

Gentlemen

The following thoughts are applicable to every impression for this event.

It is June 1864 in upstate NY. Elmira has been the site of a New York military recruiting & draft rendezvous since April of 1861. This means there has been and continues to be a significant amount of uniformed Union troops about town. By 1864, there have been more than a half dozen Federal infantry, cavalry, artillery and engineer units raised from the local communities. A General Hospital has been in operation to house recuperating victims of battlefield and disease related maladies. It is also about to become the location for a Confederate prisoner of war camp.

This means the overt presence of Confederate impressions is not an option (i.e. no Confederate patriotic clothing, flags, secession cockades etc). There are ways you can however, harbor personal Southern sympathies, after all, the Presidential campaign of 1864, is beginning to ramp up between the Lincoln Republicans and the McClellan Peace Democrats. There are also references to soldiers "marching" on persons thought to have been less than supportive of the Union cause, so there obviously was a difference of opinions present in local communities.

Elmira was an active stop on the Underground Railroad supported by a number of prominent citizens, whose names today grace many of the city streets. Gentlemen of the community are actively engaged in a wide range of business activities and employments associated with the wartime economy. Teamsters, carpenters and laborers are generously represented on the contract logs, as are many local shop keepers and hoteliers providing goods from paper, tinware, and lodging.

A wide range of impression opportunities are available from the most affluent to inhabitants of the Poor House. The following links are a good place to begin your familiarization with Elmira:

- Elmira City Directory 1863-64 <https://www.joycetice.com/director/1863elma.htm>
- Chemung County 1860 Census <https://www.joycetice.com/censusc/1860elmr.htm>

Once you have been approved & registration fee submitted, you will be added to the Citizens of the Chemung Valley FB group, where specific event related questions can be asked & answered in detail.

When do I have to be in period attire?

The event is scheduled to go "live" at 10PM Friday & run through the Sunday memorial service. This means if you are staying on site, you will need to insure you have appropriate garments on at all times during that period, including night time comfort runs to the outhouse and morning meal preparations. If staying off site, you only need to be in period clothing when you arrive at the event site.

What kind of materials should my clothes be made from?

The full range of wools, silks, linen, cottons & blends of these are all acceptable. We do ask that they be paired appropriately with the style. Lower economic class impressions are not limited to low end fabrics, as the better fabrics can be in the form of hand me downs or second hand market purchases, however, these garments should have that "well worn" character about them. Bottom line your wardrobe choices of style and fabrics need to be consistent with your chosen impression.

Are there any styles not allowed?

Yes. Unless you are part of the Veteran Reserve guard detachment, you may not wear any uniform items. Steampunk tail coats are also not acceptable. Your wardrobe choices of style and fabrics need to be consistent with your chosen impression.

What kind of weather should I prepare for?

June can be a fickle month. It can be extremely rainy & chilly, mild & pleasant, hot & humid or any combination during the course of one day. Planning a wardrobe in layers would best serve you. Check the weather forecast just prior to your departure, as forecasts more than 3 days out tend not to be very reliable, due to lake effect weather inconsistencies.

Can I carry my cellphone?

Yes, as long as it is unseen AND unheard. Keep it in your pocket & on vibrate if you have a situation that requires you to be on call. Please avoid flashing it in front of folks to take pictures. Be considerate of others. If it is modern, it can and will be seen at the most inopportune time.

Undergarments

We are not going to get in your Knickers, but wearing appropriate period styled undergarments enhance your comfort

Drawers- Cotton or linen of a period construction style.

Undershirts- Cotton, linen, wool or silk of a period construction style. Those who choose laborer positions may find items of this nature useful

Socks – cotton or wool. You won't be asked to take off your shoes/boots, but if you plan on removing your footwear keep in mind your socks can be seen.

Footgear

Shoes – Front lacing or side elastic Congress style are acceptable. Military are discouraged, but if that is all you have it beats Nikes.

Boots – Of appropriate civilian style & materials.

Shirts

Dress shirts – Highly recommended for all impressions above working laborer. Made of fine white cotton, lawn or linen, pleated or unpleated fronts. Buttons of shell, glass or china. It may have an attached or detachable starched collar.

Working man's shirts – Cotton, wool or mixed fiber. Plain white cotton, woven checks /stripes, or period correct prints. Buttons of shell, glass, china, paper or tin backed tin. Collars can be tape or stand style.

Overshirts- Wool preferred. Demilitarize “battleshirts” by removing obvious signs of military usage like buttons with state seals. Acceptable buttons as listed for a working man's shirt.

Trousers

All trousers must be of civilian pattern. NO sky blue kersey. Wool, cotton, linen or denim are acceptable. Choice of material should track with your occupation. Jean wool trousers commonly used for a Confederate impression are discouraged for several reasons, the first being you do not want to be mistaken for an escaped

POW. Secondly, you have access to fabrics or ready made clothing of better grade for all occupations. Bone or tin buttons.

Vests

Single or double breasted. Required when wearing a frock coat . Not required when actively engaged in work, but required upon leaving work site, unless wearing an overshirt or overalls. Strongly encouraged for all “white collar” occupations. Made of wool, silk, appropriate mixes with stripes, plaids or solids. Plain cotton vests are discouraged. Buttons to be fabric covered, glass or fancy metal cast with or without patterns

Coats

Frock coats – Strongly encouraged for all business/professional men cut in appropriate style & made out of a lighter finer wool than blanket grade. Linen is acceptable in natural colors, but has not been commonly found in the area. Fabric covered buttons are the most common. There should be no external pocket flaps at the waist or external breast pocket. With the exception of a linen frock should be lined.

Paletots- Acceptable in wool, being the most common, weight & fiber as listed for frock coats of varied solid darker colors or linen in natural colors. Buttons fabric covered or hard rubber. External pocket flaps & breast pockets acceptable.

Sack coats – Wool, cotton twill in darker colors or linen in natural colors. Coats should fall below the hips. For “militarized” sack coats, military style buttons need to be swapped out for the same reason as brown jean wool trousers or discouraged. You do not want to get picked up by the Provost Guard and delivered to the prison stockade.

Headgear/Hair

Choice should be in line with your occupational choice. Top hats in silks or felt. Brimmed hats with flat or “beehive” round tops made of felt or straw, properly blocked with sweatbands & ribbon trim. Mechanic or wheel caps of cloth are also acceptable. Hair styles appropriate to the period with side parts.

Accessories

Neckwear – Cravats or neck scarf for all are encouraged for all impressions once you depart your home or work site. May be pretied.

Collars – White detachable collars may be paper or cloth, well starched.

Suspenders- Optional. No sutler row heavy white “Y” shaped backs.

Belts – Made of leather, devoid of military buckles

Overalls- Cotton, denim or linen. Period construction with or without external pockets. Bib area should be of 2 piece construction, shoulder straps front buttoning with bone china or hard rubber buttons.