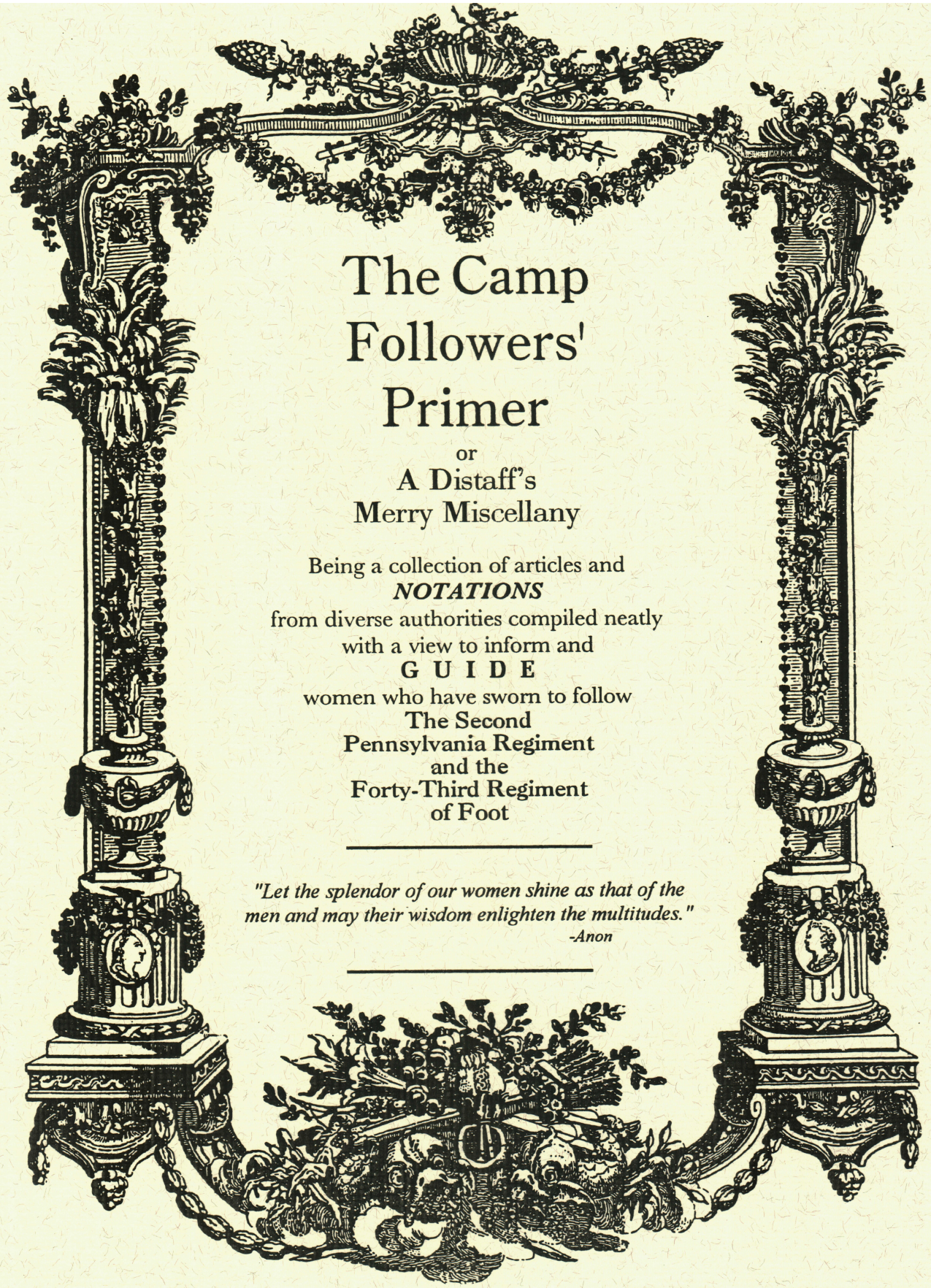

The Camp Followers' Primer

or

A Distaff's Merry Miscellany

Being a collection of articles and
NOTATIONS
from diverse authorities compiled neatly
with a view to inform and
G U I D E
women who have sworn to follow
The Second
Pennsylvania Regiment
and the
Forty-Third Regiment
of Foot

"Let the splendor of our women shine as that of the men and may their wisdom enlighten the multitudes."
-Anon

FOREWORD



Much of the recently published material on campfollowers is scattered among a number of small publications of limited circulation designed for the Living History hobbyist. This little book has brought together some of those articles and notes with the sole aim of assisting the ladies of the Second Pennsylvania Regiment and Forty-Third Regiment of Foot with their impressions of women who followed the armies in 18th Century America. It is meant for use within our organization only and is composed of several sections:

In the first section, and of greatest significance, we have reproduced most of the issues of our unit's own excellent campfollower publication, *The Camp Crier*. With assistance from member Sharon Burnston, longtime campfollower and sutler June Brilliant created and single-handedly researched, wrote and edited all of these great newsletters which showcase June's considerable knowledge and contain a wealth of information on appropriate campfollower clothing, 18th Century fashion and more. Our ladies will find these updated copies of *The Camp Crier* of great interest and extreme importance as they assemble their kit.

In the second section, we have copied a wonderful four-part article on the campfollowers of George III's regiments: *The Women of the British Army: A General Overview*. This fine and detailed work was written by consummate researcher and reenactor Don Hagist, a member and past commander of the 22nd of Foot. The articles appeared in *The Brigade Dispatch*, a scholarly publication of the Brigade of the American Revolution.

The third section presents the story of the patriot campfollower in an article that appeared in *The Continental Soldier*, the newsletter of the Continental Line. Written by John U. Rees, a reenactor with the 2nd N.J. Regiment-Helm's Company, his *"The Proportion of Women..."* is a shortened version of an earlier article in *The Brigade Dispatch* and is a rigorously researched and important addition to the subject.

The fourth section is an assortment of pertinent items beginning with another *Dispatch* article regarding a court martial that underlines the status of campfollowers as "soldiers wives" and shows that, like the men, they were subject to military justice. It was submitted by Linnea Bass and William Burke of the Brigade of Guards. We have also reproduced an entry from the original Orderly Book of the Second Pennsylvania Regiment now in the collection of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Written in 1778, it sheds some light into the politics of soldier/campfollower relations and the responsibilities of women to their regiment.

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CAMP CRIER

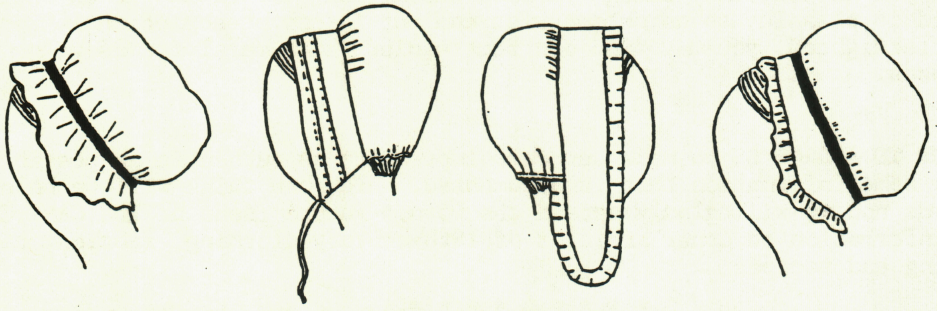
2nd PA REG'T/43rd REG'T OF FOOT

AUGUST 1991; Vol. I, No. 1

HEADS UP! (Caps, Hats, Hair, Makeup, Spectacles)

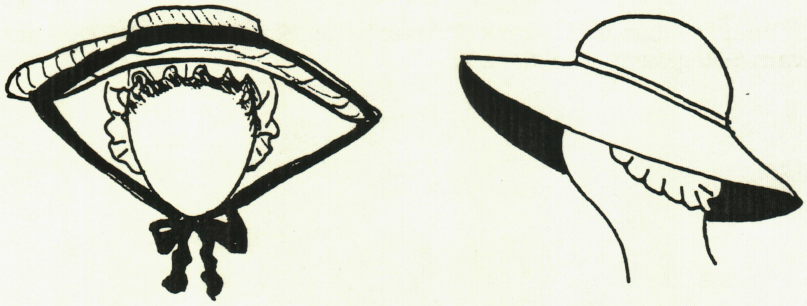
In the 18th century, most women living in homes wore some sort of head covering every moment of the day. This was considered proper, and a woman whose head went uncovered was deemed "sinful" or "shameless." From a practical point of view, caps kept the hair clean and out of the way while working.

One only has to look at portraits of the period to see that there were an almost infinite number of styles of caps. The stereotypical "mob cap" -- a circle of linen with a ruffled caul -- **is not accurate for our time period.** Original caps found in Pennsylvania have the look of a bonnet, but with a narrower band and smaller crown than similar ones in the 19th century. "Lappets" were streamers down the front which could be tied or pinned under the chin or over the head. Kerchiefs were sometimes worn, tied behind the head. Caps seem to have been constructed exclusively of light or medium weight white linen.



Women on the march with the army might have lost their caps, or be such slovens that they did not care for their own cleanliness or appearance. If you wish to portray such an individual, make your **total** appearance consistent.

Hats went to such extremes that satirists of the time made fun of them. Usually, hats were worn **over** a cap. Common styles that might have been worn by campfollowers include a floppy-brimmed felt hat, a wide-brimmed straw, or a plundered tricorn. Wide-brimmed hats protected the wearer from the elements before the popularity of umbrellas.



While we're on the subject of caps, we might as well talk about **hair.** Most women had long hair, and bangs were **never worn.** It was not the fashion to cut your hair, so disease, age, or possibly scalping would be the main culprits if your hair were short. If you have short or medium length hair, keep it covered by a cap for camouflage; you may add stuffing to the inside of your cap to make it appear as if you have a lot of hair piled up on your head. If your hair is long, push back your bangs and tuck your hair up in your cap. A cap covered the ears, but not necessarily the front hairline.

Makeup is an anachronism. Women -- not ladies -- would not have worn any, so try to do without. If you must use rouge or lip gloss, do so sparingly to look as natural as possible. Definitely no nail polish, eye shadow, eye liner, or foundation, which give someone a "made up" look.

Before we finish with our heads and faces, we should mention **eyeglasses.** As far as we know, only very elderly women or those virtually blind would have used them. Any woman who considered herself even remotely sexually attractive would not have been seen in public with glasses. (That goes for the men, also.)

Unfortunately, many of us cannot see without corrective lenses, and would rather be able to see than not. If you can wear them, contact lenses are the best choice. Twentieth century frames can destroy the 18th century impression we are trying to create.

Reproduction frames that will accept modern lenses are available from sutlers. Or you may be lucky enough to find small oval gold frames in an antique shop. (Gold is pliable, so an optometrist can put in new prescription lenses.) If you are farsighted, you may find old rectangular white metal frames with reading lenses.

IT'S UP TO ALL OF US to make our camp impression as authentic as possible. If you have some information that is documented, which you think will be helpful, send it to us and we will gladly spread the word. Future issue of **The CAMP CRIER** will have information on other articles of 18th century clothing, fabrics, camp life, cooking and recipes.

* * * * * * * * * * *

Editor: June Brilliant
Clothing Consultant: Sharon Burnston
Masthead Design: Norm Brilliant

References

"Basic Non-Military Clothing Guide--Women and Children"; published by the Brigade of the American Revolution, 1979.

"The Compleat (or nearly) Campfollowers Primer"; C. Morrow and K. Philbrick, 2nd Pennsylvania Regiment (no date).

The

CAMP  CRIER

2nd PA REG'T/43rd REG'T OF FOOT

SEPTEMBER 1991; Vol. I, No. 2

CAMP RULES

The camp is the Regiment's "home base" during an event, as well as an attraction for spectators. Since we are an educational organization, we try to maintain authenticity, and a balance between spectator curiosity and safety.

As a group, we have developed standards (or group norms) pertaining to camp appearance and safety that are **everyone's** responsibility--camp-followers and troops alike. Awareness of these camp rules helps ensure proper and safe camp interpretations.

1. **NOTHING OF THE 20th CENTURY SHOULD BE VISIBLE.** To coin a phrase: "Eternal vigilance is the price of authenticity." Whatever is not "18th century" is either covered, camouflaged, or hidden. This means covering plastic bags and containers with linen towels, cooler chests with blankets, and putting miscellaneous personal items in the enlisted men's tent near the dining fly.

2. **ONLY PERSONS DRESSED IN PERIOD CLOTHING ARE ALLOWED IN CAMP.** People--as well as things--can detract from an authentic impression. Requiring that everyone be dressed properly applies to members and relatives in civilian clothes, as well as to spectators when an area of the camp is roped or blocked off.

3. **CLOTHING MUST BE MADE OF 100% NATURAL FIBERS, SUCH AS WOOL, LINEN, OR COTTON.** This is a question of safety as well as appearance. Not only do synthetic fibers **look** incorrect for 18th century display, they are extremely flammable.

4. **ALL CHILDREN MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A PARENT OR OTHER ADULT** responsible for their supervision. The camp contains a number of hazards--guns, knives, bayonets, and often an open fire. Unsupervised children may get hurt, wander away, or be led off by strangers. Be especially alert for spectators near the fire, and don't hesitate to intervene if a small child gets too close. Older children who are curious about the equipment should be told to ask the owner of the item to show and explain it to them.

5. **ONLY MEMBERS PARTICIPATING IN AN EVENT CAN EAT OUR FOOD.** We often have requests for food, ranging from "Just a pretzel for my little boy," to lunch for a member's friend. Refusing these requests is a matter of **insurance liability**, not stinginess.

6. **MILITARY EQUIPMENT SHOULD BE LEFT UNDER GUARD AT A SEPARATE TENT OR**

AREA AWAY FROM THE DINING FLY. The primitive conditions in the dining fly are our "kitchen," and the benches and camp stools are meant for the troops to sit and eat. Leaving muskets, packs, and other items on the chests and benches exposes them to spills and accidents, and seriously interferes with food preparation and other work. The E.M.'s tent is for storage of camp supplies and is not a "locker" for 18th century gear.

7. **NEVER LEAVE THE CAMP UNATTENDED.** To guard against theft and accidents, camp-followers can take turns visiting the sutlers or watching the battles.

8. **A BUCKET OF WATER SHOULD BE WITHIN EASY REACH OF THE FIRE.** At the end of an event, the fire pit and ashes should be drowned with water.

9. **CIGARETTE SMOKING IS AN ANACHRONISM** (something not of the period) and is not allowed in camp. Women, as well as men, smoked pipes. Period pipes are available from several sutlers. Corncob pipes are nineteenth century items.

Editor: June Brilliant
Consultant: Sgt. Major Jim Hill

The
CAMP CRIER

2nd PA REG'T/43rd REG'T OF FOOT

NOVEMBER, 1991; Vol. 1, No. 3

BACK TO BASICS (Women's Camp Clothing)

If you are acquiring 18th century clothing for the first time, here are some suggestions from the "Guide to Non-Military Clothing" of the Brigades of the American Revolution, and Sharon Ann Burnston's "Mid-Eighteenth Century Working-Class Dress":

The basic wardrobe for mid-eighteenth century working women consisted of a shift, petticoat, cap, apron, and bodice. . . . The **shift** was the undergarment and frequently served as a nightgown. Its low, drawstring neckline and elbow-length sleeves showed out from under the bodice. The length might be anywhere from just below the knee to the ankle. Shifts seem to have been made exclusively of white linen: if the fabric started out as unbleached or natural, it must have become white through frequent washings, because all of the original undergarments have descended to our generation as white. (Due to the expense of modern linen fabric--about $10/yard--and the three to 3½ yards required, our Regiment accepts 100% cotton shifts.)

The **petticoat**, or what we would call a skirt, varied in length from six inches above the ankle to ankle length, with the shorter versions more convenient for working. Petticoats were three or more yards around at the hem and were gathered at the waist, usually by a drawstring. Often several petticoats were worn at once, and were tucked up in a variety of ways depending on the weather. Winter petticoats might be wool, and quilted for warmth. Work petticoats were linen.

Stays were a corset worn by women in all stations of life. They were worn over the shift and under the bodice, although sometimes for heavy work the bodice was omitted and the stays worn alone. Made of leather or of heavy fabric stiffened with boning, stays gave the fashionable cone-shaped, straight-front silhouette with uplifted cleavage.

The **bodice** took several forms. The usual working women's bodice was a "shortgown," or a "bedgown." These were cut with the sleeves in one piece with the body, and had an easy fit. A **jacket** was more fitted and had set-in sleeves. There is little evidence that shortgowns and petticoats were made of the same fabric.

Bodices **always** had sleeves. Sleeveless waistcoats, sometimes called "jumps," were usually made of quilted silk, worn for warmth, and considered **underwear**. While it seems confusing to us, from our 20th century perspective, that women might work in stays but not wear a sleeveless bodice, you must realize that stays owed their history to 16th and 17th century court dress, when the highly decorated rigid bodice of the gown was meant to be seen--so the association was with an outer garment and not a bra, as we might think of it.



Pockets were flat, pear-shaped bags with a vertical slit in the center front, designed to hold personal effects. They were worn singly or in pairs and hung from a tape around the waist. Pockets were made of homespun linen, or leftover fabric. They were sometimes decorated with crewel embroidery, or made in patchwork designs. Even the highly decorated pockets seem to have been worn under the topmost petticoat.

Aprons protected the petticoat. Heavy work aprons could be any dark color, or a check or stripe of white and one other color. Dressier aprons were white linen. Most aprons were gathered on a drawstring through a casing. If the apron had a bib, there was no loop to go around the neck; the bib was fastened to the bodice with either buttons or straight pins. (Hence the word "pinafore.")

Caps were always white linen, but were one area where women might express individuality and taste. Caps were covered in Vol. 1, No. 1 of The Camp Crier.

Kerchiefs were worn around the neck and shoulders, and were tucked into the top of the bodice or tied in front. Longer ones might be tied under the arms in back. They usually were white linen, but could be checked or striped in white and some other color.

Stockings were knee-high or thigh-high and opaque, held up by leather or other types of garters. They were generally white or black, but could be any color. **Shoes** are the most difficult and expensive articles of clothing to duplicate, and will be covered in a future issue.

Editor: June Brilliant
Clothing Consultant: Sharon Ann Burnston

The

CAMP CRIER



2nd PA REG'T/43rd REG'T OF FOOT

DECEMBER, 1991; Vol. 1, No. 4

TEXTILES FOR WOMEN'S CLOTHING

Fabrics

Since there were no synthetic fibers in the 18th century, any fabric used for period display must be of 100% natural fibers: linen, wool, cotton, silk--or some blend of these. Any reputable fabric store will have the fiber content listed on the label--this is the law!

If you are looking at remnants, you can try the "burn test." (We suggest doing this out-of-doors.) Take a few threads or a small swatch of the material and light it with a match. A natural fiber will burn to an **ash**. Synthetic fiber will form resinous drops; in other words, it will **melt**. A mixed blend of natural and synthetic fibers will melt to some extent. A word of caution: Rayon also burns to an ash, since it is made of cellulose. Rayon often has a supple or silky "feel", which may alert you to its presence.

Silk and cotton were expensive imports and generally were worn only for Sunday best. Leather, linen, and wool were produced locally and were worn for every day. Modern cotton textiles that are used instead of linen should have a weight and weave comparable to linen.

Colors

When looking for fabric for petticoats and bodices for camp follower's clothing, begin with linen or wool in natural dye colors: brown, tan, grey, gold, or dark orangey-red. Indigo blue was another popular color, although it was a purchased dye--as was cochineal, which gave the dyer the lovely red ranges of pink through crimson. A true green color in the 18th century was obtained by a double-dying process of indigo and one of the yellows.

Linen did not "take" color well using 18th century techniques, so choose one of the more muted shades. Wool, on the other had, could be dyed easily into bright colors, such as crimson.

Patterned Textiles

This is the most difficult area of fabric selection, and the one most open to dispute. As a rule, the more you familiarize yourself with actual examples in museums and books, the better off you will be.

Brocades and imported printed textiles were expensive, and were reserved for dressier garments. Solids, and woven checks and stripes were worn for everyday clothing. Woven stripes and checks will show the pattern on **both** sides of the

fabric, whereas printed textiles will have a definite "right" and "wrong" side. Woven **symmetrical stripes** are not often found in linen today. A "linen look" woven striped cotton (such as blue or red striped ticking) may be acceptable for bodices or petticoats. **Checked** linen or wool seem to have been used only for aprons and neck handkerchiefs.

Plaids were woven of wool, linen, and blends of linen and cotton, silk, or wool. In choosing a wool plaid for cloaks or shawls, you are wise to limit yourself to **two colors only**. Wool plaids using three or more colors were "Scotch Ploads." Plaids might have been used for a petticoat, but never for a bodice. In the absence of research, it may be best to avoid plaids as much as possible.

Prints were used for gowns, shortgowns, and caracos. While many expensive prints were imported from England, there was a thriving linen printing business in the American colonies, judging by the number of newspaper advertisements for linen printers. The reason that not many examples have endured to this day is that ordinary people would "recycle" used material until it was worn out--and then might sell it for "rag" paper making.

Printing techniques in most common domestic use were **block printing**, using wooden printing blocks in one to four colors; and **resist printing**, where the pattern "resists" the color. To be on the safe side, you can restrict yourself to Schumacher-Waverly **document prints** (i.e. a print taken exactly from the original) that say Williamsburg, Sleepy Hollow, Michlimkinac, or Deerfield. Make sure that the **scale** of the design is small enough for clothing, as contrasted to the larger scale used in furnishings.

If you have any **questions** regarding fabrics or colors, we encourage you to write to the Clothing Mistress, enclosing a reasonably-sized piece of the fabric, and a **stamped, self-addressed envelope** for her reply.

Editor: June Brilliant
Clothing Consultant: Sharon Ann Burnston

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The

CAMP CRIER



2nd PA REG'T/43rd REG'T OF FOOT

JANUARY, 1992; Vol. 2, No. 1

PATTERNS, CUT AND FIT

Eighteenth century garments were styled very differently from modern clothing. The seams were in different places; consequently the shaping and fit seem strange to the modern eye or body. However, accurate period clothing cannot be achieved without the use of authenticated patterns (see below). These patterns are as important to the creation of accurate reproduction clothing as the proper choice of textiles and colors.

If you are using a pattern for the first time, it is wise to make a **trial garment** first from muslin or an old sheet. Machine-baste it to test for size and fit. Any alterations that are necessary can be made on the muslin, or transferred to the paper pattern.

Here are some tips to keep in mind:

* Always wash linen and cotton in the hottest water and highest dryer setting **before** you cut and sew a garment, to pre-shrink the fabric. Then, during use, never wash or dry them any hotter than that and they won't shrink further.

* Armholes were much smaller in 18th century garments. The top of the sleeve seam should sit at the edge of your shoulder bone. The underside of the finished armhole will be no more than 2 inches below your armpit. Short-gowns are an exception, since they do not have a set-in sleeve.

* Fitted bodices, such as gowns and caracos, should be made to fit over your stays, or boned so that they fit snugly and smoothly. There will be little or no "ease" or loose fullness, which makes these garments feel tight to the modern wearer.

* Your ankles can show. Skirts got up to about six inches above the ankle in the 1750's.

* Your bosom can show. Your neckline should be very low and your bosom very high. The scoop of the neckline should be below the level of your armpits. If you feel modest, do not make the neckline incorrectly; instead wear a neck handkerchief over your shoulders with the ends tied in a knot or pinned to the top garment.

* The only portion of you that is **not** to be shown is your arm from the shoulder to the elbow. Elbows were considered ugly, and seldom appear in contemporary paintings and etchings.

* Piecing the fabric when making a garment is quite authentic. Eighteenth century textiles were woven on narrower looms than modern fabrics. Linen, for example, was typically only 30" wide; silk, about 20 to 24 inches. When piecing, always match the **grain** (direction) of the fabric.

* All originals were sewn by hand, of course. In reproducing the garments, interior seams may be machine-sewn for strength. Exterior stitching and finishing should be by hand. Remember that 18th century women were expert seamstresses who prided themselves on their small, even stitches. Please do not use large running stitches with heavy thread in a misguided attempt to imitate "primitive" sewing.

How to fasten your clothing? Short gowns generally were pinned with heavy straight pins or large thorns. Occasionally ties were sewn on either side of the front. Other types of bodices either laced to a stomacher, or the two sides of the front butted (did not overlap), and were held together with concealed hooks and eyes, pins, or laces that went through eyes or eyelets. Only mannish garments (i.e. riding habits) appear to have been buttoned.

Artificially aging your garments seems to be a sad use of your hard work and money. People did get some new clothes occasionally in the 18th century. Your new clothes will soon age if you turn out at events. This type of aging looks natural, as the wear spots and fading will occur where it is appropriate for them to be. These comments apply to aprons as well. An 18th century camp or working woman would not have abused her apron by using it to scrub pots, and she would have attempted to keep it as clean as possible.

Recommended Patterns

Brigade of the American Revolution, Diane McMahon, Patternmistress. 1031 East Mountain Road, Westfield, MA 01085. Excellent assortment of women's and children's clothing patterns on heavy paper; not sized.

Eagle's View Patterns, 168 W. 12th Street, Ogden, UT 84403. Basic country women's clothing (chemise, cap, apron, petticoat) are acceptable. Other items, such as their bodice and children's clothing, are not.

Mill Farm Period Patterns. Excellent assortment of women's and children's clothing patterns, sized. However, these run very small, so you might want to consider ordering a larger size than usual.

Recollections of J. P. Ryan, 302 E. Main Street, Berryville, VA 22611. Sized. Strapless stays, chemise, under petticoat, cap, caraco patterns by this clothing historian active in the Living History Foundation.

Stitches In Time, Box 10933, Winston-Salem, NC 27108. Women's 18th and 19th century caps, work clothing.

Not Recommended: Pegee, Costumes of Williamsburg, women's gown and other items.

Editor: June Brilliant
Clothing Consultant: Sharon Ann Burnston

The

CAMP CRIER



2nd PA REG'T/43rd REG'T OF FOOT

FEBRUARY, 1992; Vol. 2, No. 2

MISTØAKES: How to avoid them, and what to do about them.

Everyone has made mistakes in items of dress and equipment, including this writer. In addition, new research and documentation can render old standards of "authenticity" obsolete. So here are some suggestions to help minimize mistakes, or how to live with them.

DON'T: Look around at an event and judge what is authentic **only** by what other campfollowers are wearing. Each regiment or group has its own standards for what is acceptable. No need to copy some else's "mistakes."

DO: *"Play it safe" by emulating the most commonly-worn styles and colors as described in these newsletters and other authoritative sources--especially in basic campfollower's clothing. There will be other opportunities for creativity when you have more knowledge and experience.

DON'T: Assume a seller knows what is authentic.

DO: *Check out the authenticity of a garment or fabric **before** you buy (caveat emptor). You can contact the Clothing Mistress by mail or telephone--good insurance against a wrong investment.

DON'T: Sell your "mistakes" to someone else in the Regiment.

DO: *Check out discarded clothing with the Clothing Mistress **before** offering it for sale.

*Try to correct an offending detail, if possible, such as replacing inaccurate buttons or closures, removing trimmings not of the period, etc.

*If the fabric is OK but the style or fit are not, you may be able to open the seams and re-cut the garment, or to use the material for something else. "Recycling" is in the best 18th century tradition.

*If the color is incorrect, try re-dying the fabric a darker color.

IF ALL ELSE FAILS, "retire" the item gracefully and learn by your experience!

CARE AND REPAIR OF 18th CENTURY CLOTHING

Mending clothes is as typical of the period as piecing of fabric while making a garment. However, there seem to be several "rules of thumb" when either piecing or mending. First, try to use a piece of the original cloth or something similar in pattern and/or color when mending. Eighteenth century mending was almost always very neat and done so as to show as little as possible.

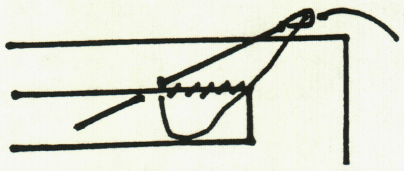
Patches were applied either on the right or wrong sides of garments, but typically with the grain of the patch matched to that of the garment being mended. Use **top stitching, whip stitching,** or **back stitching.** On worn rather than torn spots, darning was sometimes used, with a weight and color of thread chosen to approximate that of the garment being mended.

Linen and cotton garments should be washed. Washing not only cleans them, it eventually gives the fabric a soft and authentic look. Chlorine bleach should be used only occasionally on white linen, as it will eventually degrade and destroy the fiber. You are reminded not to wash home-dyed fabric with other garments, as quite a bit of "bleeding" is to be expected. Washing in cold water will minimize fading and shrinking.

Some modern woolen textiles can be washed, although dry cleaning is usually recommended. For best results follow the textile manufacturer's directions.

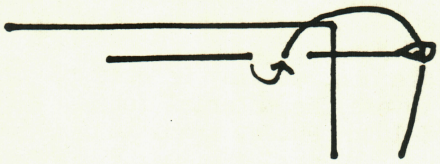
Leather goods, such as shoes and belts, will benefit greatly and last longer with regular care. Smooth leather **shoes** should be cleaned with a leather cleaner and polished with a good **shoe cream.** Wax shoe polishes are to be avoided, since the wax tends to build up and to dry out the leather. Sueded or split leather shoes should be brushed with a wire brush--no polish or cream. **Belts** can be treated occasionally with Neatsfoot Oil to help keep them supple.

Whip Stitch



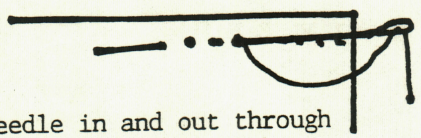
Insert the needle into a tiny bit of fabric above the hem, then catch the edge of the hem fold.

Back Stitch



Bring the needle up from underneath the fabric, then back half the length of the stitch, and forward twice the back stitch length.

Top Stitch or Running Stitch



Put needle in and out through the fabric in tiny stitches.

Editor: June Brilliant
Clothing Consultant: Sharon Ann Burnston

The

CAMP CRIER

2nd PA REG'T/43rd REG'T OF FOOT

MARCH, 1992; Vol. 2, No. 3

BEST FOOT FORWARD (Shoes)

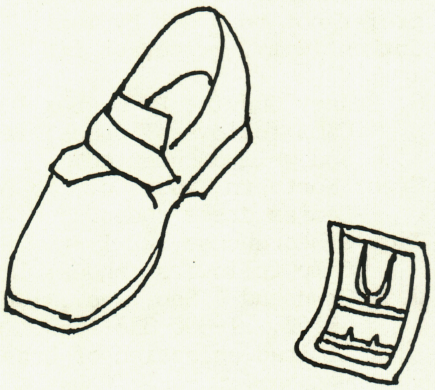
Shoes underwent several stylistic changes during the eighteenth century. Frequently, especially late in the century, they tied at the instep. At other times, they were fastened with buckles attached to two large flaps which crossed at the instep. Heels generally became lower as the century progressed. Toes were plain and unseamed, and rounded, pointed, or square.

Upper-class ladies' shoes were made of elegant but fragile fabrics such as silk, brocade, satin, taffeta, and worsted. Buckles were interchangeable and expensive, being made of silver, sparkling paste stones, or even jewels. **Working-class men and women wore shoes of leather, with inexpensive metal buckles, or shoes that fastened by tying.** Shoes were made on a straight last, meaning that there was no distinction between right and left feet.

In completing our eighteenth-century attire, proper footwear often is the single most expensive item that camp followers have to acquire. At the time of this writing, you can expect a good pair of new leather reproduction shoes to cost between $75 and $100. Buckles are additional. In comparison to the men's gear--which includes such expensive items as muskets and military coats--our outlay seems modest indeed.

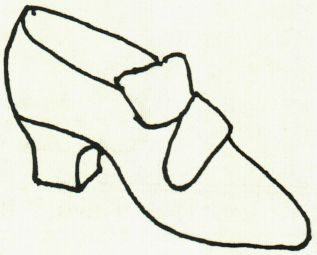
While we have included some more moderately-priced options for footwear, we recommend that camp followers plan their clothing budget so that eventually everyone owns a pair of **brogans** or eighteenth-century style **ladies' shoes.** Since we spend most of our time at events on our feet, well-fitting, sturdy leather shoes with adequate support are important to our overall comfort, as well as to our appearance.

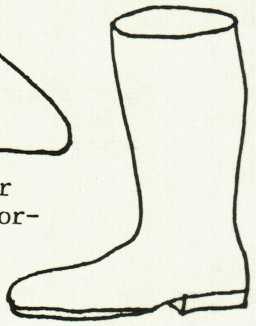
* **Brogans** (camp followers' shoes) are army-styled heavy leather shoes with a low heel, square toe, showing either the smooth or rough side out. These were fastened with inexpensive metal buckles (brass, pewter, steel) with two sets of prongs that went through holes in the flaps. Low-heeled shoes are most comfortable for our line of work, or for marching with the army.



Sometimes the flaps are cut short, and ties substituted for the buckles.

* Eighteenth century-style **ladies' shoes** are distinguished by a curved, approximately two-inch heel placed slightly forward under the arch. They fasten in a manner similar to the brogans, and may be smooth leather or suede in black, brown, or tan. Sometimes it is possible to find modern shoes with a similar silhouette that can be adapted by a cooperative shoemaker.

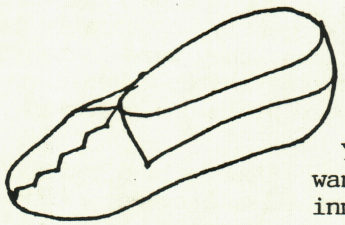




Make sure your feet are comfortable.

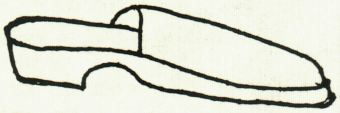
* Plain, flat-heeled, pull-on **riding boots** (no zippers, buckles, or laces, please) in black or brown will make an acceptable substitute for reproduction shoes. A camp follower might have obtained such boots from a dead officer.

* Women from the frontier might have worn deerskin **moccasins.** The style should be that of the Iroquois Indians, which generally had a seam up the center front. The tops might be plain, or have a small fold-over cuff. They definitely **did not have** beads, composition soles, "moccasin-style" toes, or fringes.

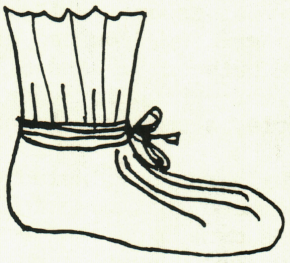


You might want to add innersoles.

* Modern Scandinavian-made **clogs,** such as those made by Eskil, are a presentable version of the 18th century working-class women's clog. Be sure the pair you choose has a smooth upper with no laces, buckles, perforations, studs, open toes, etc. To make them look more authentic, remove the vinyl layer on the bottom of the wooden soles, and paint or otherwise conceal the metal staples around the edge of the uppers.



* If you are temporarily **without** suitable footwear, we suggest buying some **natural burlap,** and covering your shoes under a burlap wrap. The burlap can be secured with **hemp twine.**



Burlap makes good cold weather insulation.

RESOURCES

These **sutlers** (merchants) are those we know about who have offered reproduction shoes for sale in the past. Some of the sutlers attend events, if you prefer not to order by mail. We cannot guarantee current availability, quality, authenticity, price, or fit.

G. Gedney Godwin, P. O. Box 100, Valley Forge, PA 19481. (215) 783-0670.
Camp followers' shoes; ladies dress shoes; shoe buckles--excellent variety and well-documented.

Great Northern Trade Co., 55 Stanmore Road, Warwick, RI 02889. (401) 732-5105.
Ladies dress shoes.

Tidy's Storehouse, RD 1-- (215) 932-8441.
Camp followers' shoes; ladies dress shoes; limited selection of brass buckles.

Jas. Townsend & Son, Inc., 106 South First Street, P. O. Box 415, Pierceton, IN 46562. 1-800-338-1665. Camp followers' shoes; center-seam moccasins; limited selection of brass buckles.

Editor: June Brilliant
Clothing Consultant: Sharon Burnston

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CAMP CRIER

2nd PA REG'T/43rd REG'T OF FOOT

MAY, 1992; Vol 2. No. 4



PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST LYME DISEASE!

Outdoor activity in some parts of the United States carries a greater risk to health and well-being than travel to many Third World areas. The source of danger is ticks that carry the spirochete that causes Lyme disease.

Lyme disease causes flulike signs of chronic arthritis, fever, and fatigue. If left untreated, it can lead to joint damage, heart complications, kidney problems, and even neurological damage. The common clinical signs are fever, loss of appetite, rash, and joint swelling, which can develop within weeks of the initial infection. Weeks to months later there may be swelling of lymph nodes, inflammatory changes in the kidneys, and inflammation of the muscular walls of the heart.

The tick that is the principal disease carrier, the deer tick, is long-lived, lacks natural enemies, and produces an impressive number of offspring. The spriro-chete that causes the disease can persist in the tick for life, and in some species can be passed through many generations and many mammalian hosts. The exact role of ticks other than the deer tick has not been clarified by research, but field observations support the suspicion that other types of ticks are involved.

Individuals who might be exposed to ticks should wear light-colored clothing and check themselves periodically. Wearing a hat and long sleeves with a snug collar will give some added protection. Pants should be tucked into the socks and only close-tied shoes (not sandals) should be worn.

Because most ticks are picked up on the lower legs or feet and crawl upwards to the head and neck, **camp-followers' clothing, with its long, loose petticoats usually of dark material, and stockings only to the knees, make women at greater risk than male re-enacters.** Wool and wool-blend fabrics are particularly attractive to ticks, and should be avoided during the height of tick season, May through September. **Troops should inspect their Regimental coats between skirmishes, and hang them off the ground when not being worn.**

Re-enacters should avoid overhanging grass and brush as well as wooded areas, and walk in the center of trails. On returning home, clothing should be removed and washed. The body should be carefully inspected. Children and pets should also be inspected. Pets can bring ticks into the home, resulting in a human case of Lyme disease without the person having been outdoors.

Repellents can increase the level of protection against tick bites. Most of these compounds are most effective when they are applied to clothing, particularly shoe tops, socks, and pant cuffs. Campfollowers can apply a repellent to petti-coats and stockings. A newly registered repellent is available in most states; called permethrin, it is sold under the brand name **PERMANON.** It is to be applied to **clothing only.**

One treatment of permethrin should provide protection for one day or longer. According to the Connecticut label, clothing should not be retreated withing 48 hours unless treated articles have been laundered between applications. A one-minute application of permethrin to the exterior surface of pants and jackets provided 100% protection, according to one test.

The only repellent approved for application to the skin is DEET (diethyl-toluamide). To be effective, the deet solution should be at least at 50% strength. It can be used in conjunction with permethrin-treated clothing. Some people may develop a rash in reaction to deet, especially at the higher concentrations.

Tick bites are painless. Ticks bite into the skin, and remain with their head below the surface. If you find a tick, prompt and proper removal is very important, since it takes up to 24 hours for the infection to be transmitted.

The tick should be grasped with tweezers behind the head, as close to the skin surface as possible. The tick should then be pulled straight upward with steady even pressure. This should remove the tick with the mouthparts intact. Twisting or jerking the tick can break off the head, and squeezing the tick may inject its fluids into the skin. If the head breaks off, do not poke at it.

Once removed, do not touch the tick with your bare hands as the spirochete can enter the body through breaks in the skin. Gloves or a tissue can be used when manually deticking pets.

Save the tick in a sealed vial along with a bit of cotton moistened with water, for later analysis if necessary. After the hands and wound site are washed, an antiseptic should be applied to the bite and the site subsequently monitored. If a rash appears (as it does in only 40% of cases of Lyme disease) or if constitutional symptoms develop (as much as 8 weeks after the bite) immediate medical intervention should be sought. Bring the tick carcass in its sealed vial to your doctor, as there are special laboratories which will analyze the tick. Blood tests to determine the presence of Lyme disease in humans are available.

Lyme disease is a serious and debilitating condition which, if left untreated, can become chronic. Several ounces of **prevention** are presently worth more than pounds of cure.

Editor: June Brilliant

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Connecticut Medicine, "Lyme Disease Prevention." Vol. 53, No. 6, June 1989.

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CAMP CRIER



2nd PA REG'T/43rd REG'T OF FOOT

JANUARY 1993; Vol 3, No.1

CHILDREN'S CLOTHING

It is an accepted cliche that children in the eighteenth century dressed like miniature adults. While this is true in general, there were aspects of children's clothing styles that were unique to them in many ways.

The swaddling of infants--tight wrapping from the shoulders down--was largely discontinued by 1750. The newborn baby in the latter half of the 18th century wore a long dress which strongly resembled the modern Christening gown. It also resembled the 18th-century adult woman's gown, with its low neckline, elbow-length sleeves, and long, full skirts. However, the infant's gown was distinctive in some ways: its bodice was fitted with tucks, it had skirts that trailed about 12" below the infant's feet, and it was a closed robe that completely covered the petticoat. The infant's gown was almost always **white linen**, but at least one example survives of an indigo blue and white small print.

Infants apparently did not wear shifts. Under the gown the infant wore a small, collarless **shirt** which opened all the way down the center front. The shirt had elbow-length sleeves, and frequently was ornamented with fancy needle lace inserts. A long petticoat with a wide waistband was tied over the shirt. The waistband took the place of the swaddling bands believed necessary to prevent hernia. The advantage of the shirt and petticoat arrangement was that if the diapers soaked through, you could change the wet lower half without having to strip the baby entirely. Speaking of diapers, they were of linen, and often covered with a knitted wool **soaker**--both very absorbent, but not waterproof.

All babies under the age of 9-12 months also wore one or more elaborately-trimmed white linen caps at all times. After this age, the cap was still required for little girls, but optional for boys.

Around the age of nine months, the child was "short-coated;" that is, put into a gown with the petticoats about ankle length, to permit the child to learn to walk. From then on, the toddler--boy or girl--wore a gown similar to that of adult women, except that it was back-fastened with either a row of ribbon ties or with lacings like a corset. The toddler shift was identical to a woman's shift, and the toddler gown had the fitted bodice, elbow-length sleeves, pointed waistline, and long full skirts typical of women's clothing. Children also wore aprons to keep their clothes clean, and their shoes and stockings resembled those of women--as did their pockets, kerchiefs, cloaks, etc. Children sometimes wore stays, as an aid to "proper" posture.

Although some of the surviving children's dresses are made in two pieces (i.e. separate bodice and skirt) they were **always** of the same fabric, to give the appearance of a one-piece dress. There is no evidence for little girls having contrasting bodices and petticoats, or sleeveless, vest-type bodices.

A little girl continued to dress in this manner until she started to show signs of mature female contours. Then she would assume the full range of adult women's garb. A little boy was dressed in the same way, with some optional masculine details until he was at least four years old. (If you're interested, contact the Clothing Mistress for particulars.) The boy would then be dressed in the style of adult men. For the working classes, this meant that he was dressed in every detail as a miniature (civilian) man.

DRESSING YOUR CHILD

Patterns are available for all of the clothing described above. Pegee of Williamsburg has patterns for boy's breeches and waistcoat. The widest selection of patterns for children's clothing are from Mill Farm Period Patterns, and include an infant's gown, child's and girl's gown, child's and girl's shift, boy's shirt, waistcoat, and breeches. Caps may be adapted from adult styles.

For information on fabrics and colors, see "The Camp Crier," Vol. 1, No. 4.

When it comes to children's shoes, please use the same judgement that you would in choosing shoes for adults (see "The Camp Crier," Vol. 1, No. 3). A black **leather** ballet slipper is acceptable for little girls. However, straps across the instep (i.e. "Mary Janes") are not. Other alternatives might be a laced black shoe with ½" heel from Bass, black laced "Jazz Oxfords" from Thom McCann, or plain leather moccasins from Tandy Leather. Bare feet, while "authentic," are not recommended for reasons of safety.

To get a better mental picture of children's clothing in the 18th century, look at portraits of the period by English and American painters, as well as "Clothing in Colonial Williamsburg" by Linda Baumgarten.

Historical Material: Sharon Ann Burnston
Editor: June Brilliant

Patterns

Mill Farm Period Patterns
Tidy's Storehouse

The

CAMP CRIER



2nd PA REG'T/43rd REG'T OF FOOT

FEBRUARY, 1993; Vol 3, No. 2

"NEITHER WIND, NOR RAIN, NOR SNOW NOR DARK OF NIGHT ..." (Cold Weather Dressing)

Like the Postal Service, the Regiment is called on to perform in all kinds of weather, from February through November. While we can admire our forebears for their endurance, we would like to be as comfortable as possible.

The kinds of clothing we wear fall into two categories: the **seen** and the **unseen**. The former should be as authentic as possible; the latter may be as practical as we can devise.

COLD WEATHER DRESSING

Working women's winter **cloaks** (capes) were mainly unlined wool cloth, although many original examples have cotton block-printed, contrasting linings. Cloaks relied on pleats across the back and shoulders to gather in the extra fullness, and closed with self-fabric ties, plain or ornamental hooks, or frogs. Cloaks frequently had attached **hoodes**, or the hoode might be a separate piece that tied under the chin.

The length of the cloak varied from about 28 to 50 inches. Cloaks had different names depending on the style. For example, the "Cardinal" derived its name from its popular scarlet-red color, and had a neck band and an attached hoode. Shorter cloaks, such as the Pelisse and the Palatine, were characterized by two long, rounded-end tabs that hung down in front. Styles worn for warmth would be made of wool; those for formal occasions might be lace, velvet, satin, or brocaded silk.

Shawls are simple and useful garments. The simplest shawl would be a blanket, tied around the neck with a length of hemp rope. You can make a shawl from a 54" or 60" square of wool--hemmed or not, depending on the fabric (see below). Knitted wool shawls--square, triangular, or rectangular, should be made in a plain stitch, using 100% wool yarn. (The art of crochet did not make an appearance until the 19th century.)

Most 18th century wool fabrics had a **tabby** (plain, firm) weave, and were so tightly woven that they would retain a firm edge even when cut and left "raw"--as was often done. If your fabric tends to ravel, you can make a narrow hem and finish by hand. Or you might apply a fabric glue (Fray Check) to the edge to prevent raveling. For additional information on wool fabrics and colors, see Vol. 1, No. 4 of "The Camp Crier."

THE GREAT CAPOTE DEBATE

Capotes, or **blanket coats** as they were generally called in the 18th century, were made from Whitney or Hudson's Bay blankets. This warm, knee-length garment was held together with a belt, buttons, or ties, and often had an attached hood.

Blanket coats were issued to British soldiers in Canada by General Howe in 1776, and it is plausible to assume that Howe's army may have brought some coats with them when they marched to Philadelphia in 1778. Blanket coats were not standard issue in the Continental Army, and to date the Authenticity Committee has found only one non-descriptive reference to an American soldier in a "blanket jacket," and so have not approved these for the 2nd PA impression.

If you want to wear a man's coat or waistcoat, it should look as if it were made for a man--not for a woman. It should be of an accepted uniform or civilian color and cut. If a woman wore a man's clothing, it would be because her own clothes were worn out, and the best she could do was to wear clothes given by or stolen from a soldier--or taken from a dead body!

Winter **bodices** may be made of wool, and lined with linen, cotton, or a second layer of lightweight wool. **Petticoats** were layered for warmth, and can include one that is made of wool, flannel, or quilted. You might consider wearing **thermal underwear** underneath your 18th century clothing for extra warmth.

Don't neglect your head, hands and feet in the effort to keep warm: a second pair of socks and **insoles** in your shoes will add insulation. (Make sure your shoes are loose enough so that circulation is not cut off in your feet.) **Mittens** were made of woven or knitted wool. Knitted gloves, often without fingers, also were popular. Ladies--not camp followers--might have worn **muffs** made of fabric or fur, padded with wool. Wool **scarves** are useful tied over your cap and felt hat, as well as wrapped around your neck.

Remember, that cold weather is very drying to the skin. You might want to use a skin moisturizer and cold-weather lip protection, such as Chap-Stick.

Editor: June Brilliant
Clothing Consultant: Sharon Ann Burnston
Authenticity Committee: T. Vogeley, W. Davis, J. Brilliant, M. Bell

Patterns for Cloaks

Mill Farm Period Patterns. One-size pattern for hooded cloak.

Pegee of Williamsburg. Cardinal, Capuchin and Palatine cloaks in one package, all sizes included. Available from Tidy's Storehouse

Capote Patterns

Northwest Traders, Inc., 5055 W. Jackson Rd., Enon, OH 45323

References

"Blankets in Early America," by Gary Mueller, The Book of Buckskinning IV pp. 43-62.
"A History of the Uniforms of the British Army, Vol. III" by Cecil C. P. Lawson, 1961 (printed in Great Britain) pp. 79-82.
"Armies of the American Wars," by Philip Katcher, p. 60.
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CAMP CRIER



2nd PA REG'T/43rd REG'T OF FOOT

OCTOBER, 1993; Vol. 3, No. 3

HOW TO MAKE AN "IMPRESSION"

An "impression" is an interpretation of how a person from a particular historical period might have looked, worked, spoken, and lived. There are many factors that should be considered in choosing appropriate clothing for a living history character: who was she, what did she do, when did she do it, where was she located, and why was she there? How did social class, ethnicity, and occupation affect her wardrobe?

In this issue of "The Camp Crier" we will offer some historical background to help you create your impression of a British camp follower.

Who were they?

According to historians' estimates, there were about five thousand camp followers attached to the British army in America during the War of Independence. The British army made a policy to enlist single men in the mother country, and limited the number of formally-sanctified marriages to six per regiment. Very few wives accompanied their husbands to America or were married here, so it follows that the vast majority of those 5,000 women were Colonials.

Political loyalties aside, what kind of woman would attach herself to a foreign army? Many were the unfortunate daughters of humble families, who lacked the money and means to survive independently. In exchange for government rations, they did useful work for the regiments--cooking, cleaning, caring for the sick and wounded. Quite a few of them came from local brothels, such as the "Holy Ground" in New York City, so named because it occupied the property of St. Paul's Church.

The most attractive were appropriated by officers, many of whom lived openly with their mistresses. The majority had to content themselves with the company of common soldiers. They were called "artillery wives." (1)

To summarize, British camp followers were largely from the underclasses of American society, consisting of runaways (slaves* and indentured servants), the very poor, and prostitutes.

How did they dress?

Advertisements for runaway slaves and indentured servants make interesting reading for the clothing historian, since in an age before photography, people were often identified by their clothing--which was not easily replaced.

Slaves: Not all slaves dressed alike. House servants were the most fashionably dressed, field slaves the worst. Clothing was provided by the slave owner, so inexpensive fabric often was purchased in large quantities. For that reason,

* The British Army had 10,000 black soldiers, called 'Pioneers."

it was not unusual for a slave to have a matching bodice and petticoat, whereas it was rarely the case with women of other classes.

Field Slaves wore a short gown or jacket, petticoat, and Osnaburg (coarse weave) linen shift. A field slave was not issued stays, handkerchiefs to protect her neck from the elements, or aprons to protect her clothing.

Virginia Gazette, July 21, 1774
"Run away from the Subscriber, in Buckingham, a Negro woman named Bess; had on, and carried away with her, a green calimanco Petticoat, a striped Holland waistcoat, a Negro Cotton Petticoat, a Virginia cloth one striped with copperas and filled in with blue yarn, two Osnaburg shifts, one new the other old ..."

Indentured Servants: Unlike slaves, indentured servants voluntarily entered into a contract to exchange their labor for passage to the Colonies. The life of a white indentured servant was little better than that of a black slave, except it was easier for a white runaway to blend into the population.

Pennsylvania Gazette, July 28, 1773
"Run away from the Subscriber, living in Reading town, Berks County, Pennsylvania...a certain indented Irish servant woman named Elizabeth White, about 25 years of age, fair complexion, sandy hair, cut before, about 5 feet high, is very talkative, fond of snuff and spiritous liquors; had on when she went away, two striped lincey petticoats off one piece, homespun shift, and a silk handkerchief ..."

Working Women: There was no single, 18th-century American style of dress--no "national costume." Styles were brought by the immigrant population from their homelands in Europe and the British Isles. These immigrants looked to their homelands for fashion leadership.

For example, northern Britons who migrated to America in the 18th century settled in southwestern Pennsylvania, Western Maryland and Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky and Tennessee. An English writer, describing the dress of the poor in Cumberland, northern England, in 1790, listed the working woman's dress as follows:

"...a black stuff hat; a linen bed gown of home manufacture stamped with blue...a cotton or linen neckcloth; two petticoats of flannell, the upper one dyed blue; coarse woollen stockings; linen shift ... Women generally wear stays. Their gowns are sometimes made of Woolen stuff. The women generally wear black silk hats and cotton gowns on Sundays and holidays." (2)

Bed gowns or short gowns refer to a large group of unfitted bodices. They vary in details, but usually were made without either shoulder seams or set-in sleeves. They were constructed of linen, wool, cotton, or a blend of these fibers, lined or unlined, and worn over stays with petticoats, handkerchiefs, caps and aprons. Bed gowns were also worn by European women.

Evidence from existing garments

Claudia Kidwell has done a study of 28 of the short gowns still extant in this country. Of the 28 garments examined, 22 were unlined and six were lined. Seventeen of the fabrics--all of plain weave--are block printed cottons with small-scale motifs. Ten are woven striped fabrics, all at least part

linen, make up the next largest group. The final example is an indigo (blue) cotton, with a matching petticoat. The most frequently-used colors are blue and brown. (3)

In half the examples, the origins are known. Most of these are Quaker or Mennonite, and suggests that prints and stripes were not the exclusive province of the upper classes, nor considered fancy by these "plain dress" religious sects.

Contemporary commentaries

Hannah Winthrop was a lady living in Cambridge at the time of the war, who witnessed the passing of British General Burgoyne's defeated army following the battle of Saratoga. She wrote to her friend, Mercy Warren:

> "...I never had the least idea that the Creation produced such a sordid set of creatures in human figure--poor, dirty, emaciated men. Great numbers of women who seemed to be the beasts of burden, having bushel baskets on their backs by which they were bent double. The contents seemed to be pots and kettles, various sorts of furniture, children peeping through gridirons...Some very young infants who were born on the road; the women barefeet, clothed in dirty rags; such effluvia filled the air while they were passing, had they not been smoking all the time, I should have been apprehensive of being contaminated by them." (4)

The misery of an army (and its camp followers) in retreat and defeat is not necessarily the total picture of military life, but it does make a vivid picture. We must remember, however, that the British camp followers earned their rations by virtue of the work they performed for the army, including sexual favors. Living in common-law relationships with a soldier afforded a woman (and her children) some measure of protection and security. If her lover were killed, or if she spotted a more likely prospect, a camp follower had to be prepared to attract such attention. This might be accomplished by a brightly-colored feather or ribbon in her hat, hitching up her petticoats to reveal a turn of ankle, as well as more obvious sexual signals. An officer's mistress might proclaim her status by wearing a gown and fancy hat, rather than the petticoat and short gown of the lowlier classes.

References

(1) Frey, Sylvia R., "The British Soldier in America", pp. 60-64
(2) Ryan, Janice, "Women's Clothing for Living History Programs"
(3) Kidwell, Claudia, "Short Gowns." Originally published in DRESS, Vol. 4, 1978.
(4) Sheer, G. F. and Rankin, H. F., "Rebels and Redcoats."

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CAMP CRIER



2nd PA REG'T/43rd REG'T OF FOOT

FEBRUARY, 1994; Vol. 4, No. 1

MEN"S CLOTHING

Since there are occasionally some men in civilian clothes affiliated with the camp, as well as civilian smallcloathes in use by the troops for "campaign" dress, we thought that an issue on men's clothing would be pertinent for "The Camp Crier." The following information is taken from papers presented at the seminar on "Men's Clothing, 1750-1790" at the University of Delaware in January.

The eighteenth century was a period of class consciousness. Most people were content to stay within the class to which they were born; some were not. Clothing traditionally serves as the primary visual emblem of social standing and identity, and this held true in the 18th century. Status and rank were evinced through expensive fabrics such as silk brocades and velvets, wool and fine linens, through trimmings such as lace, metallic braid, and embroidery. Superiority was also shown in the expense of upkeep: the washing, starching, and ironing of white linens, or gold and silver braid which tarnished and had to be removed and melted down.

The middle and lower classes wore wool, cotton, and linen. Linen was used by all classes for undergarments, the variation of class being in the fineness and quality of the fabric. Details, such as sleeve ruffles, showed that a gentleman did not have to work with his hands. Additionally, linen and linen blends were used for breeches, overalls, trousers, coats and waistcoats.

Hats also were a visible social marker. The round hat was favored by the lower classes, as the brim played a practical role as protection from the elements. The civilian cocked, or three-cornered hat was virtually useless against the sun and inclement weather, making the statement that the wearer would be entitled to be provided shelter.

Even hair was subject to class distinctions: most gentlemen wore wigs and shaved their heads to make wearing a wig easier. When not wearing a wig, they wore caps. A "physical wig" indicated that the wearer was a member of a learned profession--such as a doctor or lawyer. The number of side curls on the wigs of soldiers often was specified by regulation according to rank.

Facial hair in the 18th century connoted a feral, beastly nature. Grenadiers in the French and Hapsburg armies wore facial hair to create an intimidating appearance. Gentlemen and all who did not wish to be taken as beasts were clean-shaven. This custom did not seem to have been of concern to some sailors, and was consciously rejected by Quakers and many German religious sects.

Officers and Gentlemen

The familiar three-piece suit for men (and its descendent still in evidence today), consisting of coat, breeches, and waistcoat, was established in the late 17th century. It was altered only in details during the 18th century, progressing from a heavy full form to a slimmer line. The coat's large cuffs and voluminous pleated skirt of the early 18th century reduced gradually in size, while the center front of the coat began to slope away from below the chest. Waistcoats, formerly as long as coats, were shortened to mid-thigh by the 1760's, and continued to progress upward to just below the waist by 1790. Loose-cut breeches began to fit more closely. Fashion in suit fabrics also evolved from rich, baroque fabrics to plain, untrimmed light silks and woolen cloth. Elaborate fabrics were reserved for court or the most formal occasions.

By the beginning of the 18th century, increased prosperity brought wealth to an ever-expanding circle, and clothes were not enough to set the elite apart. The gentry turned to more subtle methods of distinguishing themselves from the common herd by refinements such as "good breeding" and deportment, taught from an early age by dancing masters for the wealthy, and by "do-it-yourself" books published for the upwardly mobile.

Contemporary standards of carriage of the body are evident in the cut of garments of both sexes. Arms were thought of as "disagreeable" if held straight, and had sleeves cut to accommodate a bent position. High, tight armholes, sleeve caps with very little fullness, and narrow backs ensured that shoulders would be held down and back. A narrow, sloping masculine shoulder line was the ideal, as reflected in sloped shoulder seams which, along with side seams set not under the arm but towards the back, helped give a fuller appearance to the chest.

Masculine garments were made not to slenderize the abdomen, but rather to accentuate its bulk. Shoulders, chest, waist and hips were apparently ideally uniform in width. The way clothes were worn furthered this impression: men's waistcoats, for example, were "correctly" buttoned only below the stomach, allowing the full-cut shirts and neck ruffles to add volume to the chest. The prescribed stance for gentlemen, with the right hand in the front of the waistcoat and the left under the pocket-flap, gave prominence to the stomach and hips, and provided support for the curved arms. From contemporary portraits men appear to have worn their coats pulled back from the chest and stomach even further than the sloped center opening indicates, adding further emphasis to the stomach and bulk in the hip region.

This well-bred ideal was exported to the American colonies, along with other fashionable and cultural baggage, even though (according to the observations of at least one European nobleman) Americans adopted the postures but missed the essence and subtleties. Officers, most often from the American moneyed class, would be distinguished not only by their uniforms and swords, but by their postures and gestures. A full description of these customs is beyond the scope of this paper.

The Common Herd

Some named 18th century fabrics were specifically, but not exclusively, associated with certain classes. Fustian, a general term covering a large category of linen and cotton, or later all-cotton textiles, was twilled and had a soft pile. Due to its long-wearing qualities, it was considered suitable for the clothing of workmen and domestic servants. Virginia cloth was a domestically produced linen/cotton blend used for servant's wear. Linen osnaburg was used to clothe plantation slaves. Nankeen, originally a yellow cotton cloth of plain weave made in China, was copied in Manchester, England by the mid-18th century. It was considered suitable for men's waistcoats and breeches, as it wore very well. Originally, it was worn only by the upper classes, but then by the middle and lower classes as the cheaper imitation became available.

Cotton pile fabrics were also used for middle class men's suitings, including Manchester velvet thickset, velveret, and corduroy (first mentioned as a named textile in America in 1789). Tailor's cloth and stuff were woolen fabrics which included broadcloths, flannel, and plush. Another category of woolens were worsteds. Manchester or kendall cotton were woolen fabrics usually worn by the poor or slaves.

Since all clothes were hand-made, the degree of fashionability and the elegance of fit are also key factors in matching clothing to social class. The question becomes, were they hand-made for the wearer, new or second-hand? The way clothing was fastened also said a great deal about the social status of the wearer. While the upper classes used buckles of paste, silver and gold, pinchbeck, brass or iron had to do for the rest. The lower classes and slaves tied their breeches and shoes in lieu of buckles. Buttons for the gentry might be precious metals, mother-of-pearl, or beautifully embroidered cloth; the middle class might wear plain cloth; while the poorer classes had buttons of bone, horn, thread, or wood.

Reproduction Clothing

To give a better idea of how men actually may have looked in the 18th century, the seminar included a "fashion show" of carefully-research reproduction clothing. Notations and observations are as follows:

Slave: clothing was issued twice a year, shoes once a year. The model wore an ill-fitting waistcoat, an unbleached coarse linen shirt, loose ankle-length tan linen trousers, and a round black felt hat. He did not have a neck handkerchief, and was barefoot.

Laborer: Represented was a farmer from New England. He was dressed in layers to protect himself from the cold. He wore a long outer shirt of linsey-woolsey with a slashed neck opening, outer breeches of a similar fabric, a linen waistcoat, coarse linen shirt, and faded red scarf. His under breeches also were linen. He had knitted wool hose and cap and black leather shoes without buckles.

Tradesman: represented was a gunsmith in his work clothing. He wore a muted red wool waistcoat with a brown linen back, buckskin breeches, coarse-weave white linen shirt held closed by a red checked neck handkerchief, a blue and white striped linen cap, white cotton hose and black leather shoes with brass buckles. Over his clothing he wore a pigskin leather apron with a triangular bib that buttoned to his waistcoat.

Learned Professional: represented was a Scottish tutor. He wore a dark brown wool broadcloth coat and breeches with a beige brocaded waistcoat, fine white linen shirt with ruffled front and cuffs, white cravat, and black cocked hat. The coat buttons were cloth covered to match the coat. He had buckled shoes and clocked (embroidered) hose. His wig was arranged in a clubbed, bagged ponytail with curls over the ears, and he carried a cane--the better to beat his pupil, no doubt.

Sporting Gentleman: described as a hunter gives game a "fair chance" by only shooting birds on the wing. He was wearing a dark grey wool knee-length coat with large brass buttons and red velvet collar. The coat had horizontal pockets without buttons; the cuffs also were without buttons. His hose were cotton or wool, with ankle-high laced boots. His breeches were leather, and laced closed. He also had a leather haversack, held close to his body with a leather shoulder strap and belt. In addition to his musket, he had his dog on a leash. The dog was not dressed. His black round hat brim was tacked up in back.

In conclusion, the kind of civilian clothing that might be worn in a military camp depended very much on the social class and occupation to which the individual belonged.

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June Brilliant, Editor

The Women of the British Army:
A General Overview
Part 1 - Who & How Many

Don N. Hagist
22nd Regiment of Foot

The role of women in all facets of the American Revolution, although not unknown, is certainly understated. Of all that has been written on this period of history, only a small portion addresses womens' issues; still less is dedicated to the topic. Here is yet another area where a great deal of information is available, but very little has been compiled or assimilated. It is with a view toward compilation that this article is written.

Published information about women and children in the British army during the American Revolution is available, but tends to be general and sometimes heavily stereotyped. A few high quality works exist[1], but provide only an overview of the subject. This persuades us that there is not much information to be had, but that is not the case. Primary sources offer a wealth of material. Unfortunately, it can only be found by surveying vast quantities of documents in disparate collections. This article will string together an assortment of material from a large number of sources, which taken together begin to give a picture of women in British regiments as individuals, with daily lives, responsibilities, and experiences. It is hoped that others will continue to bring forth such information, so that this significant portion of the military population will be appropriately documented and understood.

A Look at the Numbers How many women would we expect to find with a given regiment at a given time and place? In asking this question, we do not mean to change the way we do business in the reenactment hobby. Learning the historically accurate numbers simply allows us to improve our interpretation for the public, in the same way that we explain the original sizes of the regiments that we recreate. It gives some guidance in choosing a character to portray, but we generally do not choose our impressions based proportionality to historical numbers. We portray the nationality and discipline of a given soldier because we like it, not because the Brigade needs more of them; similarly, women should choose to portray soldiers' wives, townspeople, or what have you, because it suits them best. If the resulting numbers are not in proportion to original numbers, we need only to explain this to our audience.

It is not difficult to determine the number of women affiliated with a given British regiment; one must only look at some of the numerous returns, which were kept regularly throughout the war. It does take some time to compile these returns from various sources to get a fairly complete picture of a given regiment during its service in America. This information is, nonetheless, available.

Because a large number of returns are available, we will not attempt to present all of the raw data here. We will also avoid the temptation to perform extensive statistical analyses on these data, computing means and medians and such. Statistics of this type are of little use to us; knowing the average number of women in a typical regiment does not tell us anything about a specific regiment in a particular time and place. When dealing with historical information, statistics can obscure facts. Instead, data is given for regiments represented in the reenactment hobby, so that the data will have more significance and be more directly applicable.

A good sample of data comes from returns for the army in the New York area during 1779 and 1780. The numbers presented in Figure 1 illustrate the variation in numbers of women and children that could exist; we use only a few regiments as examples, but these give a picture which is typical enough for regiments throughout the war. The variation in the numbers is enough to show that we cannot draw conclusions

21 November 1779			
	Men	Women	Children
17th LD	257		
22nd	401	57	68
23rd	469	61	60
33rd	488	56	16
37th	499	57	38
38th	429	60	53
43rd	405	46	45
71st	195	30	16

22 - 28 November 1779			
17th LD	156		
22nd	403	60	70
23rd	468	63	62
33rd	493	58	28
37th	480	58	40
38th	436	63	59
71st	110	30	17

29 November - 5 December 1779			
17th LD	159	46	34
22nd	399	56	68
23rd	473	63	62
33rd	483	62	28
37th	481	58	40
38th	432	61	59
71st	204	32	19

12 - 19 December 1779			
17th LD	391	66	46
22nd	386	56	64
23rd	463	62	62
33rd	475	62	28
37th	474	54	36
38th	422	63	60
71st	201	35	22

20 - 26 December 1779			
	Men	Women	Children
17th LD	403	66	42
22nd	416	57	62
37th	483	32	36
38th	431	65	62

27 December 1779 - 2 January 1780			
17th LD	334	70	44
22nd	407	60	77
38th	430	65	62

6 - 12 March 1780			
17th LD	384	72	52
22nd	407	67	74
38th	422	80	77

27 March - 2 April 1780			
17th LD	384	72	52
22nd	402	73	85
38th	438	79	74

3 - 9 April 1780			
17th LD	373	78	52
38th	447	79	74

10 - 16 April 1780			
17th LD	377	77	52
38th	450	80	76

25th September 1780			
Guards	639	149	123
17th LD	88	37	42
22nd	392	66	74
37th	436	58	40
38th	427	67	65
42d	694	89	51
43d	337	76	59

Data from eleven British Army victualling returns for army personnel in Long Island, in the Frederick MacKenzie papers, William L. Clements Library. Only a few of the regiments and corps on each return are presented, and those only when the majority of the regiment was represented on the return. In cases where a regiment was divided among several posts represented in the returns, the figures given are totals of all contingents. These victualling returns do not necessarily represent the total strength in America of each of the regiments. Regiments which appear on only some returns were not posted on Long Island for the entire period represented.

Figure 1

about all regiments by looking at the situation of a few; if we want to know about a particular regiment, then we must find data for that regiment.

The numbers in Figure 1 are from victualling returns, and so include only women and children who were being fed by the army. Ratios of women to men ranged from 1 to 6 through 1 to

10, with 1 to 8 being more or less typical. There are usually about the same number of children as women, although, again, there is a great deal of variation. Determining numbers per company is more difficult, since these returns do not necessarily include all ten companies of the regiments. One or both of the flank companies for most of these regiments were serving with composite battalions during this time period, and their people were returned with those battalions. Therefore, most of these returns are for eight companies; typically we see about 7 women per company.

The returns used to obtain the data in Figure 1 include some characteristics which may be typical for an army in a long-term garrison. The returns were for Long Island, and were subdivided according to towns or localities on the island. In many cases, elements of a regiment were posted in several different places; for the regiments listed in Figure 1, we have added up all of the men, women and children given for each regiment, regardless of how they were distributed (since our purpose here is only to examine numbers, not dispositions). There are also cases where a few women and children of a regiment were in a location with no men of that regiment, and vice versa. This is probably simply an effect of regiments being moved about within a relatively small area; if women and children found good quarters in a town, they may have preferred to stay rather than move, since the rest of their regiment was only moving a few miles away.

Numbers of women in each company could vary as much as those in each regiment. The data presented in Figure 2 is from a set of returns for the First Battalion of Grenadiers. This battalion was composed of the Grenadier companies of several regiments; at the time of these returns, early 1778, the battalion was with the army in Philadelphia, and was composed of fifteen companies. The ratios of women to men ranged from 1 to 3 through 1 to 9. There were usually about half the number of children as women, but these ratios varied considerably also. Once again, we find that there is such variation that statistical reduction of the data would not produce useful information, but instead would tend to disguise the great range of situations in the different companies.

"A Return of Bread baked by Mr. Powel for the first Battalion of Grenadiers..." (Four weekly returns kept in Philadelphia, 27 February to 26 March inclusive. A.O. 13/87 p. 72-74, PRO).

Regiment	Officers	Serjeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total Men	Women	Children
4th	4	3	4	49	60	11	12
5th	4	3	3	48	58	17	12
7th	2	2	3	39	46	9	3
10th	-	-	-	52	52	6	6
17th	3	3	3	41	50	10	4
22nd	3	3	3	27	36	6	3
23rd	3	3	2	51	59	10	6
27th	3	3	4	44	54	6	2
28th	3	2	3	40	48	12	5
33rd	4	2	1	43	50	8	5
35th	2	2	3	39	46	9	3
37th	3	3	2	39	47	8	2

The 15th and 40th have no data given for women and children; the 38th appears on the returns with no data.

Figure 2

It appears that the data in Figure 2 includes women and children of officers as well as rank and file. It is not clear that this is true of the data in Table 1. This may account for the typically greater proportion of women and children in the Grenadier companies (Figure 2) than in the whole regiments (Figure 1).

These numbers show us that, typically, between one eighth and one quarter of the people considered a part of a regiment were women and children. This may strike us as a large proportion, but for the time period it was normal. A document prepared for the planning of campaigns in America indicates that an army of 30,000 men could expect to have the "number of attendants, women and children generally equal to the number of troops."[2]

The returns that we have examined represent only women and children who were being provided for by the regiments. There may well have been others who were truly "following the camp," but not affiliated with the army in any official capacity. We can do little more than speculate about the numbers of such women and children. Later on in this series we will give some general insight into the roles and lives of these "unaffiliated" followers of the army, but specifics must be the subject of other writings.

When a regiment left England for America, the embarkation orders that it was given included the number of women allowed to accompany it on the transports. The following is a typical example, from February of 1776:

The 42d Regiment of Highlanders consists of 1168 Men, Officers included, 80 Women & 16 Servants allowed..."[3]

This regiment consisted of two battalions, or twenty companies, and so the above orders provide for 4 women for each company, or about one for every thirteen men.

A related case was that of the 6th Regiment of Foot, which was on service in St. Vincents in the Caribbean in early 1776 when ordered to America:

The Sixth Regiment will consist of 677 Men, Officers included; 60 Women & 12 Servants are to be allowed..."[4]

This regiment, having a more typical 10 companies, was allowed six women to each company for this embarkation, or about one woman for every ten men.

The above examples show that there was not a hard and fast number of women allowed to accompany a regiment on foreign serve; the number could vary, and can only be determined for certain by finding the orders given to each specific regiment. More importantly, it is not necessarily true that the orders were followed. In at least one case, it is clear that they were not. The following extracts are from a War Office letter dated March 22, 1776, and refers to a regiment leaving England for Canada:

By the Embarkation Return dated the 6th. instant, it appears that the 31st Regiment has embarked 92 Private short of the Allowance... The regiment is now weaker than when it was ordered to be in readiness for foreign Service, tho' there has been time to recruit since that notice.

One hundred & five Women have been allowed to embark, tho' only Sixty are permitted by His Majesty's Order. There are also 47 Children; The great number of Soldiers Wives & Children already in America are very inconvenient to the Regiments there, and more than the Number permitted by the Regulation must be a burthen on every Corps that goes thither.[5]

In this case, no only did more women and children embark than were allowed, but also fewer than the prescribed number of soldiers, changing the expected proportionality considerably.

A related type of embarkation occurred when new recruits embarked to join a regiment already in America. Such recruits were usually sent to America in groups of about a company, or 50 to 60 men, for each regiment.[6] When such a parcel of German recruits embarked to join the 60th Regiment of Foot in early 1777, four soldiers' wives accompanied 53 noncommissioned officers and private men, for a ratio of about one woman for every twelve men.[7]

The above examples indicate that the number of women allowed to accompany a regiment when it embarked on foreign service was governed by specific orders, but that these orders

could vary, and may not always have been enforced. We see from the data presented in Figures 1 and 2 that the number of women and children with the regiments generally exceeded that allowed in the orders. In explaining the discrepancies (assuming that the orders were at least sometimes enforced), we must remember that the orders concern transportation, and do not address the number of women allowed to be with regiments after arrival at their destination.

In some cases, women secured their own passage to America. Evidence of this exists in a letter to General Washington in October of 1775, describing the situation of two women who were on board a captured British ship:

> Watertown [MA] October 4th 1775
>
> In the Brigantine Dolphin Lately carried into Gloucester, the two Women accompanying this were Passengers. There names are Margaret Roberts & Mary Knap - They say they have Husbands belonging to the 59th Regt of Genl Gage's Army - And are desirous of seeing them - I am therefore directed by the Board, to recommend to your Exy to permit them and 2 Children, to pass your Lines, in order to their proceeding into Boston.[8]

Also, some soldiers certainly married during their time on service. Town and church records provide some examples. An extreme case is described by a German officer in New York; he encountered a Serjeant of the 38th Regiment of Foot who boasted about having married seventeen times since his arrival in America.[9] Without further information, we cannot assert the accuracy of the Serjeant's claims, nor can we say whether such deviant behavior was common. Later in this article we will see advice given to officers to prevent this kind of occurrence.

It is important to note that not all soldiers' wives chose to accompany their husbands to America. There is clear evidence that some wives remained in England, never attempting to journey to America. At least one letter exists from a private soldier, Thomas Plumb of the 22nd Regiment of Foot, refering to his wife and family in England.[10]

Once a regiment arrived in America, it spent time either in quarters in towns, or in encampments; the encampments were either in or outside of towns, if the regiment was in garrison, or wherever the lay of the land was most suitable, if the regiment was on campaign. When a regiment went into an encampment or on campaign, orders were again given regulating the number of women that could accompany it. The numbers given in orders for campaigning are usually lower than the total number of women belonging to a given regiment. We can assume, then, that only a portion of the women went into the field with the regiments, while the rest remained in the garrisons.

The number of women per regiment allowed on campaign was given by the local army commander. When British troops occupied Charlestown Neck after the battle of Bunker Hill, for example, four women per company were allowed in the camps; an additional two women per regiment were ordered to the general hospital.[11] Shortly after that, more specific orders were given that four women per company, but no children, were allowed in the camps.[12] When the army evacuated Boston in May of 1776, six women per company were allowed to embark with each regiment; it is not clear how additional women were expected to make their way out of the city.[13] When General John Burgoyne's ill-fated army left Canada in the summer of 1777, Burgoyne allowed only three women per company on the campaign.[14]

The numbers of women allowed to accompany a regiment on campaign are usually found in orderly books, and are sometimes mistaken for the total number of women that were members of a regiment. In fact, it is clear that regimental women and children continued to be provided for on the regimental accounts even if they did not accompany their regiments into the field. The Long Island victualling returns cited in Figure 1 provide two excellent examples in the cases of the 23rd and 33rd Regiments. Both regiments departed Long Island in late December of 1779 as part of General Sir Henry Clinton's expedition to Charlestown, South Carolina. On the return for December 12th through 19th, we find that the 23rd Regiment victualled 463 men, 62 women, and 62 children; the 33rd victualled 475 men, 62 women, and 28 children. At the time of the following return,

December 20th through 26th, these regiments had embarked for Charlestown, but the 23rd still victualled 5 women and 8 children, and the 33rd victualled 10 men, 8 women, and no children. These numbers decrease in subsequent returns; in all likelihood some of the women and children left Long Island for the city of New York; while it is possible that some eventually found their own passage to Charlestown, this is unlikely to have occurred until after the city was taken by the British some months later.

The number of women on campaign may of course have varied from the orders, just as the number of women embarked varied. Whether or not regimental women accompanied the army without orders probably depended on the specific nature of the campaign, and we have no data from which to attempt to deduce numbers beyond the actual orders. It is certainly true that a wide assortment of people followed armies of the period, this article is concerned strictly with regimental women.

The above information gives a fairly orderly picture and leads us to believe that, although there was no set number of women and children allowed for a regiment, a general proportionality of women and children to men was to be expected. We find, however, that in at least some cases trained military men were surprised at what they encountered. When General Richard Montgomery wrote about capturing the 7th Regiment of Foot at St. John's in September of 1775, he noted that, "their number of women and quantity of baggage is astonishing."[15] We are concerned specifically with regimental women; it is possible that General Montgomery observed other civilians, both men and women, who followed the army.

Married to a Soldier We have referred to regimental women strictly as wives of soldiers. This is because there is no reason to believe that the women of a regiment were anything but wives of soldiers in that regiment. Unfortunately, it is as difficult to prove that all of these women were married as it would be to prove that a significant number were not. There is, however, considerable evidence to support the view that any woman who was considered a part of a regiment was in fact married to a man in that regiment.

Records of General Courts Martial conducted by the British Army in America contain many testimonies of women, as well as cases where women were put on trial, and numerous other references to women who were involved with the army in one way or another.[16] Among these women are many who belonged to regiments. In all of those cases examined so far, women who belonged to a regiment are clearly stated as being wives of soldiers of the regiment. More extensive research into this collection of court records may reveal otherwise, but so far all of the evidence supports the conclusion that regimental women were army wives.

No official returns are known to exist which list the women of a regiment by name, but there is some material in the Pennsylvania Archives which provides some information on this level of detail.[17] Returns of members of the 26th Regiment of Foot captured in 1775 at various locations along the Canadian border include women of the regiment. The 247 men are listed by company (although each company is erroneously called a regiment in the returns); 66 women are listed together at the end of the returns. Although the women are not correlated with their husbands, all but three of the womens' surnames match surnames of soldiers on the returns. This is not perfect evidence by any means, since this correlation of surnames does not mean that a given soldier and woman were married; nor do we know whether the returns represent all of the men or women of the regiment. The material is interesting nonetheless, because it is the most complete list of regimental women known at this time.

This return of women prisoners of the 26th regiment list the number of children belonging to each of the women, data which also rare and enlightening. Of the 66 women in the return, 15 had no children, 12 had one children, 19 had two, 12 had three, 3 had four, and 5 had five children, for a total of 123 children. It is interesting to compare these numbers with those presented in Figure 1; it is possible that the 26th Regiment had such a large proportion of women and children because it had been on service in

America since before the war began.

In the same collection of documents are returns of prisoners of a single company, the Colonel's Company of the 7th Regiment of Foot, taken at various places in Canada.[18] The prisoners include 5 non-commissioned officers, 23 private men, 10 women and 18 children. Again, it is not clear whether this represents a complete company which was under strength, or just a part of the company. All of the women are referred to as "Mrs.", and all can be correlated to men of the company. Two of the women had four children each, two had three, one had two, and two had one child; the remaining three women were childless. It is very interesting to note that three of the women - the ones with no children - are described as having married after their husbands were captured. The circumstances of these marriages are not known. It is possible that these women were Americans who met the captured soldiers, that they were followers of the army who married in order to remain with the army, even as prisoners, or that they had already intended to marry their soldiers before their capture, and did not let the exigencies of war change their plans.

Restrictions on Marriage Since a soldier's marital status could have an effect on his ability to serve, and since his wife could become a part of the regiment, it follows that the soldier's commanders would have some say over whether or not he should be allowed to marry. While we do not find any evidence that a soldier could be forbidden to marry, we do find statements such as the following:

The Commanding Officers of companies should be desired to prevent, as much as possible, the inconveniencies and ill consequences produced, by having too many soldiers married; for their wives are in general so abandoned, as frequently occasion quarrels, drunkenness, diseases, and desertions; they involve their husbands in debt; and too oft are the ruin and destruction of a soldier: it is therefore recommended, that the Non-commissioned Officers avoid entering into such engagements, without consulting their Commanding Officer; and that they use their utmost endeavours with the private men to prevent all such marriages as they think are detrimental to his Majesty's service.[19]

This passage sheds light on some of the problems that could be introduced by imprudent marriages. Since these types of problems would ultimately affect the regiment, the officers had a responsibility to attempt to influence their soldiers' marital choices. Cuthbertson devoted a section of his well-known work to the subject, which we reproduce here in its entirety:

CHAP. XXV

Of the Marriage of Non-commission-officers, and Soldiers, and the Methods for preventing improper ones as much as possible.

ART. I.

Officers being a sort of guardians to the Men in their respective Companies, should use every means that prudence can suggest, to prevent the distress and ruin which so often attends their contracting marriages with women, in every respect unfit for them.

II.

The principal method by which they can hope to guard against so great an evil, is to fix a standing order, for no Non-commission-officer, Drummer, or private man to marry without the consent of the Officer commanding the Company he belongs to, which he should not grant on any account, until he has first had a strict enquiry made into the morals of the Woman, for whom the Soldier proposes, and whether she is sufficiently known to be industrious, and able to earn her bread: if these circumstances appear favourable, it will be right to give him leave, as honest, laborious Women are rather useful in a Company.

III.

On the contrary, if he finds the woman's character infamous, and that she is notorious, for never having been accustomed to honest industry (which too often is the case of those on whom the Soldiers fix their affections) he should by no means give the least encouragement to a connection, which must, in a short time, inevitably destroy the ease and happiness of the Soldier, to whom he should represent these matters in the plainest terms, and recommend it strongly to him, not to think of persevering in a measure, which undoubtedly must hurt him in the

esteem of his Officers, besides many other unsurmountable inconveniences: if after such an admonition he is imprudent enough to marry, in justice he deserves a punishment for his folly and disobedience.

IV.

It will also be another expedient towards preventing improper marriages, if, upon the arrival of a Company in a Town, application was made to the Minister of the Parish, to request he would not publish any Soldier's intended marriage in his Church, without first receiving a certificate from the Officer commanding the Company of its being agreeable to him: this is a piece of civility, few clergymen it is presumed, could reasonably object to, as an Officer can surely have no other motive for anxiety in such a case, but merely the welfare of the Soldier, of which he must incontestably be allowed a cooler judge than either of the parties desiring to be married, being uninfluenced by passions of any sort.

V.

A Soldier marrying with proper consent should be indulged, as far as can be in the power of Officers to extend their favour, whilst his behaviour and that of his Wife deserves it; but he who, contrary to all advice and order, will engage in a dishonourable connection, exclusive of any punishment he may receive for such contempt and insolence, should as much as possible be discouraged, by obliging him not only to mess, but lie in the quarters of the Company he belongs to, at the same time that his wife, is prevented from partaking of any advantage either from his Pay or Quarters: this severity of course must soon expell her from the Regiment, and be the certain means, of making other Soldiers cautious how they attempt such acts of disobedience.[20]

Unfortunately, we have yet to discover information which tells us the extent to which these directions were followed. We have seen that some wives did not accompany their husbands on service, so the regimental returns do not tell us the total number of men who were married.

Widows and Orphans I have heard it said (by a Brigade member, speaking to a crowd of spectators) that a woman's only attachment to the army was by being married to a soldier, and that if her husband died, she immediately lost any association with the army - that unless she remarried into the army, she would be stranded wherever she happened to be. There is ample evidence to illustrate that this was not true. Widows and their children, as well as orphans, were provided with passage back to England, as indicated by the following passage:

His Majesty is also pleased to direct that the expence of the passage and victualling the widows and orphans of NCO and private men to Great Britain or Ireland will be defrayed by the paymaster of the corps to which the deceased did belong, which expence will be allowed in the next contingent bill of the regt.[21]

A return drawn up in August of 1775 lists 54 women and children of various regiments sent home from Boston.[22] The greatest part of these women belonged to regiments which suffered heavy casualties at the battle of Bunker Hill, which persuades us that they were widows.

It is also clear that, until they were able to make their way home, women who lost their husbands were provided for. Thomas Simes, one of the popular military writers of the period, had this to say:

When any casualties happen in a company, the Paymaster-serjeant must take care to preserve the regimentals, that the succeeding recruit may be clothed in like manner with his brother soldier, provided the soldier had not worn them 1 year; if he had, his wife or child should have them.[23]

This tells us something of the possible clothing of an army widow. That this kind of consideration was given is illustrated by a general order given on June 5, 1776, which ordered regimental quarter masters to draw shoes and stockings from army stores for widowed women and their children.[24] In some cases, widows fared even better than the basic provision of subsistence and passage home. Regimental Colonels could provide additional accommodation if they wished, as did the Colonel of the 5th Regiment of Foot:

After the fatal attack on Bunker's Hill in America, Earl Percy gave to the widow of every soldier in his regiment who fell in the battle, an immediate benefaction of seven dollars; he paid their passage home,

and ordered five guineas to be given to each of them on their landing in Britain."[25]

Other efforts were made to provide for those who had lost their husbands and fathers. Captain John Peebles of the 42nd Regiment of Foot describes a playhouse which was opened in Philadelphia during the time the British Army was in that city. One or two performances were given each week, for the benefit of widows and orphans of soldiers. "The Performers are Gentl[m] of the Army & Navy & some kept Mistresses. - the Gentlle[m] do their parts pretty well, but the Ladies are rather defficient."[26]

We also find evidence of the continued attachment of soldiers' widows to the army in an advertisement in the New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury of July 11, 1781. Margaret Balandine, "a native of Edinbugh, North Britain, and a widow of the 76th Regt.," had "run away from the service," and so became the subject of the same kind of advertising typically devoted to deserting soldiers.

[To be Continued...]

Notes

1. A few details are given in Frey, Sylvia R., The British Soldier in America, Austin, TX, 1981; this work is extremely well referenced, but gives only minor treatment to the subject of soldiers' wives.
The most extensive single work that we have found is Kopperman, Paul E., "The British High Command and Soldiers' Wives in America, 1755 - 1783," Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research, V60 (1982), p. 14-34.

2. "Estimate of Horses, Waggons, and Wheel Carriages, Artillery, &c. necessary for an Army of 30,000 men to take the field and act with vigor." Almon's Remembrancer, Vol. 2 p. 310.

3. Letter, Germain to the Admiralty, February 21, 1776. W. B. Clark and W. J. Morgan, eds., Naval Documents of the American Revolution, Vol. 4. Washington, D.C., 1964 -, p. 295 (hereafter cited as Naval Documents).

4. Letter, George Jackson to Vice Admiral Shuldham, dated Boston, March 16, 1776, transcribed in Naval Documents, Vol. 4, p. 977.

5. W. O. 4/96, Public Record Office, London (hereafter cited as PRO), p. 364-365.

6. See for example, pay lists of the 22nd Regiment of Foot, which present the dates when recruits joined the regiment. It bears noting that when recruits joined the regiment, they were typically distributed evenly among the eight battalion companies, and experienced men were transferred among companies so that all eight were at about the same strength. W. O. 12/3872, PRO.

7. Letter, William Knox to Philip Stephens, March 26, 1777. Naval Documents, Vol. 8.

8. Letter, Massachusetts Council to George Washington. Massachusetts Archives, Vol. 164 p. 122, reprinted in Naval Documents, Vol. 2.

9. "Journal of Lieutenant John Charles Philip von Krafft, of the Regiment von Bose, 1776 - 1784." New York Historical Society Collections, Vol. 15, 1882, p. 139.

10. Letter, Private Thomas Plumb to his brother, February 2, 1777. HCA 30,272, PRO.

11. Benjamin Franklin Stevens, ed., General Sir William Howe's Orderly Book at Charleson, Boston and Halifax... London, 1890. Orders for June 20, 1775.

12. Ibid. Orders for June 22, 1775.

13. Ibid. Orders for May 2, 1775.

14. Journal of Captain G. Pausch, Chief of the Hanau Artillery During the Burgoyne Campaign. William L. Stone, trans., Albany, 1886.

15. Almon, J. The Remembrancer or Impartial Repository of Public Events, Vol. 1. London, 1775, p. 122.

16. Judge Advocate Papers, W. O. 71/80 - 97, PRO.

17. John B. Linn and William H. Egle, ed. Pennsylvania Archives, 2nd Series, Vol. 1, p. 411 - 419.

18. Ibid., p. 419 - 420.

19. Simes, Thomas. A Military Guide for Young Officers, London, 1781, p. 164.

20. Cuthbertson, Bennet. A System for the Compleat Interior Management and Economy of a Battalion of Infantry. Dublin, 1768, p. 156 - 158.

21. Orderly Book of General Allan MacLean, 1776-1784. Burton Historical Library, Detroit. Entry for May 9, 1777. The entry for this date includes extensive discussion of allowances for officers maimed on service, and for wives and children of officers killed on service. The allowances for widows and orphans of officers were as follows:
"When any officer shall be killed in action, his widow and orphan children (if he have any) shall be allowed as follows.
"To the widow a full years pay, according to her husbands regimental commission. To each child under age and unmarried one third of what is allowed the widow, posthumous children to be included.
"All persons dying of their wounds within six months after battle, shall be deemed slain in action.
"The C. O. of the corps in which the slain officer served, shall on demand, give a certificate of his being killed in action, to his surviving widow, and orphan respectively, specifying the time when, and the place where the said accident happened; a duplicate of which certificate shall likewise be transmitted with the next monthly return."

22. "Passes Granted to Women and Children, sent on Board the ship Charming Nancy, Boston, 19th August 1775." Thomas Gage Mss., Vol. 134 (Reel 65), William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

23. Simes, ibid, p. 201.

24. Orderly book, Marine garrison at Halifax, June - August, 1776. New York Public Library mss.

25. The Percy Anecdotes, Vol. 2. New York, 1832, p. 53. It bears noting that 13 women and children of the 5th Foot were listed on the document cited in Note 22, more than any other single regiment.

26. Journal of Captain John Peebles, 42d Foot, undated entry made in January 1778. Cunningham of Thortoun Papers, Scotish Record Office, Edinburgh.

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The Women of the British Army:
A General Overview
Part 2 - Sober, Industrious Women

Don N. Hagist
22nd Regiment of Foot

For a soldier to be allowed to marry, it was expected that his future wife would be someone who could "earn her bread."[1] This was sensible for the woman, who could not be expected to subsist on her husband's meager pay and the half-ration allotted by the crown, especially if children were expected. It was also sensible for the army, to avoid the possibility of the soldier being distracted from his duty either by indebtedness or by his spouse's deviant behavior, both of which often resulted from idleness.

Many employment options were open to a soldier's wife. Some of the more readily documented occupations are presented below, and discussed in terms of the information that we find in period military manuals, orderly books, and other documents.

Women as Sutlers An essential adjunct to the military of our period was the sutler. We are all familiar with this term, but it may improve our understanding to provide some definitions. Notice the spelling of the word, as opposed to the verb, *to suttle*; the pronunciations differ accordingly.

Sutler. *n.f.* [*soeteler*, Dutch; *sudler*, German.] A man that sells provisions and liquour in a camp.[2]

SUTLER, in *war*, one who follows the army, and furnishes provisions for the troops. They pitch their tents, or build their huts, in the rear of each regiment, and about head quarters.[3]

The popular military writers of the day tell us that women were allowed to employ themselves in this role. Unfortunately, we are not given the details of how this occupation was sustained, that is, how the sutlers were to procure their wares, or the booths or tents used to sell them. What is clear is that they were an integral part of the encampment[4] and of the military organization, and as such were subject to regulation.

No non-commissioned officer's or soldier's wife is to suttle or sell liquors without permission; and leave will be granted to such as are particularly recommended by commanding officers of companies, and who will pay due attention to all orders concerning them.

That no sutler offer to harbour any body in the line of the regiment without the Major's leave.

No more than one grand sutler and five petty ones will be allowed; and any sutler who refuses to change the men's money, or ask reward, shall be drummed out of the camp.[5]

We see from this that it was considered wise to limit the number of sutlers (remember that the military texts usually contain recommendations, not regulations; regulations were usually established locally and could vary), and control their activities by the granting of permission. Permits would only be granted to women who had shown that they would follow orders. Further, the sutler was required to operate a sound business, and not to "harbour" soldiers.

Orderly books show us not only that these recommendations were put into use in America, but that abuses occurred as well. In Halifax during the Summer of 1776, orders were given that women suttling in the barracks without leave were to be turned out of the barracks and their rations stopped.[6] Orders given in Boston during 1775 give a clear picture of the army's attempts to regulate the consumption of liquor, the soldiers' efforts to continue to drink, and the womens' efforts to ply their trade:

Altho' Canteens have been allowed the several Regiments for the convenience of the soldiers, there are notwithstanding still complaints of soldiers wives keeping dram shops in the different parts of the town, where the men get intoxicated in a very extraordinary manner, and two soldiers have been killed (with the

poisonous liquors they sell) in one night.

The Commanding officers will make enquirey amongst their Regiments, and give in a return of such women as hire rooms in the town to sell drams, where they live, and from whom they hire the rooms.[7]

When Soldiers are found frequenting houses occupied by soldiers wives who sell liquor without license, from whence the greatest irregularities proceed, and the liquor sold in such houses proves fatal to many soldiers, the commanding officers will direct such persons to be carried before a Majestrate with proper witnesses who will order them to be fined, and proceeded against in other respects according to law.[8]

All persons belonging to, or followers of the Army, are forbid to sell spiritous liquors, excepting at the Regimental Canteens, one and only one of them is to be allowed for each Regiment subject to the regulation of the Officer Commanding it; and as the appointment of the Sutler depends upon the Commanding Officer of the Corps, it is expected that henceforward they will be answerable for the sobriety of the Soldiers under their Command, all other sources for Spiritous liquors but that of the Canteen, being effectually stopped up...[9]

The Commanding Officers of Corps not to allow their Sutlers to sell liquors to Soldiers, or any other persons who do not belong to their respective Corps; Upon a conviction of a disobedience of this order, the liquors will be destroyed, and the delinquent not to have leave to sell any in future.

Women belonging to the Army convicted of selling Spiritous liquors, will be confined in the Provosts till there is an opportunity of sending them from hence.[10]

The Commanding Officers of Corps to Suppress all Dram Shops in their Respective Districts that are not Licensed by Brig.-Gen. Robertson.[11]

In order to maintain sobriety and safety, the army established regimental canteens. To sell liquor more freely, soldiers' wives rented rooms and opened shops. When the shops were ordered closed, it appears that women attempted to expand the canteens. Then it was asserted that only one canteen was allowed, and only one sutler allowed to operate it (but it is not stated whether the sutler could employ others). Presumably the regimental canteens were regulated to guard against drinking to excess, because the soldiers found that they could drink more by visiting more than one canteen. To prevent this, it was required that each canteen serve only its own regiment, with dire consequences for the sutler who failed to obey. Finally, all dram shops were required to be licensed, regardless of who ran them.

We can speculate that women who sold liquor illegally procured the cheapest product available, or perhaps made it themselves; this would explain the concern about its potentially dire effect on the health of soldiers.

The situation appears to have been similar in other garrisons. Soon after the British occupied Rhode Island, permission was given for women to keep shops as long as they did not sell liquor:

No Soldier's wife is upon any account to keep a shop, without permission in writing signed by the Commandant, or Deputy Commandant of the Town, for which they must be recommended by the Officer Commanding the Corps to which they belong. The General is concerned that no recommendation will be given to any women without a certainty that she will not make a bad use of it, by selling spiritous Liquors.[12]

We can assume that the women shopkeepers did not abide strictly to this order, since their privilege was revoked a year later:

Whereas the great Drunkenness that prevails among the Soldiers, proceeds from the Soldiers wives being allowed to keep little Shops out of the districts of their Regiments, the Commanding Officers will give directions that they are not permitted to live out of the quarters of the Regiment they belong to.[13]

We assume that the selling of liquor was restricted to regimental canteens, as it was in Boston. When private soldier Bartholomew Gilmore of the 22nd Regiment of Foot was court martialed in July of 1779, it was mentioned during the testimony that he and several comrades from his regiment had been drinking in the canteen of the Regiment von Ditfurth, one of the German regiments in the Rhode Island garrison.[14] Three other soldiers of the 22nd, Murtoch Laughlan,

Charles Neal and Robert Pearce, were tried by a Court Martial for stealing 12 sheep. McDonald testified that after the sheep were stolen and divided up among 6 men involved, "one had been given, by joint consent to the Wife of Joseph Lovel, for some Rum."[15] It is not stated whether Mrs. Lovel was in fact a licensed sutler.

The problems caused by the sale of liquor are obvious - not only in terms of sobriety, but from soldiers plundering in order to pay their drinking debts. Similar problems could be caused by the suttling of any goods, as illustrated by the following extract:

There being great Reason to suppose, that Soldiers are encouraged to plunder Fields and Gardens, by Soldiers Wives, and other small Retailers, purchasing from the Vegetables so stolen...[16]

In response to this problem, sellers were required to be able to account for the acquisition of their wares, or they would be held by the provost. This account also brings up the subject of plundering, which will be covered in a later part of this series.

In some cases, the sutler enjoyed a privilege which was typically not allowed to women, and often not even allowed to junior officers:

No follower of the Army can be allowed a Horse Except the Sutler of Each Regiment.[17]

Whether a horse was allowed would of course depend on the particular circumstances of the army at the time; the allowance of horses for each regiment varied on different campaigns depending on the availability of both horses and forage.

None of the orders above pertain to armies on campaign. We cannot say whether these women sutlers did, or were allowed to, ply their trade outside of garrisons and regular encampments. An order given to the 1st Battalion of Light Infantry on campaign in New Jersey leads us to believe that sellers of liquor, at least, were not welcome:

any Woman detected in Bringing Rum into Camp is immediately to be sent to Provost.[18]

Women as Nurses One of the more obvious services that army wives might perform is that of nurse. This subject is so well covered by military writers of the period, that we need only look at their works to get a detailed picture of the nurse's duties.

An experienced, careful woman must be constantly employed to attend in the Regimental-hospital, as a Nurse, whose wages should be paid, either by the Surgeon when he has an + allowance for it, or from the savings of the sick Men's Pay; when neither of these will answer, it must be a charge in the Non-effective account: an orderly Man, or more if necessary, should be appointed daily from the Companies, in turn, to assist in the attendance of the sick.

+ An allowance is made to the Surgeon of each Regiment, on the Irish establishment of thirteen shillings and three-pence three farthings *per* month for a Nurse.[19]

Clearly, a nurse could earn a decent wage if paid directly by the regimental surgeon - slightly more per month, in fact, than a private soldier's base pay.

The Serjeant attending the infirmary must keep an exact account of the pay of each ward; see it properly expended by the nurse, according to the Doctor's directions; give receipts for coals, candles, and sheeting, and close the account every half week...

No sick soldier can have his wife employed as one of the nurses; and if any of the nurses husbands are taken ill, such nurse must be dismissed, or her pay discontinued till the recovery of her husband; but married men of good character, who live near the infirmary, and who have careful wives, if they are taken ill, may be allowed to remain in their lodgings, at the discretion of the Surgeon.[20]

You [the regimental Surgeon] are to appoint a head nurse (and the others to be under her) and the greatest attention must be paid that she is of exceeding good character, sober, healthy, and experienced in her duty, and in every other respect qualified for the employment.[21]

You [the regimental Surgeon's Mate] are to visit the sick twice a-day, and, if necessity demands it, oftener, to see that the head nurse and nurses of the infirmary keep their wards clean; that they behave

themselves soberly and orderly, and give all necessary attention to their patients; that their food is good and properly dressed, their pots, kettles, &c. free from copperas, lest they endanger the healths of the sick; you are to see that the food and medicines ordered consist of such only as were directed by the surgeon, or in his absence by you.

If any nurse should be found out of not having paid all due attendance to their patients and wards, and of keeping them as neat and clean as the nature of the distempers admit of; to give them their diet regularly; to be particularly careful to see them take their medicines as ordered them; to have their chamber-pots and close-stools early out of their wards, emptied and well washed before brought back again; or who shall connive at, or be present at any faults or irregularities, which any of their patients may have committed; or if they do not maintain good order and regularity throughout the infirmary; it is your duty to report the same to the surgeon, that they may be dealt with accordingly.[22]

Notice the emphasis on character and sobriety, always requirements of a woman who is to hold a job with the army.

The above extracts pertain to regimental hospitals, for which we would expect only one or a few nurses; on service in America, however, there were additional nursing opportunities in the general hospitals of the various garrisons. Orderly books are replete with entries such as the following:

A Discreet active Woman from each corps to be ordered to attend the sick of their respective Corps in the General hospital, where they are to be sent to morrow morning at six o'Clock, to prepare the rooms for the reception of the sick.[23]

It is again recommended to send a good nurse from each Regiment with the men, such as are encumbered with children, are by no means proper for that duty.[24]

Twenty Women from the 1st., 3d. and 4th. Brigades, and 71st, to be sent to Horne's Hook to-morrow morning at 8 o'Clock, to be Employed in the Hospitals.[25]

The 43d and 63d Regiments are immediately to send

Lessons from the Courts:
Requiem for a Nurse

Strength returns often give the number of women who were part of a regiment. Examining groups of returns allows us to do some statistics, make generalities, and understand some things about how women fit in with the rest of the army. But they are just numbers.

When numbers of soldiers change, we can often correlate the changes to recruiting efforts, to illness, or to combat. Sometimes we can find the names of the soldiers who were new, who deserted, who died. Rarely are we so well informed about the women.

The proceedings of a British Court Martial give some definition of one of the hundreds of British army wives serving in America. On trial was John Lindon, a private soldier in the 22nd Regiment of Foot. The various testimonies given at the trial tell a story that sounds more like something from a prime time news program than a vignette from the American Revolution.

When her regiment departed Rhode Island for New York in late 1779, Mrs. Lindon (whose first name is not given) did not sail on the same ship with her husband; he claimed that she also took all of his necessaries. After this, she refused to live with her husband.

In August of 1780, Lindon went to the hospital where his wife was working. Grace Chapman, another nurse, testified,

that much discourse pass'd between the Prisoner and his Wife, which she the Deponent did not attend to- that she heard the Prisoner desire his Wife not to be in a Passion, that he said he only wanted his right, that the deceas'd ask'd What was his right- He answer'd "herself was"- She then reply'd- "She would

two Nurses each to the General Hospital.[26]

Two Nurses from each British Regiment in the Country to be sent to the General Hospital immediately[27]

Such Corps as have not already sent a Woman as a Nurse to attend their Sick in Town are to order one there immediately.[28]

Similar orders, with a bit more emphasis, were given after major engagements. We find examples given after Bunker Hill:

The Regiments are to oblige two Women of each Corps to attend at the hospital immediately; the wounded being in the greatest want of assistance.[29]

The General requests the officers Commanding Corps will order sober careful women, to be sent to the General hospital, to take care of their wounded men, who are greatly suffering for want of proper attendance.

Two more women from each Corps to be sent as soon as possible to the General hospital.[30]

After Brandywine:

Four Women from each Brigade British to be sent to the General Hospital to attend the Wounded; Surgeons of the Hospital will dispose of them.[31]

After Guilford Courthouse:

All the Women of the army Except one a Compy to be Immediately sent after the Wounded men of the Army.[32]

From this assortment of orders, we find that the numbers of nurses required varied with the need; as we would expect, on campaign and soon after major engagements, more nurses were needed. Notice that regiments or brigades were required to provide a number of nurses; either qualifications were not important, or it was typical that a number of qualified women were available. We have found no information, other than that published in popular military guides, to indicate how the nurses were selected from among the wives of the regiment. It is evident,

never live with him or any one else" that the Prisoner said- "if she would not live with him she should not live with any one else"- that she the Deponent turn'd her head towards the Window; thinking the Prisoner was gone out of the Room

Donald Cameron, soldier of the 74th Regiment, did not turn away after Mrs. Lindon's remark:

the Prisoner and his Wife were disputing and she desir'd him to go away and not make a Disturbance in the Hospital- He answer'd, he would not go 'till he had his right- She ask'd him, What his right was- He answer'd herself- She then made Answer, She never would go with him, the Prisoner then said if you had told me so when I first came in, I should have gone away and said no more, for that was all I wanted- He the Deponent was at this time sitting on the Bed. He observ'd the Prisoner take up his Firelock and face towards the Door, and supposes, He at that time cock'd his Firelock- He then said if you do not live with me, you shall not live with any one else, and then turn'd round and fir'd his Piece- that the Woman immediately fell and to the best of his the Deponent's recollection, died in four or five hours afterwards.

Cameron said Lindon did not "shew any Concern- He levell'd his Piece in such a Manner, not bringing it to his Shoulder, that He the Deponent, thought he was going to Charge or Strike the Woman, and was going to prevent him, but before he the Deponent could effect his intent, the Piece was fir'd." "To the best of his recollection the Muzzle of the Piece touch'd her Cloaths."

The final witness, Surgeon Thomas Ady, treated Mrs. Lindon and said, "she had been shot thro the Body, below her breast- that the Woman died the same day, and to the best of his Judgement, he thinks the Wound she had receiv'd, was the Cause of her Death"

however, that the women did not have a choice about this service:

Any women who may be wanted as nurses at the General hospital, or to do any other business for the service of the Garrison, and shall refuse to do it, will immediately be struck of[f] the provision list.[33]

Complaint having been made that Women decline serving in the Hospital Ships, The Commander in Chief determined not to allow any Woman to remain with the Army, that refuses to take a duty of this necessary Office.[34]

The various orders cited here do not give a clear picture of how many women from a given regiment were serving as nurses at any particular time. There are references to hospitals, general hospitals, hospital ships, and "sick in town." Additional research is required to determine how many of these places were operating simultaneously, and whether regiments provided one or two nurses altogether, or to each hospital location. All that can be concluded so far is that a few women from a regiment - maybe between one and six - could be expected to be working as nurses at any given time.

Women as Laundresses The image of the washer woman camp follower is somewhat cliché, but evidence suggests this may have been the most common occupation of regimental women who followed the army on campaign. An order given shortly before the war began suggests that washing was the only reason that women were to be with the army in the field:

Six women, wifes of men belonging to the detachment may be sent there [Marshfield] at the same time the necessaries go, who will be employed in washing for the men, that they may be kept clean.[35]

Most of the orderly book references to laundresses that we found address restrictions on where they could work, to insure cleanliness and sanitation.

The Commanding Officer having observed some women washing in the Barracks, which must be prejudicial both to the Rooms & the mens health therefore it is his positive order that the women find some other place to do that Dirty work in, the Commanding Officer being Determined to Drum out of the Corps such as are Guilty of so shameful a practice.[36]

John Lindon's did not deny the murder charge, but offered a defence which sounds very modern; he testified that his wife's "repeated ill behaviour exasperated him in such a manner, that at times he was not sensible and could not be accountable for his Actions- He farther says he has serv'd His Majesty Fifteen Years and submits himself to the Mercy of the Court.

He called on an Officer, Lieutenant Benjamin Craven of the 63rd Regiment of Foot, who had for several years been in Lindon's company in the 22nd. Craven pointed out "that the Character of the Prisoner in General, is that of a good Soldier."

John Lindon was found guilty, and was sentenced to be hanged by the neck until dead.

Neither John Lindon nor Mrs. Lindon could know that their tragic demise would be remembered two centuries later. Their situation makes many current news events appear not so unique to our times. More importantly, a real person can be associated with the cold numbers which we often must use to learn about the period. An event can be associated with a change in the numbers. The story of Mrs. Lindon gives a reminder that every number represents an individual who had their own unique circumstances to live with every day, and who by their very existence became a part of history to be discovered.

The information in this article is from the Court Martial of John Lindon, Judge Advocate Papers, W. O. 71/93, Public Record Office, London, p. 196 - 198. *D.N.H.* *****

> Commanding Officers of Corps are not to suffer their Women, on any account, to Wash in the Streams near the Watering Places.[37]

An order given when the British Army was at Halifax in 1776, partly on board transports and partly encamped ashore, persuades us that washing was best done away from the encampments, and certainly not on board ship:

> The Commanding Officers to be answerable that proper People are sent on Shore at Dartmouth to Superintend the Women and others that may be left there to Wash, or for any other Purpose, who are to be accountable for all Depredations that may be Committed on the houses or Estates of the Inhabitants.[38]

An entry from an orderly book kept in England in the Summer of 1779 indicates that the "washerwomen" of each company were allowed one wood ration.[39] This gives a little insight into the requirements of this line of work.

The military publications that we reviewed made little mention of laundresses, except for the following extract. This passages not only sheds a little more light on the logistics of the job, but also mentions one of the improprieties that could occur if finances were poorly managed:

> As it often happens, that the women who wash for the Soldiers are not punctually paid, by which means, they are unable to provide that quantity of soap the linen must require, and thereby sooner rub it out, the Pay-Serjeants should be directed to stop for washing from those, who are so idle to neglect a punctual Payment, and every week clear off the Women, who, by this method, can have no excuse for not doing justice to the linen.[40]

Women as Seamstresses Our 20th-Century intuition would tell us to expect women to be employed in the making and altering of clothing for regiments. New regimental clothing had to be fitted after it was received by a regiment. In addition, British regiments in America often received cloth with which to make up campaign clothing such as leggings, overalls or trowsers, and linen breeches. When the amount of repairs required for a regiment on service is considered, it is clear that there was much sewing work to be done.

But tailoring was typically a male profession, and Britain's extensive textile industry provided many skilled tailors who had joined the army as soldiers. So certain was this, that extensive information about the duties of the tailors and the payments that they were to receive for their work can be found in orderly books and published military writings.

There were some cases where women could find employment in producing or altering clothing for their regiments. One such example is described by Simes:

> No Serjeant employed to buy necessaries for the men shall receive any advantage thereby, except that of employing his wife to make up the linen; and even that shall be absolutely at the choice of the men for whom it is bought, who shall be present at the buying, and see the money paid...[41]

The necessaries, of course, consisted of shirts, stockings, and shoes, items which wore out frequently and were procured locally by companies when they were required. The company Captain was responsible for the procurement of these articles, but might delegate a Serjeant to actually locate and purchase them.[42] Apparently, a privilege associated with this responsibility was an opportunity for the Serjeant's wife to realize some extra income.

On occasion, women could be pressed into service to assist the tailors, when clothing had to be produced quickly. When the Brigade of Guards was in Charleston, South Carolina, in December of 1780, preparing to march into the country on campaign, the following Brigade orders were given:

> the 1st Battn to be providd with Brown Trowsers, in order that the Brigade may be Uniform in this as well as the other part of their dress... The Taylors & Women of the whole Brigade to be Employ'd in Compleating the 1st Battn in Trowsers; a Return of whom will be given in for the Comds of the 1st Battn immediately.[43]

Another example which ties in with the nursing occupation is given in the journal of Thompson

Forster, Surgeon to the General Hospital, while sailing with Clinton's first expedition to Charleston, South Carolina, in 1776. In March, while still on board ship, Thompson relates:

> we employed all our women - soldiers wives intended for Nurses to the Hospital - in sewing four thousand Bandages which we two Surgeons made during that week.[44]

We see, then, that it was not typical for soldiers' wives to be employed making or repairing clothing, but there were occasional opportunities for this type of work.

Other Employment There were other opportunities offered by the army for wives of soldiers to earn an income, albeit on a temporary basis. Two examples are given in the following orders:

> If the soldiers wives chuse to go a Hay making Mr Fairbank will employ them.[45]

> As there are many women in the different Corps, who understand making of hand turf, a list of their names to be given to the Barrack Mr General immediately, who will employ them, and pay them for their work. Any woman who is capable of doing this work, and shall refuse, will be struck off the provision list.[46]

Here we have another case where work was offered, but women were not given a choice of whether to participate. "Hand turf" was used for fuel.

There is also an example of an activity from which women were specifically excluded. The following note was included in orders given for fighting fires in Boston early in the war:

> Women belonging to the Army will not be allowed to be present at any fire that may happen.[47]

It is not stated whether this was due to the nature or hazard of fire fighting, or as a precaution against plunder.

Occupations and Numbers We have shown that there were many opportunities for "sober, industrious women" to earn a living with the army. This information improves our overall image of the situation of the soldier's wife, since we know that her husband's pay was not enough to subsist her, much less her family, even if a reasonable amount of food was provided by the army. What we do not have are examples of exactly how many women of a regiment were employed at any given time. The information presented above offers enough to do some general guesswork.

We have seen that it was typical for a regiment to have about 80 women, or eight per company, when on service in America, although actual numbers varied widely. When on campaign, a number of women were allowed to follow each company; we will use four as a typical figure, remembering that this number also varied widely. Our scant evidence suggests that the primary employment of these women was as laundresses. If we assume that these women worked as laundresses in garrison also, then we have about half of a regiment's women employed as laundresses.

We know that some women worked as sutlers; it appears that only one was allowed per regiment, while others were sometimes allowed to keep shops in the vicinity of encampments. We also see opportunities for women to be nurses, and occasional sewing work. All of these occupations might account for another 5 or 10 women in a typical situation.

This leaves move than a third of the women of a regiment with no steady employment from the army. Temporary opportunities occurred now and then, and certainly some wives were not "discreet active women," but we still must suppose that some army wives sought employment outside of the army. Continuing research may provide evidence of this, or at least uncover details about the proportion of regimental women who were actively employed.

To be Continued...

Notes

1. For a discussion of the restrictions on soldiers' marriage, refer to part 1 of this article, Brigade Dispatch, Vol. XXIV No. 3.

2. Johnson, Samuel. A Dictionary of the English Language. London: W. Strachan, 1755.

3. Smith, George. An Universal Military Dictionary, London, 1779; reprinted by Museum Restoration Service, Ottawa, 1969.

4. Lochée, Lewis. An Essay on Castrametation, London: T. Cadell, 1778.

5. Simes, Thomas. The Regulator, London, 1780. This extract is from the section titled, "Of the Colonel, and his Duties", p. 156.

6. Orderly book, Marine garrison at Halifax, June - August, 1776, New York Public Library mss. Undated entry.

7. General Orders, America, W. O. 36/1, Public Record Office, London (hereafter cited as PRO). Mss. p. 68, undated entry, probably late January 1775.

8. Ibid. Mss. p. 69, undated entry, probably early February 1775.

9. Ibid. Entry for June 22, 1775.

10. Ibid. Entry for October 14, 1775.

11. "General Sir William Howe's Orders." Collections of the New York Historical Society, 1883. Entry for January 23, 1776.

12. General Orders, Rhode Island, W.O. 36/2, PRO. Entry for December 23, 1776.

13. Ibid, orders for December 11, 1777.

14. Judge Advocate Papers, W.O. 71/90 p. 26-34. Notice that there must have been no order about serving soldiers from other regiments at this time.

15. Judge Advocate Papers, W.O. 71/85 p. 159-166, Dec. 22, 1777. They were found guilty and sentenced to be lashed. The General William Howe, the Commander in Chief, ordered the sentences to be carried out, but Howe also signified in public orders that he disapproved of the punishment, since the crime warranted capital punishment. The Diary of Frederick MacKenzie, Harvard University Press, 1930. Entry for February 23, 1778.

16. Newport Gazette, August 26, 1779.

17. Orderly Book of Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Mawhood, 17th Regiment of Foot, October 11 - December 28, 1776. New York Historical Society manuscripts. Entry for November 22, 1776.

18. Orderly Book of the 1st Battalion Light Infantry (British), August 4 - October 13, 1778. Presidential Papers of George Washington, Series 6B Vol. 6, Library of Congress. Mss. p. 83.

19. Cuthbertson, Bennett. A System for the Compleat Interior Management and Œconomy of a Battalion of Infantry. Dublin, 1768, p. 42-43 (section titled, "Of the Treatment of the Sick, and management of a Regimental-Hospital.") The reference to the Irish Establishment is a reflection of the location of the first publication of Cuthbertson's work.

20. Simes, Thomas. A Military Guide for Young Officers. London, 1781 p. 212.

21. Simes, The Regulator, op. cit., p. 80 (section titled, "Of the Surgeon, and his Duties").

22. Ibid., p. 70 (section titled, "Of the Surgeon's Mate, and his Duties").

23. General Orders, America. Op. cit. Entry for May 25, 1775.

24. Ibid., entry for June 2, 1775.

25. "General Sir William Howe's Orders," op. cit. Entry dated New York Island, October 10, 1776.

26. General Orders, Rhode Island. Op. cit. Entry for January 27, 1777.

27. Ibid., entry for February 10, 1777.

28. Ibid., entry dated Camp at German Town, September 28, 1777.

29. General Orders, America. Op. cit. Entry for June 18, 1775.

30. Ibid., entry for June 27, 1775.

31. "General Sir William Howe's Orders," op. cit. Entry dated Brandywine, September 12, 1777.

32. Orderly Book, Brigade of Guards, August 28, 1780 - March 20, 1781. Published as "A British Orderly Book, 1780-1781," A. R. Newsome, ed., The North Carolina Historical Review. Entry for March 17, 1781.

33. General Orders, America. Op. cit. Entry dated Boston, May 25, 1775.

34. "General Sir William Howe's Orders, 1776." Op. cit. Entry for October 15, 1776.

35. General Orders, America. Op. cit. Entry for January 27, 1775.

36. Orderly book, Marine garrison at Halifax, op. cit. Undated entry.

37. "General Sir William Howe's Orders", Op. cit. Entry dated Staten Island, July 2, 1777.

38. Ibid., entry for April 13, 1776.

39. Order books, W. O. 34/242-244, Amherst Papers, PRO. Entry dated London, June 5, 1779.

40. Cuthbertson, op. cit., p.21-22 (Section titled, "Of the Stoppages necessary to be made in a Regiment.")

41. Simes, Military Guide for Young Officers, op. cit., p. 197.

42. An example of this is given by an advertisement placed in the New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury on September 19, 1778; Serjeant Blackgrove of the 45th Regiment of Foot offered a reward for the return of 50 pair of white worsted stockings lost between New York city and Kingsbridge, where the regiment was encamped. Presumably Blackgrove had purchased the stockings in the city for his company.

43. Orderly Book, Brigade of Guards, op. cit. Entry for December 15, 1780.

44. "Diary of Thompson Forster, Staff Surgeon to his Majesty's Detached Hospital in North America. October 19, 1775 - October 23, 1777. Transcribed in 1938 from the original in the possession of Robert Ethelstone Thompson Forster." Typescript provided by Gilbert Riddle, 2nd New Jersey Regiment.

45: Orderly book, marine garrison at Halifax, op. cit. Undated entry.

46. General Orders, America. Op. cit. Entry dated Boston, September 17, 1775.

47. Ibid. Entry for November 18, 1775.

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The Women of the British Army: A General Overview

Part 3 - Living Conditions

Don N. Hagist
22nd Regiment of Foot

As we seek to construct a detailed picture of the women of the British Army, we find it increasingly difficult to draw definite conclusions. The numbers of women "on the strength" is a matter of record. It is fairly clear that most, if not all of these women, were married to soldiers. We can determine the more common occupations of some of them. These facts allow the construction of a biography of sorts, but do not tell us much about the day to day lives of women who spent years in America in the service of their government.

In gathering material about every day life and living conditions, we find that the individual bits of information do not readily gel into generalities. Each woman had her own life, dealt with her own hardships, and made the most of her own opportunities. Rather than pretend that there is a "typical" profile, we will piece together what we can by looking at the basic requirements of life, and hope to find some common threads among diverse situations.

Habitation in the Garrison Most of the British Army's time in America was spent in garrison. Usually, the regiments spent winters in barracks or quarters, and summers in encampments within or adjacent to towns. During these times it was not necessary for the wives to "follow" their regiments, since the regiments were not going anywhere. This is significant because it made it possible for women to find long-term housing in the towns; when a regiment was in garrison, there was no need for the wives to stay in the encampments, even if it was allowed. For this reason, we must consider habitation not in terms of barracks and encampments, but in terms of garrisons and campaigns.

The writings of Bennett Cuthbertson provide some general insight on the consideration given to married soldiers and their wives when a regiment was in garrison:

> Those Soldiers who are married to industrious sober women, that can earn near as much as their husband's pay, and can be depended on for eating well, may be excused from messing with their Companies; but if on the contrary, the wives are idle, and trust to them for support, it must be insisted on, that such men be appointed to a mess, to prevent their being starved, and to oblige the women to some scheme of industry, by which alone it can be possible for their husbands to be allowed to co-habit with them: Officers should frequently enquire into the married Soldiers' manner of living, that they may be enabled to prevent, in time, any ill consequences which may arise, from the indulgence of permitting them to be with their wives.[1]

> Private Men and Drummers, who are married to sober, industrious women, may be indulged with liberty to lodge with them, provided the lodgings are not too distant from the Quarters of the Company: the Non-commission-officers should inform themselves of such Men's habitations, that they may inspect their manner of living, and know where to find them readily, when necessary; and as it often happens, that several people on whom Soldiers are quartered, do not wish to have the trouble of them in their houses, and therefore desire leave to lodge them out, it will be right, in that case, to exchange to those Billets, any of the married Men who are deserving of indulgence, that they may receive the advantage of a lodging for their wives, without expence; when an Officer has none of these to serve, he should insist on having an apartment hired, fit for the reception of the Soldiers, and that will answer conveniently for messing, otherwise, he will do extremely wrong, in consenting to their being removed from the original Billet.[2]

We were able to find only a few fragments of evidence to indicate what was actually done in America. In May of 1775, the army in Boston prepared to move from barracks into encampments; General Gage issued the following orders concerning the use of the vacated barracks:

Two Regiments barracks will be assigned for the accommodation of the women and children of the army, and a place will also be assigned as an hospital for convalescents; all the other barracks are to be cleared immediately, and quitted by the troops.[3]

After the barracks were provided, however, it was necessary to order the following:

Notwithstanding the care that has been taken, to provide the women, with proper places to stay in, some of them have broke into houses and buildings that were infected with the small pox, by which there is danger of its spreading through the town... the General therefore desires the Officers Commanding corps, will have the strictest enquirey immediately made, to discover the women concerned, whom he is determined to order on board ship, and send away.[4]

Some wives appear to have made their own arrangements. In September of 1775, the 23rd Regiment of Foot was encamped on Charlestown neck; its women had been assigned to one of the barracks mentioned above. Two soldiers of the regiment, John Cox and John Woods, along with two soldiers of the 63rd Regiment, were tried by a general court martial for breaking into a store and stealing porter and oil. During the trial it was stated that the accused men left their booty in "the house where Woods's Wife lives."[5]

Early in 1780, the 37th Regiment of Foot moved from Long Island into the New York City area; soon after, the Major commanding the regiment received this letter from Brigadier General Pattison:

A Complaint having been made to Major Genl Pattison that a Number of Women belonging to the 37th Regiment have taken possession of a House near the Bowery Lane belonging to Mr Auchmuty and known by the name of the Cascina, and lately belonging to Mr Burton, I am directed by the General to desire that you will give Orders that they be immediately removed.[6]

These tidbits are insufficient to draw any conclusions, except that women sometimes had their own lodgings in the town where their regiments were serving, and that married men were not necessarily required to live in the barracks if they or their wives could find private housing. Further research may tell us what was typical, and what different arrangements were made in different locations and situations.

Habitation on Campaign On campaign, we naturally assume that the women of the regiment simply shared tenting with their husbands, and whomever else was assigned to that tent. There were cases, however, where we know that this was not possible; sometimes wives were specifically prohibited from living in the encampment. An example is found in orders given to the 17th Regiment of Foot campaigning around New York in October of 1776, which read:

No Women are ever to be allowed to lay in the Men's Tents.[7]

Some regiments accommodated this by providing special tentage for the women, as indicated by this description of the benevolence of the Colonel of the 5th Regiment of Foot, Hugh, Earl Percy:

He had a large tent provided for every company at his own expense, to accommodate the women; and he made it a rule to receive no other servants into his family but soldiers or their wives.[8]

On the other hand, we have evidence that women were sometimes allocated tent space with the men. An August 1776 return of tent assignments for Lieutenant-Colonel Sir John Wrottesley's Company of the 1st Regiment of Foot Guards includes assignments for five wives among the 99 Serjeants, Corporals, Drummers and private soldiers in the company. There are 18 tents, most with six people assigned, a few with only five. Five of the tents each include one woman among the six people assigned (except one which has only five people altogether). Clearly, the women were considered among the total tentage requirements of the company.[9] We cannot say how these assignments were used in encampments in garrison and on campaign.

There is one additional situation in which women on campaign could find themselves. When regiments were disembarked from transports, it was often several days before the women were allowed to disembark, after the situation

of the army was firmly established. This was the case in Rhode Island in December of 1776:

> No women to be allowed to go on shore till further orders: they, and the baggage will be brought on shore when proper...[10]

When the army landed on Staten Island in the summer of 1776, the orders were somewhat less strict; women were allowed on shore during the day, but were required to return to the transports at night.[11]

Life on Campaign Armies on campaign could find themselves in combat. The order of march was established to anticipate this, arranging the soldiers so that they could be readily employed to the best advantage in battle. Precautions were taken protect all of the assets of the army by keeping them together on the march. The fact that these assets included both the women and the baggage does not mean that the women were considered as baggage. Rather, common sense dictated that, when on the march and when deployed for battle, everything of value be kept together - baggage, stores, horses, wagons, and all noncombatants including wounded and invalid soldiers, wives, and children. Orders given by General Cornwallis on his campaign in the Carolinas illustrate this:

> December 21, 1780, "Camp, Thirty Mile Halt": "The Women of the Army Will March at the Head of the Baggage."[12]

The orders were straightforward enough. Similar orders were given on various campaigns; there were minor variations, such as having the women "march on the Flanks of the Baggage of Their Respective Corps".[13]

These orders, however, were difficult to enforce. Subsequent orders given by Cornwallis make it clear that the marching orders were not followed, despite increasingly dire consequences:

> December 22, 1780, "Camp Monks Corner": "the

Lessons from the Courts:
On the Road to Freehold

General orders given on campaign usually included admonitions against straggling and plundering, and measures and procedures to prevent marauding. But because these orders are repeated so frequently, we get the impression that they were not followed. Marching orders were very specific about who was to be where, but straggling remained a persistent problem. What was it really like on the march?

The proceedings of the court martial of two women, "followers of the army," describe a vignette which occurred on the British march through New Jersey in 1778. The trial was held at Freehold, New Jersey, on June 27, the day before the famous Battle of Monmouth. Mary Colethrate and Elizabeth Clarke were tried for plundering; they were arrested on the 25th by Major John Antill of the New Jersey Volunteers. Antill described the circumstances of the day:

> a farmer came up to him and begg'd for Protection, as some Women were plundering & destroying his house, that upon going into the house, he found everything in the greatest Confusion, the feather Beds being cut open and the feathers strewed about, and many other things destroyed; that there were about twenty or thirty Women in the house, & upon asking the Man of the house, who had been the most active, he pointed out the Prisoner Colethrate, & the Woman of the house pointed out the Prisoner Clarke and another Woman... the Prisoner Clarke was in the house and Mary Colethrate at the Door, and both Loaded with something in their Aprons, which he did not examine, but by the feel of one of them it appeared to contain Flour; he himself saw the Prisoner Clarke very busy, in turning over some things which were in a Closet in the house, & the Woman of the house informed him that she had treated her very ill, having beat and abused her and that the Woman who has been since released, stripped all her Children and had Carried off one Load of Plunder and returned for another.

Women of the Army more Strictly to Observe the Orders of yesterday."

December 27, 1780: "The Ordr respecting Bat Men Woman, Servts & other followers of the Army is repeated, any person who may be again found out of the Line of March, will be punished on the Spot, in the most Exemplary Manner."[14]

The reason for keeping such a tight rein on the followers of the army was, of course, to prevent plunder. No amount of orders successfully stopped this constant problem. Much has been written on this topic. Since we are concerned with wives of soldiers, and not with followers of the army in general, we would like to be able to find out how much of the plundering was committed by army wives. Unfortunately, we have no way to determine this. A few bits of information persuade us that soldiers' wives were as opportunistic as anyone in taking advantage of chances to plunder. Orders given to the Brigade of Guards on Cornwallis' Southern campaign illustrate this well:

It is Br Genl O'Hara's orders that the Officers Commanding Companies cause an immediate Inspection of the Articles of Cloathing at present in the possession of the women in their Companies & an exact Account taken thereof by the Pay Serjts after which their Necessaries are to be regularly examin'd at proper opportunities; and every Article found in Addition thereto, Burnt at the Head of the Company; Except such as have been fairly purchas'd on Application to the Commanding Officers & regularly added to their former List by the Serjts as above. The Offrs are likewise order'd to make these Examinations at such times & in such a manner as to prevent these Women (Suppos'd to be the Source of the most infamous Plunders) from evading the purport of this order.[15]

Even these systematic measures did not seem to keep order, for a week later additional orders were given:

Women to attend all Roll Calls in the Rear of the Companies (Except such as are in the Service of Officers) any, and every one found absent, to be immedy Whipp'd & Drumm'd out of the Brigade...
NB: The Women to attend all Punishments.[16]

Mary Colethrate's defence gives some details of a woman's life on the march:

she had rode all day on the Baggage Waggon and had just then got off to Light her Pipe, which she was smoking at the Door, when Major Antill went in, that she never was in the house and what she had in her Apron was her husband's Biscuit, which she shewed to the Woman of the house, and who acknowledged before the Officer of the Artillery Guard that it did not belong to her & that she had not been in the House.

Clarke said that she only went into the house for a drink and took nothing; a Matross of the Royal Artillery who took the women to the provost said that "upon her apron being examined, there was found an unfinished pair of shoes, & some other Articles that he does not remember."

The owners of the plundered house did not testify; probably the army was miles beyond them by this time. When the prisoners were first brought to the guard, the owners were not able to identify the defendants as having been involved in the incident, and said that their house had been plundered by Dutch women.

The court found Mary Colethrate innocent, but convicted Elizabeth Clarke, probably based on the testimony of Major Antill. Clarke was sentenced "to receive one hundred Lashes on her bare back with Cats of nine tails, and then to be drummed out of the Army, in the most public manner possible." It is not known whether the sentence was carried out.

The information in this article is from the Judge Advocate Papers, W. O. 71/86, Public Record Office, London, p. 151 - 158.

D.N.H. *****

Ten days after that, however, the requirement for women to attend punishments was dispensed with.[17] We also have the following quotation, from some time in the middle of the war; unfortunately we did not record the provenance in detail.

As to the plundering, there is nothing so common as to see the soldiers wives, and other women, who follow the army, carrying each three or four silk gowns, fine linen, etc. etc. which have been stolen by the soldiers from different houses in their march...[18]

If a woman was arrested for plundering, she was subject to the same system of justice as a man, namely, trial by court martial. From May of 1774 through May of 1780, 7 women associated with the army were tried by general courts martial for plundering, theft, or receiving goods known to have been stolen. Of these, 2 are known to have been wives of soldiers. It is not known how the remainder were affiliated with the army; the court records refer to them as "followers of the army," or, in one case, "retainer to the camp."[19] We have information only for general courts martial; probably other women were tried by regimental courts for similar crimes.

Women in Battle Following the army in any capacity always included the possibility of being exposed to battle. Although the women were protected along with the other assets of the army, they were at risk whenever there was combat. This is illustrated by an event in Rhode Island during the siege in 1778; on August 19, a soldier of the 54th Regiment Light Infantry was struck by a cannon ball, by which he

lost his leg... as he was making shoes in his tent with his wife & children about him.[20]

The extent of the danger is exemplified by an incident in New Jersey on June 22, 1777, in a skirmish which began "where the Quibbletown Road meets and turns into the Amboy Road":

They killed and wounded about 20 Soldiers and a Woman a Grenadiers Wife.[21]

An order given by General Cornwallis gives the impression that women were expected to actually fight in certain situations, but we do not have sufficient evidence to know whether that is really the intent of the order:

When the Brigade Marches the Women, Sick, & Weakly Men, will March in the Rear of the Second Batt^{n} & in Case the Brigade Shoud be ordered forward - and they cant keep up - they will form a Guard to the Baggage, Packs, or what else May be left in their Charge.[22]

The discussion of women in battle begs the question, did women ever disguise themselves as men and join the British Army? This subject has much allure and has drawn much attention, but documented cases throughout the entire 18th Century are few. One book devoted to the subject suggests that there are only 16 known instances throughout over two centuries, and provides only 3 examples of women soldiers, and four sailors, for the entire 18th Century.[23]

We know of no cases of women serving as soldiers in British regiments in the American Revolution. Even at the time, however, the possibility was intriguing. If we can believe the newspapers (which published many rumors and tall tales, and should be used very cautiously without additional evidence), a woman attempted to enlist in the 71st Regiment of Foot when it was preparing to come to America:

Newcastle, December 30, 1775.

Wednesday last, a good-looking girl, about twenty-seven years old, dressed in mens cloaths, applied to Serjeant Miller, the recruiting officer here for Frazer's Highland regiment, and desired to be enlisted in that body, which the serjeant agreed to, and gave her a shilling. Her sex, however, was soon after discovered. She said the cause of this act was from a quarrel with her father, whose cloaths she had absconded in: and notwithstanding her sex, she would have no objection to the army, as she thought the exercise not superior to her abilities. She was, however, discharged.[24]

Similarly, Rivington's New York Loyal Gazette of September 25, 1779, carried an account of a woman trying to enlist in the army, to follow an officer she loved.

Again, we cannot document any cases of women serving as British regulars in the American War. British recruiting procedures included a physical examination and other practices which, if followed, would make it impossible for a woman to disguise her sex.[25] If women were ever successful in enlisting, it was so rare as to be irrelevant to our hobby. But the fact that women attempted to enlist should not be ignored, and could certainly add a dimension to recruiting scenarios.

There is one known occasion when a British soldier's wife did battle with an American soldier. Thomas Anburey, a British officer with the Convention Army outside of Boston, tells the story:

The soldier's wives are allowed to pass the centinels, but the other day a most ludicrous circumstance took place, by the obstinacy of an old man upon guard. He would not permit a woman, who was a true campaigner to go beyond him, great altercation ensued, in which the lady displayed much of the Billingsgate oratory, when the old man was so irritated as to present his firelock; the woman immediately ran up, snatched it from him, knocked him down, and striding over the prostrate hero, in the exultation of triumph, profusely besprinkled him, not with Olympian dew, but that which is esteemed as emollient to the complexion - and 'faith, something more natural - nor did she quit her post, till a file of sturdy ragamuffins marched valiantly to his relief, dispossessed the Amazon, and enabled the knight of the grisly caxon to look fierce, and reshoulder his musquet.[26]

To be Concluded...

Notes

1. Cuthbertson, Bennett. A System for the Compleat Interior Management and Œconomy of a Battalion of Infantry. Dublin, 1768, p. 28-29 (section titled, "Of messing, and the Advantages attending to it...").

2. Ibid., p. 35-36 (section titled, "Of the necessity of regularity in quartering Soldiers on a Town, or in a Barracks...").

3. General Orders, America, W. O. 36/1, Public Record Office, London (hereafter cited as PRO). Entry for May 31, 1775.

4. Ibid., entry for June 6, 1775.

5. Judge Advocate Papers, WO71/81, PRO, p.405-430.

6. Letter, General Pattison to Major Cousseau, March 10, 1780. New York Historical Society Collections, 1875.

7. Orderly Book of Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Mawhood, 17th Regiment of Foot, October 11 - December 28, 1776. New York Historical Society manuscripts. Entry for October 12, 1776.

8. The Percy Anecdotes, New York, 1832.

9. Newbold-Irvine Papers, Box 5, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

10. General Orders, Rhode Island, W.O. 36/2, PRO., entry for December 7, 1776.

11. General Sir William Howe's orders, June 30 - October 5, 1776, Morristown National Historical Park. Entry for July 10, 1776.

12. Orderly Book, Brigade of Guards, August 28, 1780 - March 20, 1781. Published as "A British Orderly Book, 1780-1781," A. R. Newsome, ed., The North Carolina Historical Review.

13. Orderly Book, Second Battalion of British Grenadiers, 1778. George Washington Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. Series 6B, Captured British Orderly Book Volume 5. Microfilm Reel 118, P37437.

14. Orderly Book, Brigade of Guards, op. cit.

15. Ibid., entry for February 28, 1781.

16. Ibid., entry for March 2, 1781.

17. Ibid., entry for March 12, 1781.

18. Almon's Rememberancer, Vol. 5, p. 154.

19. Index of WO 71/80-94, Judge Advocate Papers, PRO. Work in progress by the author.

20. "Journal of Rev. Joshua Wingate Weeks," Historical Collections of the Essex Institute, Vol. LII No. 1 (1916), entry for August 21, 1778. Another diarist says that the soldier was in a hut, and erroneously refers to his regiment as the 45th. Diary of Frederick MacKenzie, Cambridge, MA, 1930, entry for August 19, 1778.

21. "Journal of the Operations of the American Army under General Sir William Howe from the Evacuation of Boston to the end of the Campaign of 1776" (this document also includes a journal of operations in New Jersey, June 11 - July 31, 1777). British Library, Egerton Manuscripts.

22. Orderly Book, Brigade of Guards, op. cit. Entry for January 30, 1781.

23. Ewing, Elizabeth. Women in Uniform through the Centuries. London.

24. The Middlesex Journal, and Evening Advertiser.

25. It was typical to subject recruits to a physical which included examination for rupture. Cuthbertson, op. cit., p. 56 (section titled, "Of Recruiting, and what is to be particularly attended to on that Duty.

A recruit in the 33rd Regiment of Foot, John Robert Shaw, says that on his first night as a recruit, "I was put to bed a naked man, which I thought strange, but this is a common custom with soldiers, in order to save their linen..." More likely this was a measure to prevent a new recruit from deserting during the night. A Narrative of the Life & Travels of John Robert Shaw, the Well-digger, "written by himself," Lexington, KY, 1807; reprinted by George Fowler, Louisville, KY, 1930.

26. Anburey, Thomas. Travels through the Interior Parts of America, in a Series of Letters. London, 1789. Reprinted by Arno Press, Inc., 1969. Vol. II, p. 81-82., letter dated Cambridge, December 9, 1777. "BILLINGSGATE LANGUAGE. Foul language, or abuse." Grose, Francis, A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue, London, 1796.

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The Women of the British Army: A General Overview

Part 4 - Miscellaneous Notes

Don N. Hagist
22nd Regiment of Foot

In the previous three installments of this series, we have examined the numbers of soldier's wives that were included in British marching regiments, presented some of the typical professions of these women, and given an overview of some of the living conditions that they experienced. While all of this information begins to bring together a picture of the people and their lives, it makes it very clear that there are no stereotypes. Every woman in the army had her own situation, which could be drastically different from, or starkly similar to, that of other women in the same corps. The numbers, the occupations, and the living conditions all varied with the time and place, governed in different degrees by the activities of the army, by necessity, and by opportunity.

In this final installment, we present some miscellaneous notes which provide additional insight into the lives of army women, as well as some information about the children of the army.

Hazards We have seen that women who accompanied the army into the field could be exposed to the dangers of battle. Life with the army had other hazards as well. A soldier of the 33rd Regiment of Foot recounts an interesting event, and shows that women might accompany a regiment even on a short expedition:

> In this excursion, among other plunder, we took a store of molasses, the hogsheads being rolled out and their heads knocked in, a soldier's wife went to dip her camp-kettle in a hogshead of molasses and while she was stooping in order to fill her kettle, a soldier slipped behind her and threw her into the hogshead: when she was hauled out, a bystander threw a parcel of feathers on her, which adhering to the molasses, made her appear frightful enough. - This little circumstance afforded us a good deal of amusement.[1]

This incident is indeed amusing, but other dangers were greater. In the garrison at Charleston, South Carolina,

> At midday a fire broke out in an English soldiers' barracks, which burned down. A woman in childbed died in the blaze.[2]

Following the army could be hazardous on board ship as well:

> A very remarkable event happened that Night, which was:
> A Woman's shift being burnt upon her body, lying in a Birth on board a Transport, and she a Sleep, by a Flash of Lightning, with out the least damage to her skin or Flesh. Also a Man's Coat and Shirt was burnt likewise on his Back, without his knowing of it till next morning: And the Arms of three Companies of men were japanned on Board the same ship by the same Flash.[3]

Of course, an additional hazard faced by any soldier's wife was the possibility of dismissal from the regiment. Orders like this one were given occasionally throughout the American Revolution:

> Any Soldiers Wife who is a disgrace to the Regiment she belongs to, for bad behaviour, and having incurred the displeasure of the Commanding Officer of the Regiment; her name to be given in that she may be sent to England in the Fleet.[4]

Notice that even disgraced women were usually not abandoned, but rather sent home. There were occasions when measures were more drastic. Preparations for the evacuation of Boston presented unusual opportunities for plunder, and prompted the following unusual measure:

> Any Woman belonging to ye Army, that may be found in Town after one o'Clock will be imediately

taken up & sent to ye Provost & will be left there[5]

Domestic Distress With the exception of being send back to England, the types of hazards described above were typical of common life, and not particular to the army. The same is true of the domestic strife that some women encountered. Some of the social problems with which we are familiar today, were yesterday's problems as well (although we cannot say whether they were as frequent). An advertisement in a New York newspaper in 1774 read

Hugh McCullum, soldier in His Majesty's Royal Regiment of Welsh Fusileers, will not pay debts contracted in the future by his wife Ann.[6]

We know nothing of the circumstances behind this incident, but it is clear enough that things were not well between this soldier and his wife.

We have seen, in a previous installment of this article, a case where a soldier murdered his wife after she distanced herself from him ("Lessons from the Courts: Requiem for a Nurse," Brigade Dispatch, Vol. XXIV No. 4). Two additional tragic incidents are recorded in the journals of British officers:

Carrigan of Ct Duffs compy [of the 40th Regiment of Foot] was stabb'd by Northington- being got upon his Wife - died in 1/2 hour
NB Northington after stabbing Carrigan stabb'd his wife & then stabb'd himself & attempted to throw himself again on his bayonet. (he wounded himself & his wife slightly)[7]

A Soldier of the 43rd Regt shot himself last night in the rear of the Camp. The discovery of a Connection he had with a married woman of the same Regiment, appears to have been the cause of this rash action.[8]

We cannot say incidents such as these were common. But the society that was the army experienced the problems that society as a whole faced, and which continue today.

Lessons from the Courts:
A Case of Mistaken Identity, and a Woman Child of Nine Years of Age

The article was written, formatted, and ready for publication. And it was a good one. The thesis concerned the concept of mercy in the discipline and justice system of the British Army - sometimes sentences called for severe punishments, only to be reduced or completely pardoned at the last moment, thereby giving a lesson both in punishment and forgiveness.

Careful examination of orderly books yielded an excellent example. On March 15, 1778,

Corporal John Fisher of His Majesty's 28th Regiment of Foot, tried by the General Court Martial of which Lieutenant Colonel Musgrave is President, for having committed a Rape on the Body of Maria Nickles, a woman child of 9 years of age, is found guilty and Sentenced to suffer death by being hanged by the neck until he is Dead.[27]

Two days later it was ordered that

The Prisoners Corporal John Fisher of ye 28th,... to be executed on Monday the 23rd Instant on ye Common between the hours of 10 and 12 in ye fore noon.[28]

The prisoner was pardoned at the last moment by an order given on the 24th:

The Commander in Chief is Pleased to grant a pardon to Corporal John Fisher under Sentence of death in consideration of his Youth and very good character Given of him by the field Officers of his Regiment.[29]

Fifty-eight days later, however, we find this:

Some Stayed Home In light of the hazards described above, it is no surprise that some wives did not follow their husbands overseas to America. We have no record of the numbers of soldiers who were married but not accompanied by their wives, but the existence of some examples prove the number of women who accompanied a regiment was not equal to the number of men who were married. We have already noted some examples in a previous installment of this article. Writings of British officers give us some further information.

Captain William Dansey of the 33rd Regiment, and Lieutenant Loftus Cliffe of the 46th, each mention soldiers in their companies in letters home, offering news to be passed on to the soldiers' wives and families.[9] Major Frederick MacKenzie of the 23rd Regiment, serving as a staff officer in Rhode Island, described the drowning suicide of a soldier of the 43rd Regiment, and noted that he left a wife and child destitute in England.[10]

In other cases, wives were in America, but not with the army:

In Committee of Safety, Cambridge, June 21, 1775. Resolved, that Joseph Adams Driver of the Stage from Newbury be and he is hereby Directed to transfer back to Newbury Eliz^{h} Rogers (who as she says) is the wife to Willm Rogers First Sergeant in the 63 Regiment of Foot now in Boston and deliver her to the care of the Selectmen of s^{d} Newbury who are Hereby Directed to Provide for her and her child at the expense of the Colony.[11]

We have no additional information to explain Elizabeth Rogers' plight; it is unlikely that she was an American who married a soldier before the war began, since the 63rd had only that month arrived in America. Perhaps she travelled from England on a separate vessel from her husband, and landed somewhere other than Boston; perhaps she managed to leave the besieged city for an unknown reason.

Marched from this place [Evesham, NJ] at 4, and met with no interruption from the Rebels the whole day. Saw a man sitting by the road side who belonged to the forementioned party, and had been wounded by the Yagers with swords, in a dangerous way. He proved a desserter from the 28th regiment...[30]

John Fisher Drummer in the 28th Regiment Tried by the General Court Martial of which Lieutenant Colonel Grant of the 42nd Regiment is president, for Desertion and Bearing arms in the Rebel Service, is found Guilty and is sentenced to Suffer Death. The Commander in Chief Confirms the above Sentence, and Orders it to be put in Execution On the March tomorrow between the hours of 4 and 12.[31]

Other documents make it clear that the punishment was carried out this time. So it appears that a repeat offender is dealt with more harshly; other examples of the progression of punishments are available, but this one is especially vivid, and was the focal point of the article entitled, "Military Justice, and a Repeat Offender."

There was just one problem - the offending soldier, John Fisher, had two different ranks. Although there are many examples of Corporals being reduced after being tried for a crime, for a Corporal to become a Drummer just doesn't add up. Perhaps an error was made in the period documents; this is common enough, except that several documents carry the same terminology. Is our understanding of the ranks incorrect? Or could there be another explanation?

The proceedings of the courts martial provide the answer: there were two men named John Fisher in the 28th Regiment of Foot, each tried and sentenced to death within a two month period. Drummer John Fisher was a draft from the 36th Regiment of Foot, and was serving in the Light Infantry company of the 28th. On April 11, 1777, when this company was in New Jersey, he deserted; he testified that he strayed accidentally from his company. He went to Morristown, married, and worked as a laborer. He claimed he enlisted in the American army in order to get close enough to the lines to rejoin the British army, but another returned deserter disputed Fisher's claim; Drummer John fisher was executed.[32]

Thomas Sullivan, soldier in the 49th Regiment, wrote a history of the American war in which he recounted many of his personal experiences. He writes of December 15, 1777, while the army occupied Philadelphia:

This day I was married to Sarah Stoneman, then an Inhabitant of the City of Philadelphia. She was born in Buck's County, in the Province of Pennsylvania, and in the 20th Year of her age; she was bred to the Book-binding business. Her father (who was a man of great learning) was born in Wales; and her mother in the North of Ireland.[12]

When Philadelphia was evacuated the following June, Sullivan deserted; although he had considered desertion earlier in the war, it is noteworthy that his second attempt came at a time when he was faced with either separation from his spouse, or her with separation from her family.

Notes on Clothing and Behavior Reenactors, of course, are concerned with how people looked and how they acted. While it is often straightforward to portray the looks and actions of a soldier by donning a uniform and learning an exercise, there are no such guidelines to follow in portraying the wife of a soldier. We were able to find only a few passages which give some insight on how women of the army dressed, and how they behaved.

There were cases when army women were able to possess soldiers' clothing. In particular, a widow (who, as we have seen, was offered passage to England) might be allowed to have her deceased husband's regimental clothing:

When any casualties happen in a company, the Paymaster-serjeant must take care to preserve the regimentals, that the succeeding recruit may be clothed in like manner with his brother soldier, provided the soldier had not worn them 1 year; if he had, his wife or child should have them.[13]

Because Corporal John Fisher was with the British army in December of 1777, we know that the two Fishers are different men. But Corporal Fisher's story is not as interesting as that of his accuser, Maria Nichols. She was a child of the 28th Regiment, her parents being Serjeant James Downes and his wife Hannah. But neither parent was sure of Maria Nichols' age; Hannah Downes said that

She was born when the 28th Regim[t] lay at Dublin which is between Eight & Nine years ago; her age is Registered in her Bible which she has not at present.[33]

Other testimony makes it clear that neither of the Downes' were present at Maria's birth. It appears that Maria Nichols was adopted by the Serjeant and his wife. No details are given of how this family came together. It is clear, however, that children in the army sometimes had complex histories - and also that the army looked after its children.

The incident for which Corporal Fisher was tried occurred one evening when Serjeant and Mrs. Downes went out for the evening, leaving Maria in the care of Thomas Lilly, a private in their regiment; when Fisher came to visit Lilly, Lilly left Maria in Fisher's care and went to sleep. The Downes' testified that this was the only time that one of them had not been with Maria since arriving in Philadelphia. So it was considered necessary to have adult supervision (albeit poor in this case) for a nine year old girl, a tidbit to add to our understanding of the time.

Further research might reveal whether the 28th had a soldier named Nichols while in Dublin, and whether he died before 1777, giving clues as to why this "Woman Child of Nine years of Age," became part of the history of the British Army in America.

Gilbert V. Riddle, 2nd New Jersey Regiment *Don N. Hagist, 22nd Regiment of Foot*

Of course, this does not mean that a woman would wear such clothing. Even a widow who had experienced the rigors of army life would be likely to have some sense of fashion, and not wish to wear men's clothing - especially garments which could be sold. On the other hand, a contemporary analogy gives an interesting suggestion that at least some women did indeed make use of military clothing:

It looks like one of those drunken red-faced old women, who follow a camp, and half of whose clothes are scoured regimentals.[14]

During the Summer of 1776, some women and children in the British army received stockings and shoes, but details are not clear. General orders read:

Quarter Masters... to apply... for the Women and Children's Shoes and Stockings appropriated for those Regiments.[15]

An officer recorded in his diary that

the Women who lost their Husbands, or were otherwise objects of Charity, rec'd for themselves & Children each a pair of shoes & stockings a Charity Rais'd by the English as some recompense for their sufferings.[16]

While widows and orphans received these articles, it is not clear if other army women did. Since these articles (or the cost of them) were donated by citizens in England, we do not know if the shoes and stockings were the same as those used by soldiers.

Two American diary accounts give us a glimpse of some British Army women, but these should not be taken as generally descriptive. While colorful, the women that these diarists encountered might not have been representative of the "sober, industrious women" that were considered ideal spouses for soldiers.

The first diarist, Peter Edes, was imprisoned in Boston on July 2, 1775. He describes the people who populated the provost:

From this day to the 17th, a complicated scene of oaths, curses, debauchery, and the most horrid blasphemy, were committed by the provost martial, his deputy and soldiers who were our guard, soldier prisoners, and sundry soldier women confined for theft, &c. We had some of the vilest women for our neighbors ever known, some placed over our heads, and some in rooms each side of us. They acted such scenes as was shocking to nature, and they used language horrible to hear, as if it came from the very suburbs of hell.[17]

It is important to note that the women Edes was describing were, in fact, in prison; they were not necessarily typical.

Alexander Graydon was a Pennsylvania officer and among the American soldiers captured when Fort Washington capitulated in late 1776. He and other prisoners were marched to New York City; he writes:

On the road as we approached the city, we were beset by a parcel of soldiers trulls and others, who came out to meet us. It was obvious, that in the calculation of this assemblage of female loyalty, the war was at an end; and that the whole of the rebel army, Washington and all, were safe in durance. Which is Washington? Which is Washington? proceeded from half a dozen mouths at once; and the guard was obliged to exert itself to keep them off. Some of them assailed us with vollies of Billingsgate; and colonel Maxwell [of the 27th Regiment of Foot], who rode along side of us... had enough to do to silence one of them, calling out repeatedly: "Away with that woman! Take her away! Knock her down, the bitch! Knock her down!"[18]

A military text tells us another activity which might sometimes be performed by wives, and illustrates that it was typical for wives to be with their regiments:

When Soldiers are on Guard, their attendance must never be dispensed with, even for the smallest time, except on some very extraordinary occasion, as they are always to be in readiness to turn out with alertness on the shortest warning; the Rolls should therefore be frequently called, to ensure this point; and that they may never have the least pretence for straggling from their Guards, the dinners of the batchelors should be carried to them by their comrades, and that of the married men, by their wives.[19]

We also find that company officers were, at

least in some cases, as familiar with the women of their companies as with the men. Ann Harris of the 22nd Regiment testified on behalf of an officer of her regiment, Lieutenant Charles Dalrymple, who was accused of stealing liquor from the owner of the house in which he lodged; Mrs. Harris went so far as to advise Darymple's accuser against bringing the matter to a court martial, since it would "hereby much hurt Mr. Dalrymple."[20] Lieutenant Loftus Cliffe of the 46th Regiment wrote that

> if it were not for a woman of my company a Corporals Wife who has supplied me with money between 30 and 40 Guineas I should have been badly off.[21]

Far from being considered excess baggage, these army wives were a part of the society of their regiments.

Notes on Children Marriages in the army brought children to the army. At the beginning of this series, we saw that the number of children on the strength of a regiment was usually at least equal to the number of women. We know far less about the children, but their presence was clearly an accepted part of military life, since some of the military writers of the day devoted text to them. Thomas Simes notes,

> No soldiers must carry coals, or any other thing, on their heads, when they have their regimental cloths or hat on; nor must they carry any children about the barrack-yard or street.[22]

Army children were exposed to the same hazards as the women when in encampments, garrisons, and on board ship. Some were exposed to domestic distress as well.[23] On the other hand, in many ways they lived like children. Excavations of British hut sites in the New York City area uncovered a number of playthings - buzzers made from flat, round pieces of lead with serrated edges and holes for string through them; miniature pewter plates, cups, and platters; a doll; a tiny thimble; and a little pewter broom.[24] And the army made an effort to educate the children:

> A Serjeant, or Corporal, whose sobriety, honesty, and good conduct, can be depended upon, and who is capable to teach writing, reading, and arithmetic, should be employed to act in the capacity of schoolmaster, by whom soldiers and their children may be carefully instructed: a room or tent should be appointed for that use; and it would be highly commendable if the Chaplain, or his deputy, would pay some attention to the conduct of the school.[25]

We cannot say whether schools were maintained consistently during the war in America. An account kept by Rhode Island schoolmaster Joseph Rhodes includes an entry for "Schooling Soldiers Children" in 1777, during the British occupation.[26] This bit of information shows us not only that army children were sent to school, but also that the schools were not always maintained by the army itself.

Conclusions This article is intended to be an overview, and to stimulate further research into the lives of the wives of the common British soldiers who served in America. This article is in no way comprehensive. It represents the assimilation of disparate notes accumulated during research on other aspects of the British Army. Every topic covered in this article invites further, dedicated research; we hope that some of this research will be undertaken, and that some of the results will appear in future issues of this publication.

Women were not considered a burden; instead they were an integral part of the workings of a regiment. Although some commanders-in-chief complained about the numbers of women with the army, women were always allowed to accompany it.

Although general orders usually specified that three to six women per company were allowed to accompany a regiment, victualling returns show that higher numbers were common. Eight women per company of fifty men was typical but numbers varied widely; in addition, a similar number of children were usually victualled.

Widows were not abandoned or forced to remarry; instead, they were provided with some financial or material compensation, and given passage home.

Many, if not most, women were gainfully employed. In fact, employment was necessary

for subsistence, and often was a condition of being allowed to accompany the army.

Army wives sometimes had their own lodgings when regiments remained in one location for long periods; some remained in garrison towns when their regiments went on campaign. Those who did follow the army on campaign were faced with the similar dangers and hardships to the soldiers.

Acknowledgements

This article is not the product of research dedicated to the subject, but rather an assimilation of miscellaneous notes gathered while researching other aspects of the British Army in America. Most of the sources used came to me through the generosity of others; below I thank a few of the major contributors, with apologies to the many others who have helped but whom I've failed to acknowledge:

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Gilbert Riddle, 2nd New Jersey Regiment, for many of the orderly books cited throughout this article.

Kim Stacy, 84th Regiment of Foot, for orderly book information from the 84th Regiment of Foot.

Notes

1. Shaw, John Robert. A Narrative of the Life & Travels of John Robert Shaw, written by himself, Lexington, TN, 1807; reprinted Louisville, KY, 1930. Shaw says that this incident occurred in 1779, when the regiment was on an expedition "up the East river... some distance above New Bedford..." From other evidence in the text it does not appear to be the raid on New Bedford, MA, in September of 1778.

2. "Valentin Asteroth's Diary of the American War of Independence, 1776" Bruce E. Burgoyne, trans. Diary of A Hessian Chaplain and The Chaplain's Assistant, The Johannes Schwalm Historical Association, 1990. Entry for August 22, 1781, Charleston, SC.

3. Journal of Thomas Sullivan, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 973.3.SW5. This incident occurred on a transport when the army was bound for Head of Elk, August 17th, 1777.

4. General Orders, Rhode Island, W.O. 36/2, PRO., entry for December 7, 1777.

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7. Bamford, William. "Bamford's Diary: The Revolutionary Diary of a British Officer." Maryland Historical Magazine, V. 27, December, 1932. Entry for July 15, 1776, Staten Island.

8. MacKenzie, Frederick. Diary of Frederick MacKenzie. Cambridge, MA, 1930. Entry for July 6, 1777, Rhode Island.

9 Letters of William Dansey, Delaware Historical Society, Dover, DE: Letters of Loftus Cliffe. William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

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11. Massachusetts Archives, V. 138 p. 166. reprinted in Essex Institute Historical Collections, V. 46 (1910).

12. Sullivan, op. cit. Entry for December 15, 1777, Philadelphia.

13. Simes, Thomas. The Military Guide for Young Officers, London, 1776, p.201.

14. Lewis, W. S., ed. Horace Walpole's Correspondence,v. 35, Yale Univ. Press, 1973. Describing a portrait of Philippe, Chevalier de Vendôme (1655-1727), in a letter to the Earl Harcourt, May 18, 1781.

15. "General Sir William Howe's Orders, 1776." Collections of the New York Historical Society, 1883. Orders given on June 6, 1776.

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17. Edes, Peter. Diary of Peter Edes, Bangor, 1901.

18. Graydon, Alexander. Memoirs of a Life, Chiefly passed in Pennsylvania, within the last sixty years; with occasional Remarks upon the general occurrences, character and spirit of that eventful period, Harrisburg, 1811.

19. Cuthbertson, Bennett. A System for the Compleat Interior Management and Economy of a Battalion of Infantry. Dublin, 1768, p. 180 (section titled, "Of Regulations for doing Duty, Direction for Guards and Centinels with some general Rules to be observed in a Regiment").

20. Judge Advocate Papers, W. O. 71/87, PRO, p. 209 - 250.

21. Cliffe letters, op. cit. Letter dated Philadelphia, November 12, 1777.

22. Simes, op. cit., p. 204. An almost identical entry is in Thomas Simes, The Regulator, or Instructions to Form the Officer and Complete the Soldier, London, 1780, p. 12 (section titled "Of the Soldier, and his Duties").

23. See sidebar, "Lessons from the Courts: A Case of Mistaken Identity, and a Woman Child of Nine Years of Age." Private William Sanders of the First Regiment of Foot Guards was tried for molesting a four-year-old girl. W. O. 71/90, PRO, p. 82-102.

24. Calver, William P. and Bolton, Reginald P. History Written with a Pick and Shovel, New York, 1950, p. 236-239.

25. Simes, Military Guide, op. cit, p. 164; Simes, **Regulator**, op. cit., p. 2.

26. Document entitled, "School with Joseph Rhodes Eq.", Item 999, George Chalmers collection, Peter Force manuscripts, Library of Congress.

27. General Grey's Orderly Book, British Army Orderly Book, 28th Regiment, Feb. 23 to May 20, 1778. Rutgers University Library, microfilm, mss p. 25.

28. Ibid, mss p. 29.

29. Ibid, mss p. 40.

30. Journal of Andrew Bell, secretary of Sir Henry Clinton, kept during the march of the British Army through New Jersey, in 1778. New Jersey Historical Society Proceedings, V. VI, p. 15.

31. Orderly Book of the Second Battalion of British Grenadiers, June 1 - 27, 1778, kept by Lieutenant John Kennedy Strong, Grenadier Company, 64th Regiment of Foot. Presidential Papers of George Washington, Series 6B Volume 5, Library of Congress.

32. W. O. 71/87 p. 202 - 208.

33. W. O. 71/85 p. 290 - 307. All additional information concerning the participants in this trial is from this document.

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"The proportion of Women which ought to be allowed..." Female Camp Followers with the Continental Army

by John U. Rees

Like all the armies which preceded it the Continental Army was not just a community of men. Numbers of women and their accompanying children followed the troops throughout the war and performed a number of tasks which contributed to the welfare of the soldiers.

The number of women present with the army throughout the war was, on average, about one for every thirty men or approximately 3 percent of the total number of troops. It is evident that from the beginning of the war the numbers of women fluctuated greatly from regiment to regiment and, apparently, from company to company within each regiment. In December 1777 the return for the main army at Valley Forge showed a total 400 women present or one woman for forty-four enlisted men (though it is possible that there were more women with the army during the summer of that year). In January 1783 a return for the main army at New Windsor gave an average of one woman for every twenty-six enlisted men. During the intervening years the average ratios may have been within the range of one to thirty and one to thirty-five. From the available information it seems that early in the war it would not have been at all remarkable for an individual company to contain no women. This situation had changed by 1783 when the average was two women for each company with the main army.

The information which we do have concerning female camp followers with the American army is particularly interesting when compared to the numbers attached to the regiments of the Crown forces, especially those of the British troops. In February of 1783 Robert Morris referred to "the british Prisoners of War who have Herds of Women with them." This comment is borne out by the returns of British camp followers throughout the war. In May of 1777 the ratio of women with the British forces in New York was about one for every eight men, while the Germans had approximately one woman for every thirty men. Later in the war, during August of 1781, the troops in New York and its outposts were shown to have a ratio of one woman to every four and a half British troops, and one to fifteen for the Germans.

Regardless of their numbers, the women who followed the Continental Army during the war were important in a number of ways. Unlike some of their British counterparts most could not pay their own way if they were not on the list of those who drew rations. In their own words they "could earn their Rations, but the Soldier, nay the Officer, for whom they Wash has naught to pay them." They did, however, perform duties such as washing and cooking for those men

they were related to or had some association with. Additionally, it seems that as the war progressed these dual duties (most particularly laundering) were increasingly required of them in return for their continued acceptance with the army. Most importantly, besides these practical tasks, they provided some semblance of home life for the men in the army. This seemingly minor service was extremely important considering that the war of the Revolution continued for eight years and the soldiers fought tedium more often than they did the enemy. This was in some part attested to by Washington himself when he wrote that "I was obliged to give Provisions to the extra Women in these Regiments, or loose by Desertion, perhaps to the Enemy, some of the oldest and best Soldiers in the Service."

"Rations... Without Whiskey"
The Food Allowance for Women

It has generally been assumed that British General William Howe's orders of 1776 allowing a half ration per women and a quarter ration per child was the system followed by the Continental Army during the war. Contrary to this belief there is no concrete evidence that the Continental Army ever made use of this system of rationing for soldier's dependents. There is quite a bit of evidence, however, that Washington's forces took as their precedent the ration issues for women in the British and Provincial forces during the French and Indian War. In 1781 the returns for Colonel Joseph Vose's Light Battalion show two rations for each officer and one ration for each common soldier and woman. A "Return of the number of Women and Children... that drew drew Rations under the late Regulations..." lists the specific number of rations that were allowed prior to January of 1783. Under the "late Regulations" each women was given one full ration and each child a half ration. This is similar to the women's allowance during the period of the French and Indian war which consisted of either a full ration or two thirds of a ration of food.

The food ration issued to the troops and their followers was based on a standard originally set in 1776 as follows: "One pound of beef, or 3/4 of a pound of pork or one pound of fish, per day. One pound of bread or flour per day. Three pints of peas or beans per week, or vegetables equivalent, at one dollar per bushel for peas or beans. One pint of milk per man per day. One half-pint of rice, or one pint of Indian meal per man per week. One quart of spruce beer, or cider, per man per day, or nine gallons of mollasses per company of one hundred men per week. Three pounds of candles to one hundred men per week, for guards. Twenty pounds of soft, or eight pounds of hard, soap for one hundred men per week." Eventually a small amount of rum or other alchohol

was included in the basic ration. In 1782 the returns of women and children in Colonel Henry Jackson's Regiment stipulated that they be given "Rations... Without Whiskey."

Necessity and nutrition required that some method be found by which this basic ration could be supplemented. This was especially important since items such as milk, cider, vegetables and soap proved to be difficult, and often impossible, to obtain. In July of 1777 it was stipulated that "As nothing can be more comfortable and wholesome to the army than vegetables, every encouragement is to be given to the Country people, to bring them in [to market]:... The General recommends temporary ovens to each brigade, which, by men who understand it, can be erected in a few hours. Bread baked in these, will be much wholesomer than the sodden cakes [firecakes] which are but too commonly used."

To add to the problem of feeding the army the system of supplying the troops sometimes failed due to bad weather, crop failure, economic conditions or ineptitiude in the quartermaster department. At Valley Forge in the winter of 1778 it was necessary to temporarily adjust the daily rations for the army. In the General Orders of February 8th it was noted "that instead of the ration heretofore Issued there should be Issued a pound and a half of flouer, one lb of Beef or 3/4 Salt pork and a certain Quantity of Spirits..." In addition to this it had been previously ordered on January 29th that "The Commissaries in future to Issue [a] quart of Salt to every 100 lb fresh Beef." This was to prove more or less the common ration for the army during their winter cantonments.

Finally, the 1776 British system of a half ration for women was stipulated to be issued to those women left behind at Halifax after the army sailed on to New York. It is entirely possible, and even probable, that women with the British army when on campaign were given a larger amount of food.

"...some men washed their own clothing."
Women's Duties and Shelter

In August of 1777 General George Washington wrote that "the multitude of women in particular, especially those who are pregnant, or have children, are a clog upon every movement. The Commander in Chief therefore earnestly recommends it to the officers commanding brigades and corps, to use every reasonable method in their power to get rid of all such as are not absolutely necessary..." He was, however, to find it impossible to rid the army entirely of these persistent females who performed any number of "necessary" tasks. As Washington admitted later in the war, he "was obliged to give Provisions to the extra Women in

these Regiments, or loose by Desertion, perhaps to the Enemy, some of the oldest and best Soldiers in the Service."

Any females who chose to follow the army may have been alloted provisions but in return they were expected to perform some sort of service for the benefit of the troops. Their primary task was that of "Wash Women", a role which various documents describe them as performing from 1776 through 1783. During the 1776 campaign in the Mohawk Valley in New York one company of the 3rd New Jersey Regiment contained seventy-one enlisted men and three "Washer-Women", giving a ratio of one woman to twenty-four soldiers. In sharp contrast to these numbers was the proportion used in Colonel John Lamb's Artillery Regiment in September of 1780; "one Woman to Wash for ten." A final comparison is the number of "Wash Women" in the 9th Massachusetts Regiment over a period of three and a half months during the summer of 1782. The approximate average for those months was one laundress for every thirty-five enlisted men.

It is evident that although some women washed primarily for the enlisted men of the army others performed the same services for officers only. During the Siege of Yorktown follower Sarah Osborn "took her stand just back of the American tents, about a mile from the town, and busied herself washing, mending, and cooking for the soldiers, in which she was assisted by the other females; <u>some men washed their own clothing</u> (author's emphasis)." Another women, Maria Cronkite the wife of a fifer in the 1st New York Regiment, stated that she "accompanyed her husband... in the service... and continued in said service in the capacity of washerwomen for the officers untill the close of the war where her husband was duly discharged. That she had while in said service several children..." Due to the small numbers of women with the army, especially early in the war, many if not most of the men would have done their own washing.

The task of cooking provisions was usually performed by the men themselves in messes of six, the same number of men usually assigned to a tent. There were occasions when women were available or the soldier's duties made it necessary to have the followers prepare the food. At the Battle of Brandywine Jacob Nagle served with Proctor's Artillery. He described his situation at the onset of the action: "The provision waggons being sent a way, we ware three day without provisions excepting what the farmers brought in to sell in their waggons and what the soldiers could plunder from the farmers. I went to my father [the lieutenant colonel of the 9th Pennsylvania Regiment], his rigment being on our right, and received a neats tounge from him, and Mr. Hosner bought some potatoes and butter the evening before the Brittish arrived, and we concluded to have a glorious mess for breakfast. Mr. Hosner gave it to one of the soldiers wives that remained with the army to cook for us in

the morning. Early in the morning, she had the camp kittle on a small fier about 100 yards in the rear of the Grand Artillery, with all our delicious meal, which we expected to enjoy. The Brittish at this time hoisted the red flag on the top of the farm house on the rige of the hill a breast of us, and their artilery advancing towards us down the ploughed field, we then begin a cannonading... Unfortunately one of the enemies shot dismounted the poor camp kettle with the fier and all its contents away with it. The woman informed Mr. Folkner. He replied, 'Never mind, we have no time to eat now.' Therefore we made another fast day." At Yorktown in 1781 Sarah Osborn mentioned that she "cooked and carried in beef, and bread, and coffee (in a gallon pot) to the soldiers in the entrenchment." On the day of Cornwallis's surrender she stated that "having provisions ready, [she] carried the same down to the entrenchments that morning, and four of the soldiers whom she was in the habit of cooking for ate their breakfasts."

In many respects the women in the various regiments were accorded the same treatment as the common soldiers. As was previously noted they were given the same basic food ration as the enlisted men and it seems that this parity was extended when it came to shelter. General John Sullivan's division orders of August 17, 1777 not only stipulated that six enlisted men occupy a tent but alloted one tent for every six "Waggoners [or] weomen" as well. In conjunction with this order is a listing of mess squads in Captain Ross's Company of the 3rd New Jersey Regiment in June of 1777. In this roster of eight messes, seven contained five or six people, the same number assigned to a tent or approximately so. Two of the mess squads contained women, one of whom was Margaret Johnson, wife of Sergeant Samuel Johnson, and the other Elizabeth Evans, wife of Private Emmanuel Evans. It is probable that, due to the exigencies of army life, the women included in these two mess squads shared a tent with the men of their squad.

"...coming into the line of fire."
Women on the March or on Campaign

The followers of the army occasionally were exposed to the dangers of the battlefield, though this was the exception rather than the rule. The stated practice in the Continental Army through most of the war was that any women attached to the various regiments were to travel with the baggage of the army when on active campaign. However, when a detachment was formed for a short-term expedition or mission these women were often left behind at their current post or at some other designated location. On General John Sullivan's expedition against the Indians of Pennsylvania and New York in 1779 the women and children accompanied the

troops only as far Tioga in Pennsylvania. At that place a fort was built and only those women "as may be applied to the use of the Hospital, or may be deem'd necessary to keep the Soldier's clean at their Return" were to remain at the new post. The remainder were to be sent back to Wyoming where orders were given "to the Commissary... to issue Rations to those Women & Children." A year later on August 1, 1780, when Washington's Army was preparing to move against the British in New York City, it was ordered that the division and brigade commanders were "to exert themselves to get in readiness as fast as possible... Convalescents and such men as are otherwise absolutely unfit to march yet capable of doing duty in a fixed post are to be left at Verplanks and Stoney points... All the Women and Children of the Army are also to be left at these Posts for a few days where the commanding officers will see that they are furnished with rations as usual." When a detachment of troops under the Marquis de Lafayette was sent south in February of 1781 the wives of the soldiers were left behind, it being thought that the "service will be but a temporary one." It was later discovered by both the women and the soldiers themselves that they were to be absent longer than they thought and from May through July four women made their way south to join Vose's Massachusetts Light Battalion. Presumably other females also were able to rejoin the men in Lafayette's forces in Virginia. And in the summer of 1781 when a portion of the army was readying itself for the southward march to Yorktown it was desired that "as the Detachment under... Major General Lincoln are to consider themselves as Light-troops who are always supposed to be fit for action and free from every incumbrance [the Commander in Chief] cannot help advising them to take the present opportunity of depositing at West Point such of their Women as are not able to undergo the fatigue of frequent marches and also every article of Baggage which they can in any wise dispence with..."

The women following the troops were, as previously stated, supposed to march with the baggage wagons. The first such order was issued in July of 1777 and was repeated at least once each subsequent year until 1781. In 1780 one such order stipulated that the officer commanding the baggage escort "is to allow no women to ride in the waggons unless their peculiar circumstances require it." Sarah Osborn, the wife of a commissary sergeant who in the company of three other females traveled with the baggage of Washington's Army as it marched to Yorktown in the late summer of 1781, was one of the lucky ones. She was allowed the use of a horse for at least part of the trip southward, though at other times she walked or rode in a wagon. It is extremely doubtful that many female camp followers were afforded the use of a horse. If the women with the troops elected (and

were permitted) to stay with the soldiers, they would have had to rely primarily on their own two feet.

An example of the occasional disregard for standing orders was given by those women who were present at the Battle of Brandywine in 1777. One account (previously given) describes a woman from an unknown regiment trying to cook while under fire during the battle while another describes the women of the 6th Pennsylvania Regiment who took "the empty canteens of their husbands and friends and returned with them filled with water... during the hottest part of the engagement, although frequently cautioned as to the danger of coming into the line of fire." The day before the action a directive was given that "No baggage is to be kept [with the army]... that can be dispensed with..." The inclusion of women with this unnecessary baggage is inferred by the General Order of July 10, 1777 that all "Women [were]... to march with the baggage." Additionally the General Orders for September 13th attempted to rein in any recalcitrant camp followers by ordering that "No woman under any pretence whatsoever to go with the army, but to follow the baggage." This last order indicates that the disobedience of the female followers was an ongoing problem. Other women known to have marched among the troops or to have been present on the field of battle, were Mrs. Grier and Mrs. Warner who marched with Arnold's troops to Quebec in 1775, Margaret Corbin who was wounded at Fort Washington in 1776, Anna Maria Lane, wounded at the Battle of Germantown, and Mary Hays at the battle of Monmouth in 1778.

(primary source, John U. Rees "'... the multitude of women' An Examination of the Numbers of Female Camp Followers With the Continental Army", The Brigade Dispatch (Journal of the Brigade of the American Revolution) three parts; Vol. XXIII, No. 4 (Autumn 1992); Vol. XXIV, No. 1 (Winter 1993); Vol. XXIV, No. 2 (Spring 1993))

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A Note About Laundry and the Second Pennsylvania Regiment

The importance of cleanliness in giving their men a military appearance was not overlooked by commanding officers and some probably realized it also kept the amount of sickness down as well. In orders to his division of Pennsylvanians in March, 1778, Anthony Wayne notes: "As there is no Greater or Surer Mark of Discipline than Cleanliness So there is nothing More conducive to health and Spirit" and in May he exempts his troops from drill "every Fryday afternoon" to "wash their linnen" and bathe. Among the roles both British and American campfollowers were expected to assume in their regiments was that of laundress.

In the Historical Society of Pennsylvania are several original orderly books of the Second Pennsylvania Regiment. An entry in one indicates washing was both an obligation and also a way of earning some extra money, at least in *that* unit. The passage also hints that there was some controversy regarding what the women were charging and that the regimental bureaucracy had to step in to preserve harmony:

Regimental Orders Oct. 7th 1778

"...agreeable to Col. Stewart's Orders, the officers met and agreed to the following prices--the Women to find Soap, for Washing a Shirt Six pence, one pair of stockings two pence one pair of Breeches five pence a Hunting Shirt five pence, in all two Shilling;-the men to find soap, for Washing one shirt four pence, one pair of stockings one penny, one pair of breeches or Overhalls, three pence, Hunting Shirt four pence and stock three pence, in all one Shilling and three pence; a soldiers pay per week is Eleven Shillings Eight Pence; a soldiers pay for washing per week (providing he has the above articles washed) two per Week, four Shillings.-N.B. if the women find soap by the above Calculation, supposing a Woman to wash for ten men soldiers brings her 20 Shilling per week and leaves her sufficient time to Earn twice as much more, for the officers washing; this Regulation to Respect the Non Commissioned officers and Soldiers only. The commissioned Officers to agree for their washing any way they chuse-

Capt Patterson president

Should any woman refuse to work for a soldier at the above rate he must make complaint to the officer commanding the Co. to which he belongs, who finding that it proceeds from laziness or any other improper cause he is to immediately dismiss her from the Regt. Viz. if she attempts to remain afterwards he must have her drummed out as the Col is determined no woman shall draw rations from the Continent in his Regt. unless they make use of their endeavors to keep their men clean."

-Paul Loane

An Excerpt From

Founding Mothers

By Linda Grant DePauw
(published by Houghton Mifflin Company)

[Written in 1975, the author of this somewhat flawed book did not have the benefit of the research contained elsewhere in this Primer. Readers should beware of statements which seem based more on assumption and Bicentennial hype than fact, some of which I have tried to point out. Nevertheless, it is a credible general overview of the world of the Revolutionary War campfollower, with several good quotes, and is included here for your further information.-PL]

When the military conflict began, in April, 1775, it was expected that women would participate. In addition to sporadic mob activities, women saw combat in three roles: as campfollowers with Continental troops, as regular soldiers who disguised their sex, and as irregular fighters on the frontier affiliated with local militia units.

Nineteenth-century historians, reading the practices of the Victorian era back into the eighteenth century, casually assumed that the campfollowers of the American Revolution were prostitutes. They seem to have felt that the only way to handle the thousands of females who accompanied the army was to ignore them or, at best, to give them a few sentences in which they refer vaguely to women of "vicious character." Consequently, while every schoolchild is reminded of the hardships of American men at Valley Forge, the many women who suffered for the patriot cause at least as much as the men they followed are totally blacked out of history or else casually slandered.

Let it be made quite clear that in eighteenth-century America the term "campfollower" was by no means a synonym for whore. Today the campfollowers would be called WACs, or field nurses or army wives. They were respectable married women, frequently pregnant and usually accompanied by their children, who were recognized as an essential part of the Military organization. They were not treated equally with the male troops---they traveled with the baggage and received only half rations---but their contribution to the military effort was recognized by officers and men on both sides. Campfollowers had served with the regular troops in all the wars with French and Indians in the eighteenth century. Women who had served in many campaigns viewed the army life as a career just as their husbands did.

This attitude is illustrated by a petition sent by an army wife to the commander of her husband's regiment after she had been put in jail for using abusive language to an officer [incident actually from French & Indian War, written June 4, 1758, at Carlisle, Pa. Martha and spouse were jailed for having verbally attacked their Colonel, Henry Bouquet-PL]: *"I have been a Wife 22 years to have traveled with my husband every Place or Country the Company march too and have workt very hard ever since I was in the Army. I hope yr Honour will be so good as to Pardon me this onct time that I may go with my Poor Husband one time more to carry him and my good Officers water in ye Hottest Battle as I have done before. Yr unfortunate Petitioner and Humble Servant, Martha May."*

The British armies brought some soldiers' wives with them from England, Ireland, and Germany. During the War, many British and Hessian troops married American women who followed them in the army. It appears that the number of women with the British approximately doubled between 1777 and 1781. The English soldiers eventually had one woman for every one and one half men and the German mercenaries had one woman for every fifteen men.

Just as Soldiers in the regular armies of Europe were recruited from a level of society so debased that it had no counterpart in the New World, so the wives of the British soldiers appeared so wretched that they shocked the Americans. Many were abandoned far from home when it was inconvenient for the British to transport them with the army.* Others stuck with their men even after the officers cut off their rations and they were forced to live on what their husbands could spare. A Boston woman left this description of the women with the army captured by the Americans at Saratoga in 1777: *"I never had the least Idea that the Creator produced such a sordid set of creatures in human Figure-poor, dirty, emaciated men, great numbers of women, who seemed to be the beasts of burden having a bushel basket on their back, by which they were bent double, the contents deemed to be Pots and Kettles, various sorts of Furniture, children peeping thro' gridirons and other utensils, some very young infants who were born on the road, the women bare feet, cloathed in dirty rags, such effluvia filld the air while they were passing, had they not been smoaking all The time, I should have been apprehensive of being contaminated by them.**"* These unfortunate women, who were rarely provided for adequately from army stores, became a special scourge to the civilian population, whether Loyalist or Patriot, in every area the British army passed through. It was said they took peculiar pleasure in stealing from and insulting the civilian women who lived in the comfortable little cottages and farmhouses along the line of march.

In the early days of the war there was a great shortage of women on the Patriot side. As the war progressed the number of women with the American Army increased. It would appear, however, that there were never as many women with the American armies as with the British.***

Most of the American soldiers joined Washington's army at least partly for economic reasons. It is probable that women also had economic motives for joining. As the movements of the British troops made refugees of civilians, women who could not support themselves and their families when deprived of a husband's assistance in farm or shop, found the campfollower's stipend extremely attractive. The American army provided the women who worked for the troops with half rations for themselves and quarter rations for each child. There was no such thing as a dependent's allowance in eighteenth century armies. Only women who actually accompanied the troops were allowed to share army rations. In 1779, when a number of wives whose husbands were on expedition into the Indian country where, it was well known, women and children were in special danger, applied to be allowed to draw rations while remaining at West Point, General Washington refused. "*This is a thing which I have never known to be allowed,*" he wrote, "*and which, if admitted in one instance, might be claimed by the families of the whole Army.*"

If a woman who wished to march with the army did not have a husband to follow or if her husband should be killed, the American army was liberally provided with chaplains to help her form a new connection. At the time, the American officers, who prided themselves on their moral superiority

*I don't think so. Simply abandoning the unit's women and children would have caused a mutiny within the ranks of most American and British regiments and army commanders knew this very well.-PL

** No doubt that campfollowers were a poor, tattered and usually desperate group. However, keep in mind that this description refers to the women of a defeated army that had been marched 200 miles in 13 days from New York to Massachusetts. They were probably a particularly wretched lot. A captured British officer writes of their confinement near Cambridge; "It was not infrequent for 30 or 40 persons, men, women and children, to be indiscriminately crowded together in one small, miserable, open hut; a scanty portion of straw their bed, their own blankets their only covering."-PL

***Probably only in the very early days, as the information elsewhere in this book indicates.-PL

to the "corrupt" British, took good care that no "lewd women" appeared in camp. As early as June, 1776, Colonel Israel Hutchinson., who was in command of Dorchester after the siege of Boston, ordered inspection of the women "*that the wheat may be selected from the Tares (if any be found).*" But the inspectors found only legitimate wives and children.

Eventually there were so many refugees following the army that General Washington found them a burden. They slowed the movements of the army dangerously. In August, 1777, as Washington was attempting to maneuver his army to protect Philadelphia from the invading army of General Howe without risking capture himself he issued the following order: "*In the present marching state of the army, every encumbrance proves greatly prejudicial to the service; the multitude of women in particular, especially those who are pregnant, or have children, are a clog upon every movement. The Commander in Chief therefore earnestly recommends it to the commanding brigades and corps, to use every reasonable method in their power to get rid of all such as are not absolutely necessary; and the admission or continuance of any, who shall, or may have come to the army since its arrival in Pennsylvania, is positively forbidden, to which point the officers will give particular attention.*" A few weeks later, as an engagement seemed imminent, it was ordered that "*every species of baggage...will now be stored - women are expressly forbid any longer, under any license at all, to ride in the wagons, and the Officers earnestly called upon to permit no more than are absolutely necessary, and such as are actually useful, to follow the army.*"

Washington was, however, very reluctant to order wives to leave the army even when the proportion of women to men went well over the one to fifteen ratio authorized by the Continental Congress He believed that many of his best troops would desert if their families were abandoned. Furthermore, the services of the campfollowers were essential.

In an age when infection and disease killed far more soldiers than enemy bullets, the traditional women's work---feeding the men, nursing them, and keeping them clean was not expendable to any army. Few men were trained in these "womanly" skills. In the early days of the war, before many women had joined the troops, it was almost impossible to maintain minimum standards of hygiene in the American camp. "*Many of the Americans have sickened and died of the dysentery,*" wrote an observer during the siege of Boston, "*brought upon them in a great measure through an inattention to cleanliness. When at home, their female relations put them upon washing their hands and faces, and keeping themselves neat and clean; but, being absent from such monitors, through an indolent, heedless turn of mind, they have neglected the means of health, have grown filthy, and poisoned their constitution by nastiness.*"

A year later, when Congress sent a committee to Ticonderoga to report on conditions there, an inspection of the hospital at Fort George revealed that there were four hundred sick and wounded soldiers who "*suffered much for Want of good female Nurses*" It should be remembered, however, that the eighteenth century considered too much cleanliness unwholesome. When Washington ordered that the troops should have time off to bathe every Friday afternoon, he also stipulated that no man was to be permitted to spend more than ten minutes in the water.

Campfollowers were also essential to maintain the clothing of the troops. Just as shirts and stockings were unavailable to the army at any price unless women at home would take on the extra work required to produce them, shirts and stockings quickly turned to rags without women with the troops to repair them. Contemporary observers felt that much of the ragged, unkempt appearance of the American army was due to their having an insufficient number of women to wash and mend. "*Not being used to doing things of this sort,*" wrote one man, the American soldiers "*choose rather to let their linen, etc., rot upon their backs than to be at the trouble of cleaning 'em themselves.*"

Although most of the campfollowers, like most of Continental troops, came from the lower class, campfollowing was not confined to poor women. Officers' wives also followed the flag. Martha

Washington boasted that she had heard the first and last gun of every campaign of the war although she only joined her husband in camp and did not go along the line of march. Rebecca Biddle and Kitty Greene were also found at camp. Lucy Knox, wife of General Henry Knox, did accompany her husband on the march and was said to follow the camp fire as certainly as the drum.

On the British side, some officers clung to their prerogatives as "gentlemen" by taking mistresses. The most notorious was General William Howe's mistress: Mrs. Loring, who was known as "the sultana." She and Sir William spent three years of campaigning together, making the best of army life by spending a good deal of time drinking and gambling. Patriots sneered at the British general's gallantry and attributed his failure to launch a decisive attack against the American army on fondness for his paramour. As one wit expressed it:

Sir William, he, snug as a flea
Lay all this time a-snoring
Nor dreamed of harm as he lay warm
In bed with Mrs. Loring

Not all British officers, of course, indulged in such scandalous behavior. Most seem to have been satisfied with the wives who followed them accompanied by ladies' maids, cooks, and stores of wine and delicacies.* The highest ranking campfollower was probably Baroness von Riedesel, wife of the Hessian general. She came to America to meet her husband, bringing their three small daughters, all under five. She bore a fourth child, named America, during the war. For six years the Baroness traveled with her husband in a private coach together with two maids and the children. She kept a detailed journal that provides the sharpest picture available of the life of an upper-class Revolutionary War campfollower.

The presence of upper-class ladies in camp made it possible for officers of both sides to continue some semblance of civilized life. Gambling and conversation were possible without ladies, but the dancing that was so popular among colonial aristocrats was not. An attempt by French officers to teach the gavotte and quadrille to Indian women at some of the desolate outposts during the French and Indian War had not been notably successful. General Washington was exceedingly fond of dancing. We have a record of him dancing with Mrs. Greene "*upwards of three hours without once sitting down*" at what General Greene described as a "*pretty little frisk*" in March, 1779, and dancing with Lucy Knox, the plump wife of General Henry Knox in May, 1782. A newspaper reported Washington's "*dignified and graceful air*," as the couple "*carried down a dance of twenty people in the arbor on the green grass.*"

Although the living conditions of upper-class campfollowers were superior to those of their poorer sisters---just as the officers lived better than the enlisted men---they were not idle parasites on camp supplies. Although they were not sent out to forage for horses or to clean the barracks, they did mend uniforms, sew shirts, knit stockings, and assemble baskets of food and home remedies for sick soldiers. In an emergency such a woman might also supervise a field hospital.** She might also aid in such clerical chores as copying enclosures for letters to transcribing file copies of outgoing communications. The services such women performed usually won them the gratitude and admiration of the troops as persons in their own right, not merely as ornamental wives to their officers.

*We're talking about only a handful of the highest ranking officers here. Such splendor was far beyond company grade officers and most regimental commanders.-PL

**They might supervise other campfollowers who worked there, perhaps. The army surgeons would run the hospital.-PL

Some Quotes Regarding

Camp Followers of the Revolution

Another book to deal with the subject of campfollowers was Walter Hart Blumenthal's *Women Camp Followers of the American Revolution.* Written in 1952, again without the information available to us today, the volume did contain some interesting 18th Century quotes. Some of these have been extracted and appear here for your information.

Regarding the British Army:

A report...dated May 20, 1777, at New York, transmits statistical Returns to John Robinson Esq., Secretary to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury. The commissary writes that the victualling transports from Cork had arrived, and that on one of the returning ships he is sending with this letter an inventory of army stores on hand, together with the number of British and German forces daily victualled, which is 36,000, including waggoners, boatmen, skinners women at half count, children at quarter, and 500 rebel prisoners. He adds: "*In the computation is included the Women and Children belonging to each Regiment, which are indeed very numerous beyond any Idea of imagination and although the former are victualled at the rate of moiety of each man's allowance, and the latter at a fourth only, yet the expence is very considerable. As it is my Duty as well as my inclination, to reduce this as well as every other extraordinary expence, consistent with propriety and humanity, I hope we shall be able with the advice and concurrence of the General, to adopt some plan in order to curtail in some degre this enormous Expence.*"

As early as midsummer of 1775 a shipload of sixty widows and orphans of the slain, together with 170 amputee and invalided soldiers and officers, were embarked for England on the brig Charming Nancy. Though the wife of the General, Mistress Gage herself, sailed on this passage, the conditions aboard were abominable as usual in that day.

Burgoyne issued an order at his camp near Ticonderoga, July 3, 1777, forbidding that liquor be either sold or given to "the Savages," and stating: "*Commanding Officers are to assemble the Sutlers and Women of the respective Regiments, and inform them that the first person found guilty of disobedience shall instantly have their liquors and sutling stores destroyed and [be] turned out of Camp, besides receiving such Corporal Punishment as a Court Martial shall inflict.*"

A fortnight after the above warning, the playboy General, at the lower end of Lake Champlain, issued another order against "*vending of Spirituous Liquors by the Sutlers or any other followers of the army...to Soldiers, Women or Savages,*" and requiring officers to "*examine all Huts, Tents, or other abodes in the rear of the Encampment,*" any offenders to be taken prisoner and the liquor "*belonging to him or her destroyed, and burn the dwelling.*"

Various orders pertaining to...camp women indicate that their presence was troublesome rather than efficacious from the early days of the war onward. Eleven days before Bunker (Breed's) Hill, General Thomas Gage, who despite his American wife served the King, issued this order at Boston, June 6, 1775: "*Notwithstanding the care that has been taken to Provide the Women with proper places to stay in, some of them have broke into houses and Buildings that were infected with the Small Pox, by which there is Danger of its Spreading thro' the Town, Particularly a place that was shut up at the North end on Account of that Disorder, during the Winter. The Gen'l therefore desires the Off'rs Commanding Corps to have the Strictest enquiery immediately made, to discover the Women Concern'd, whom he is determined to order on Board Ship & Send away.*"

General Henry Clinton demanded a count of the number of females "*actually with each Corps,*" and ordered (Haddonfield, N.J., June 18, 1778) that: "*The Women of the Army are constantly to march upon the flanks of the Baggage of their respective Corps, and the Provost Martial has received positive Orders to Drum out any Woman who shall dare to disobey this Order.*" On July 3 one was so drummed out after being lashed.

Regarding the American Army:

Colonel Ebenezer Huntington due to depreciated currency found his laundry bill exceeding his entire compensation. Writing to his brother from camp near Morristown, January 8, 1780, he declared: "*Money is good for nothing ... my Washing bill is beyond the limits of my Wages. I am now endeavoring to hire some Woman to live in Camp to do the Washing for myself and some of the Officers, th'o I am aware that many Persons will tell the Story to my disadvantage. But be that as it may, I am determined on it, if I can hire one on better terms than hiring my Washing.*"

Three weeks before Washington marched into Philadelphia, and while encamped on the heights at Roxborough, a day's brief march away, he forbade any new women being permitted to become camp followers, and sought to get rid of all those "*not absolutely necessary.*" In this order of August 4, 1777, he wrote: "*In the present marching state of the army, every encumbrance proves greatly prejudicial to the service; the multitude of women in particular, especially those who are pregnant, or have children, are a clog upon every movement. The Commander in Chief therefore earnestly recommends it to the officers commanding brigades and corps, to use every reasonable method in their power to get rid of all such as are not absolutely necessary; and the admission or continuance of any, who shall, or may have come to the army since its arrival in Pennsylvania, is positively forbidden, to which point the officers will give particular attention.*"

On a sweltering Sunday, August 23, with Washington at their head, some eight or nine thousand men marched through Philadelphia, "down Front street," as Alexander Graydon tell us. But beforehand, Washington issued rigorous orders as to the decorum and appearance of the troops. From headquarters at Stenton, near Germantown, he that day ordered, in part: "*If any soldier shall dare to quit his ranks, he shall receive Thirty-nine lashes at the first halting place afterwards. ...Not a Woman belonging to the army is to be seen with the troops on their march*

afterwards. ...Not a Woman belonging to the army is to be seen with the troops on their march thro' the City. ...All the rest of the waggons, baggage, and spare horses are to file off to the right, avoid the City entirely, and move onto the bridge at the middle ferry, and there halt."

So meticulous was this order that it further required: "*The drums and fifes of each brigade are to be collected in the center of it; and a tune for the quick step played, but with such moderation, that the men may step to it with ease; and without dancing along, or totally disregarding the music, as too often has been the case.*"

The men did as they were told; but not the women, it would seem. In what may be reasonably authentic description, one limner of the Revolution thus conjures the scene: "*They were spirited off into the quaint, dirty little alleyways and side streets. But they hated it. The army had barely passed through the main thoroughfares before these camp followers poured after their soldiers again, their hair flying, their brows beady from the heat, their belongings slung over one shoulder, chattering and yelling in sluttish shrills as they went, and spitting in the gutters.*"

This was doubtless the picture at its worst. Next day the army was at Darby, across the new floating bridge over the Schuylkill River at Middle Ferry, and soon to plod its way toward Chester and Wilmington. That day, Washington issued this,order at Darby: "*The Commander in Chief positively forbids the straggling of soldiers...and the General Officers commanding these divisions will take every precaution in their power effectually to prevent it; and likewise to prevent an inundation of bad women from Philadelphia; and for both purposes, a guard is to be placed on the road between the camp and the City, with particular orders to stop and properly deal with both.*" 10

Human nature being what it was, and is, conditions compelled Washington amid his trials at Valley Forge to issue an order, February 4, 1778: "*The most pernicious consequences having arisen from suffering persons, women in particular, to pass and repass from Philadelphia to camp under Pretence of coming out to visit their Friends in the Army and returning with necessaries to their families, but really with an intent to entice the soldiers to desert; All Officers are desired to exert their utmost endeavors to prevent such interviews in future by forbiding the soldiers under the severest penalties from having any communication with such persons and by ordering them when found in camp to be immediately turned out of it.*" Or they were to be arrested for trial and punishment if "*under peculiar circumstances of suspicion.*"

At Valley Forge, May 31, 1778, there were cases of smallpox. In an order of that day, the sick were to be left behind, and, "*Commanding Officers of Regiments will assist Regimental Surgeons in procuring as many Women of the Army as can be prevailed on to serve as Nurses to them who will be paid the usual Price.*"

Cap
White linen or cotton with hair tucked underneath. No bangs.

Chemise
White linen or cotton.

Bodice
Shortgown, bedgown or jacket with sleeves in plain linen, cotton or approved print (spotted here to show different garment)

Apron
Must be linen: white, dark or approved check or stripe.

Petticoat
Colored linen.

Shoes and Stockings
White or colored cotton or wool stockings worn with appropriate 18th Century shoes.



NOTE: Linen is more fire resistant than cotton and safer around camp fires.

Headrag
Headrag over hair may replace cap.
Hair must be tucked underneath.

Fischu
Must be approved cotton or linen. Worn over bodice.

Chemise
Must be white linen or cotton.

Stays
For the correct silhouette.

Apron
Must be linen: white, dark or approved check or stripe.

Petticoat
Colored linen.

Shoes and Stockings
White or colored cotton or wool stockings worn with appropriate 18th Century shoes.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

A Special Note: This is a list of some of the more outstanding books on 18th century costume. The reading of only one or two books will not make the reader an "expert." It is suggested that readers explore several sources, as well as investigate books available through Interlibrary Loan at your local library. Books marked with an asterisk (*) are available in paperback.

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Books to Avoid

Klinger, Robert L. Distaff Sketch Book: A Collection of Notes and Sketches on Women's Dress in America, 1774-1793.(Inaccurate and poorly rendered drawings, no documentation for information.)

Warwick, Pitz & Wykoff. Early American Dress: The Colonial and Revolutionary Periods. (Poor documentation. However, the book does have many black and white reproductions of dated portraits.)

Worrell, Estelle Ansley. Early American Costume.

A NOTE ON USING PAINTINGS AS DOCUMENTATION:

Keep in mind that portraits were painted mainly of the wealthy in England and America. Furthermore, English artists had the romantic convention of sometimes painting their subjects in 17th century (Van Dyke) dress. American itinerant painters, on the other hand, pre-painted the clothing and background, and filled in the face of the patron.

American Artists

Benjamin West (painted in England)
Charles Willson Peale
John Trumbull
John Singleton Copely
Gilbert Stuart

English Artists

William Williams (Also in Phil.)
Thomas Gainsboro
William Hogarth+
Sir Joshua Reynolds
George Stubbs+
Alan Ramsay
John Blackburn
Joseph Wright+

+ represented common folks