"DEVELOPING A FIRST-PERSON IMPRESSION"

A SIMPLE WORKBOOK TO AID REENACTORS IN DEVELOPING A QUALITY FIRST-PERSON IMPRESSION
The following booklet is intended to be a guide for starting or improving your first-person impression. In the end this will make you a more effective reenactor and can boost the enjoyment level of any event 100%. I hope that you will study it carefully and use it many times in the future. Hopefully, it will also open up new areas of thought and understanding. However, in order for this workbook to be of any use to you, you must put some effort and thought into what it is asking you to do, hence the name "workbook". I believe, however, that you will find this kind of activity enjoyable.

Before delving into the heart of the matter, I believe that it is necessary to explore what a first-person impression means. In short, it is becoming, in every way, shape, and form, a person from the time period in which you reenact. The memories and experiences you possess are those that would have been experienced by a person from that time. Your attitudes are their attitudes, your speech is their speech, and your life is their life. All of your modern-day experiences are unknown to this person which you portray. If you are able to adapt yourself to this frame of mind then reenacting takes on a whole new dimension. The more you know and understand about this person and their time, the more convincing you will be in portraying them and the more fun you can have in the experience.

It was with this idea in mind that this workbook was created. Before you begin to answer the questions, give some thought about what type of person you might want to portray. You may think at first that this is a simple task. You might answer that I want to portray a Confederate Soldier. This is fine, but it is only the tip of the iceberg. You must also consider such things as: is this soldier rich or poor?, is he educated or not?, is he an recent immigrant or native born?, what is his occupation?, does he have any previous military experience?, and so on. It might prove helpful to look at the partial list of occupations common to mid-nineteenth century America to aid you in your search. In the end when you settle on what form your impression is to take, be specific when answering the questions and try to enter the mind of the person you are going to portray. Good luck.
COMMON OCCUPATIONS OF
MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICA

Farmer
Shopkeeper
Actor
Undertaker
Sutler
Missionary
Preacher
Priest
Cobbler
Carpenter
Blacksmith
Woodwright
Wheelwright
Cabinet maker
Livery stable owner
Miller
Photographer
Saw mill operator
Cheesemaker
Store clerk
Railroad engineer
Railroad conductor
Railroad brakeman
Railroad worker
 Telegraph operator
Government worker
Insurance agent
Traveling salesman
Horse breeder
Tanner
Cattle breeder
Newspaper editor
Newspaper journalist
Magazine editor
Magazine journalist
Magazine/Newspaper artist
Restaurant manager
Novelist
Poet
Tailor
Doctor
Mason
Miner
Postal worker
Politician
Teamster
Planter
Tenant farmer
Sheriff
Lawyer
Judge
Teacher
Student
College professor
Musician
Ship captain
Sailor
Fisherman
Architect
Career soldier
Surveyor
Factory owner
Factory worker
Sculptor
Printer
Riverboat pilot
Ship builder
Drover's stop operator
Barkeeper
Hotel/Inn manager
Land speculator
Butcher
Farm Laborer
etc...
FAMILY & INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

FULL NAME: ________________________________________________________________

AGE: ______________  YEAR OF BIRTH: ___________________
(If you wish to remain your present age then you must adjust your year of birth at each event)

PLACE OF BIRTH: _____________________  COUNTY:  ____________ STATE: ________
(Did this town, city, or county exist in the year you were born?)

WHERE DID YOU GROW UP:  _________________________________________________

PARENTS’ NAME: ____________________________________________________________

FATHER’S BIRTHDATE: ____________   MOTHER’S BIRTHDATE: __________________

PARENTS’ OCCUPATION: _____________________________________________________

BROTHERS AND SISTERS? ___________________________________________________

( Give full names and ages - also if living or dead)

ARE YOU MARRIED? _______     WIFE’S NAME:__________________________________

NAME AND AGES OF CHILDREN: ____________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

HAVE ANY OF YOUR CHILDREN DIED? ________ HOW? ______________________

WHERE IS YOUR HOME? _____________________________________________________

WHERE IS YOUR FAMILY NOW? ______________________________________________

WORK HISTORY

WHAT IS YOUR OCCUPATION? _______________________________________________

DESCRIBE YOUR WORK _____________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

PAST TRAINING/APPRENTICESHIPS: ___________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________
PRE-WAR MILITARY EXPERIENCES

MILITARY SCHOOLS ATTENDED (WEST POINT, VMI, ETC...) _______________

GRADUATION DATE: _______________ PLACE IN CLASS: __________

ANY SERVICE BEFORE THE WAR? ___________ MEXICAN WAR? ___________

RANK: ______________________ REGIMENT? _______________________

COMMANDING OFFICER: ____________________ BRANCH: _____________

HOW LONG WERE YOU IN THE ARMY BEFORE THE WAR? ______________

WERE YOU IN THE MILITIA? _____ NAME OF UNIT: _______________

WARTIME MILITARY EXPERIENCES

WHERE DID YOU ENLIST? ______________ DATE ENLISTED: __________

NAME OF COMPANY: ______________________________________________

DESCRIBE YOUR JOURNEY TO THE MUSTER AREA: ______________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN THE ARMY? ____________________________

IF YOU HAVE FAMILY IN THE ARMY LIST THEIR NAMES? _______________

_____________________________________________________________________

WHAT BATTLES HAVE YOU BEEN IN? _________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

NAMES OF CLOSE COMRADES LOST: ________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

RANK WITHIN REGIMENT: __________ WHEN PROMOTED? ______________

WARTIME COLONEL'S NAME: _________________________________

WARTIME LT. COLONEL'S NAME: _________________________________

WARTIME MAJOR'S NAME: _________________________________

BRIGADE: ______________ DIVISION: ______________ CORPS: __________

HOW MUCH DO YOU GET PAID? __________ HOW OFTEN? _____________
PERSONAL OPINIONS AND POINTS OF VIEW

WHO DID YOU VOTE FOR IN THE ELECTION OF 1860? _________________________

WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON SLAVERY? _________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

DO YOU OWN ANY SLAVES? ___________ HOW MANY? ________________

WHAT ARE YOUR MOTIVES FOR FIGHTING?
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

HOW MUCH EDUCATION DO YOU HAVE? ______________________________

CAN YOU READ AND WRITE? ______________________________________

HOW HAS YOUR LIFE CHANGED DUE TO THE WAR? ______________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

WHAT IS YOUR RELIGION? _________________________________________

WHAT WILL YOU DO WHEN THE WAR IS OVER? _________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

STATE YOUR OPINION ON THE FOLLOWING MATTERS AND SUBJECTS:

LINCOLN: ______________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

MUSIC: _________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
EDUCATION: ________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
TEMPERANCE: _______________________________________________________________
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_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
ROLES OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY: ______________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
FACTORY PRODUCED GOODS: ________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
NORTHERN FACTORIES: ____________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
NORTHERNERS: _____________________________________________________________
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_______________________________________________________________________
SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS: _____________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
AGRICULTURE VS. INDUSTRY: _______________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
THE PLANTATION OWNERS: _______________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

WHO WILL WIN THE WAR: _________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

SOCIAL REFORMS: _________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

STATES RIGHTS: __________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

THE ARMY: ______________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

THE FUTURE: _____________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________