

Women's dress for Civil War Impressions.

The following is a list of the basic items in which you will need and some vendors in which you can purchase these, along with some Facebook pages dedicated to helping women achieve an authentic look by both advice and items for sale. I also would recommend buying some of the items second hand when you are first getting started. I've seen great deals on used dresses and outerwear. I have put some average cost of what I've seen for sale, so you can have a general idea on what you should expect to pay. And of course, the ladies of the 12th are always available to answer any questions and offer suggestions. It's better to ask than make a costly purchase to find out it's not right for the era. I can't tell you how many times I've seen that happen. Also, if you sew, you may be able to make some of these items.

Drawers- These are what we now call underpants, however they will not resemble your modern garments. They are most commonly white cotton, they are knee length. They have traditionally been split for ease of toileting, although some women now wear them sewn. These generally will cost you \$20-\$50

Chemise- This is what we now call a slip. It is also white cotton. Items that were worn against the skin were most always white cotton as this was easier to wash. It is an off the shoulder fit, and generally extends to the knee. It can be worn tucked into your drawers or outside your drawers. Whichever way is most comfortable for you. I have found these from \$25-\$50

Stockings- Stocking most commonly are white or black. Black is generally day wear and white evening wear. They extend to above your knee, under your drawers. You should expect to pay around \$10-\$20

Corset- This is a very important item. It not only serves as your bra, but gives you the proper look and fit for the dresses of the era. These are most often made to your measurements, but I've heard of some women getting them "off the rack" and having a good fit. This really depends on your body style. They are generally white or off white. They are a different shape than the modern ones you can get at some lingerie shops, so be careful not to make a costly mistake. Corsets are well worth the investment to get the right one. Corsets give you a tidy waist, not tiny waist, so don't think you need to have these so tight they are uncomfortable. When fit properly they are very comfortable. \$100-\$200

Under petticoat- This is a white cotton slip that is worn under your hoop. It is worn for modesty, if by chance your hoop where to flip up, no one would be able to see your drawers. \$25-\$45

Hoop or Cage- These give your dress the beautiful bell shape. They sit at your waist and are hemmed about 4-6 inches from the floor. \$60-\$125

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Over Petticoat- This is worn over your hoop or cage to soften the look so the ribbing is not easily seen through your dress. \$40-\$60

Dress- There are many different types of dresses for the era, however for the beginner, the very best bet for cost and versatility is a one-piece day dress. Dresses are made of cotton, wool or silk, the shoulder sits off the natural shoulder giving the drop shoulder look. The dress should be hemmed so not to drag on the ground and get dirty, yet not short enough to see your stockings above your shoes. For the beginner, you will get more use out of a cotton dress. Don't be fooled by the outfits out there that are white shirts with colored skirts, these are not proper. \$125-\$200

Shoes- The most versatile shoe is a black leather ankle high boot with a small heel. There are some fancier ones, but these are the most useful and comfortable. Every beginner should start with the basic leather boot. \$50-\$125

Bonnets- Bonnets are made of straw, felt, fabric. Hats were also worn in very specific styles. Women wore head coverings when going out. \$25 for fabric sunbonnets up to \$150+ for the fancy bonnets.

Jackets- There are many styles of outerwear. There are coats, cloaks and mantles as well as shawls. Depending on weather and event. From about \$40 for a shawl up to \$200 for a Winter weight coat or mantle.

Gloves- Gloves were worn when women went out. They could be leather or cloth. \$5-\$35

Accessories- purses, jewelry, bags, hair combs, belts, collars, cuffs, under sleeves, handkerchief, parasols, this is where you can make the outfit your own. Just be careful to remember that these also must be period correct.

Vendors I have used and had good experiences with quality, price and authenticity:

www.abrahamslady.com

www.originals-by-kay.com

There are some online sutlers that carry women's items, just be careful to make sure they are correct for our period. Word to the wise-just because a sutler carries it, doesn't necessarily make it period correct, buyer beware.

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www.fcsutler.com The only thing I like on this page for authenticity's sake is the ladies high top shoes, the rest is not correct for our use.

www.blockaderunner.com On this site, the items that would work for our period are. 1860's corset (however I prefer Originals by Kay for this), Ladies cotton stockings in white or black, The ladies traveling boot, Peterson's style crocheted purse, civil war/Victorian crocheted miser purse, cameo broches. Nothing else looks like it would work.

www.ccsutlery.com On this site, the items that would work for our period are-chemise, ladies hoop-6 bone, 119 inch , ladies shawl-crochet wool, ladies hankie, ladies lace boots. The rest on this site is not right for our time period.

www.milkcreek.com On this site the Women's wool cloak would be the only item for our tie period.

www.tstitches.com On this site, the items that are correct for our time period are-Chemise, corset,ladies drawers, petticoats, patterns for underpinnings.

Facebook pages with items for sale and great advice:

The Civilian Civil War Closet

The Civil War Jewelry Box

Respectfully submitted.

Mrs. Amaritnant

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