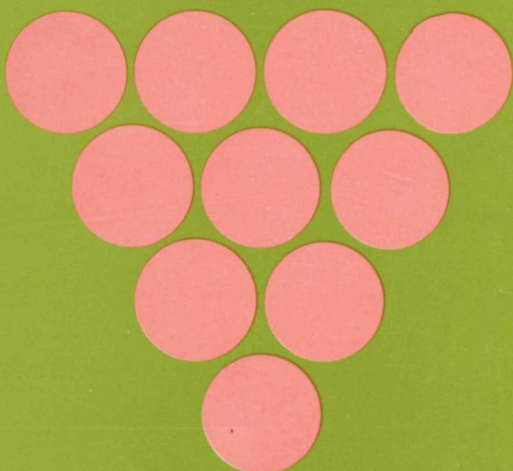


keep it alive!



keep it alive!

Tips On Living History Demonstrations

by
William Kennon Kay

U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Visitor Services Training Series
1970

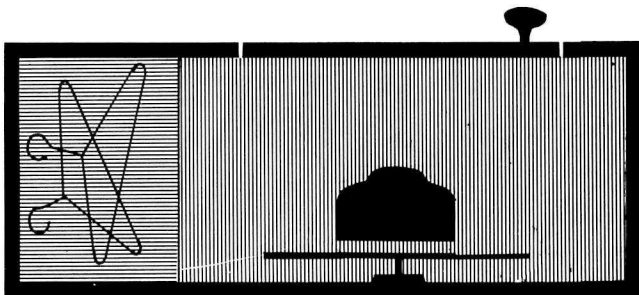
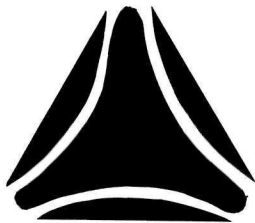
CONTENTS

LIVING HISTORY	3
What it is	3
What it isn't	3
What it needs to be	3
TO DEMONSTRATE OR NOT TO DEMONSTRATE ..	4
LIVING HISTORY: ITS HABITAT, ITS CARE AND FEEDING	7
The whole park demonstrates	7
The living town	7
The living military post	8
The living farm	11
The scheduled demonstration	14
The military demonstration	14
Crafts and skills	17
Agriculture	18
THE INTERPRETER AS LIVING HISTORIAN AND VICE VERSA	19
WHY COSTUME?	22
HOW TO GET STARTED AND KEEP ON GOING ...	27

PREFACE

When you come right down to it, the demonstration part of Living History is not new. All of us, as interpreters, have seen the puzzled look on the face of some interested visitor and realized that our explanation of some process, complete with impassioned gesticulations, was not getting through. So, what would we do? Reach into the study collection, get out the gadget we were talking about, and *show* how it worked. That's a demonstration. Now we ask you to go a few steps further and turn demonstrations into Living History. That's what this booklet is all about.

To those of you who have been running successful Living History programs, we silently lift our Stetsons. You will see your ideas reflected in this publication, but in general terms and without acknowledgement. There is a reason! You all deserve commendation. Maybe even flattery. But imitation is the sincerest form of flattery and we would just as soon that you not be flattered that way. Each park must come up with its own program; not just copy someone else's. Otherwise, the visitor is going to be shortchanged. So, we haven't given the details of successful operations. We leave it to each park to do its own thing and to **KEEP IT ALIVE**.



LIVING HISTORY

What it is. It's an attention-getter. It's an interpretive tool. It's a valid re-creation of the past. It's a three-ring circus. It's a gas. It can be all of these, but it had certainly better be the first three. As an interpretive tool, it can get the attention of visitors, illustrate for them a part of the park story authentically and accurately, and lead them to look further into our other interpretive wares. If it doesn't do that, it's a waste of time and money.

What it isn't. It is *not* the beginning and end of interpretation. It is not a panacea for all the ills of anybody's ailing interpretive program. If a program is so sick that we must rely on Living History simply to repay visitors for troubling to visit the park, then we had better sit back and take a cold look at our museum exhibits, publications, wayside exhibits, other personal services, and audiovisual programs. If the interpretive structure is so shaky that we're boring visitors to tears, all the Living History programs in Christendom aren't going to help. Indeed, they'll fall flat on their faces . . . simply because they are not an outgrowth of a well-thought-out, well-planned, comprehensive interpretive effort.

What it needs to be. Valid, accurate, and deep. Validity is a simple matter of making sure that the program portrays what actually happened in the area. It would be bootless to grow cotton where no cotton grew, or to fire a siege gun where no siege gun ever fired. Crafts, and particularly Indian and other native crafts, need considerable attention. Turning out cheap, souvenir items rather than valid copies of period objects may be good business, but it's poor interpretation.

Accuracy entails tremendous attention to small details—details which too many persons think the public will overlook. For instance, a World War II blanket in a Revolutionary hut, or a package of cigarettes alongside an 18th-century loom, will completely destroy the image we're trying to create.

Depth lies in the hands of the costumed interpreter. He is not merely *telling* what happened; he is *showing* how it happened and telling the visitor *why* it happened. He is *being* what happened. Often he is demonstrating a mechanical process unfamiliar to visitors. Of course it is. Relatively few persons wear clothing spun, woven, and sewn at home; eat dishes cooked in a fireplace and seasoned with home-grown herbs; or form for line of battle. Failure to strive for depth can lead to Living History failures, and bad ones. The demonstrator-housewife, say in a foundry village, who can do an adequate job of preparing a buckwheat cake and making a stew, but who knows little of gardening, less of the economics of dealing with the company store, and nothing of the social structure of the village, is hardly likely to give perceptive visitors much of a picture of the community.

In short, there is much to show and more to explain. A simple, rehearsed stage production is *not* Living History.

Neither is a battle reenactment. The costumed interpreter must be available to visitors as much as possible during the demonstration, and completely so afterward. And he'll have to know far more than the craft he is demonstrating. He'll have to know how it fitted into the world of that day. Indeed, he'll call into play everything he knows of social, technical, ecclesiastical, and every other kind of history and of the literature of the period. He must be so familiar with the period that he lives it. Living it is the only way to put over Living History if we are to do what we should do: open a window to the past for visitors. If we're really lucky, and talented, we'll open not just a window, but a door, and invite visitors to step through it.

TO DEMONSTRATE OR NOT TO DEMONSTRATE

Oh,

*Whether 'tis better in the park to suffer
The slings and darts of bureaucratic rage
Or comply, and land in a sea of troubles?*

Decisions, decisions, decisions. Do we, or don't we? Of course, the whole purpose of this publication is to encourage you to start living your history—and to give you some tips on getting started.

First, make up your mind that it isn't going to be easy. A slapdash, half-done demonstration is far, far worse than none. Turning out a good demonstration, even a one- or two-man affair, calls for intensive planning, more intensive training, and monumental attention to minute detail. Again and again, and we can't say it too often, Living History calls for more depth and broader knowledge of an area and its history than does any other one type of interpretation. To keep his head above the waves of the sea of visitors, the interpreter must know everything that the person he is portraying—the farmer, the craftsman, the housewife, the soldier—would know about his life and times, and more. Otherwise he isn't going to convince himself or anyone else.

Yes, it takes a lot of work, but it is an effort visitors appreciate simply because it brings home to them that history is made by little people as well as the great. These are people they can understand. Suddenly they realize that history is not a matter of names, dates, and places—as some of us have been taught—but a matter of men, women, and children living their lives against a backdrop of their own era, locality, and economic and social conditions.

Make no mistake about it; we have been just as guilty as generations of diligent schoolmasters and schoolmar'ns in talking mainly about the great political leaders, the industrialists, the genius-inventors, and the generals. As a result,

visitors walking into a military park are suddenly confronted with a mass of information about troop movements, the generals on both sides, and the strategic reasons for a battle being fought there, backed up by a bit of material, in passing, about the causes of the conflict, the tools of war used, and the individuals who fought there. Consequently, visitors, who may arrive with little knowledge, are likely to leave thinking that history is still a matter of names, dates, and places, all connected, somehow. But give them someone with whom they can identify—a person of the time, such as a private soldier, a non-com, or a technician working in an inventor's shop, a law clerk in a legal office, a craftsman, or a housekeeper—and the story begins to come alive. And that's where Living History comes in. It supplies a person with whom visitors can identify, with whom they can talk, and from whom they can learn about day-to-day life of a past era. From that touchstone, they can go on to learn more from the exhibits, audio-visual program, and publications.

There is another side to it. Some of our historians became historians because they prefer to live in the past. Granted, they are willing to accept novocaine in the dentist's chair, prefer antibiotics to bleeding and leeching, and realize that automobiles are handier than horses, but they still have an affection for the good old days, and they enjoy coping with yesterday's practical problems, at least on a limited basis. It gives *them* a touchstone with the past and they, by doing, learn more of that past. It makes them better all-round interpreters. And, since they enjoy it, their feeling gets across to visitors. As a result, everyone finds pleasure in the learning process; interpreter and visitors alike.

Perhaps this very enjoyment causes some to have doubts about the program. They see only the result, and it looks too much like fun. They overlook the tremendously hard work that goes into planning, scrounging equipment, and training everyone to carry out Living History. To the doubters, we say two things: one, look behind the scenes and learn what went into the program; two, look at the effect a good Living History program has upon visitors. If we are to teach these folk—and that includes the myriads of schoolchildren being dutifully dragged around to our great national "shrines"—we have to sugar-coat the lesson. If our interpreters enjoy their work, visitors are much more likely to enjoy themselves, and carry away some lasting lesson.

Now, for the decision. Does your park have a story that lends itself to this type of interpretive aid? Have you the perseverance to put it together and not only make it work, but keep looking for ways to improve it, to make it as near perfect as possible?

It takes a tremendous amount of mental and physical work to put across a decent, or even passable, demonstration. So, in the words of President Truman, "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen."



LIVING HISTORY: ITS HABITAT, ITS CARE AND FEEDING

Having done our best to frighten off the timid, the fearful, and the lazy, and to encourage the strong, the courageous, and the energetic, it is time to discuss various types of demonstrations: where and how they live.

The whole park demonstrates. At present, so far as the National Park Service is concerned, the concept of every park employee visible to the public, in costume, performing Living History tasks, is still largely a gleam in the planners' eyes. That it is practical is shown by Colonial Williamsburg and our own developing parks such as Hopewell Village, Lincoln Boyhood, and George Washington Birthplace. All these projects have shown us that it cannot be done overnight. It's a long process that entails continuing research, planning, and building. Certainly we must have good master planning and good preliminary research. But if we wait to start until we have everything completely planned, down to the last stick and stone in the most non-essential springhouse or woodshed, we'll never get anything done. The first generation of planners will be dead and buried and visitors will be deprived of even an approach to a Living History program. It's likely to dampen enthusiasm.

The living town. Here is the ultimate of Living History. In fact, the village of Stensjö, in Sweden, became so ultimate that it nearly put itself out of business. Somehow progress passed Stensjö by, leaving it frozen in the middle of the 19th century. The Swedish Government took it over as a living historical project and, to alleviate the poverty that accompanied the lack of progress, put the citizens on the government payroll. No longer forced by dire economic necessity to live in a past century, the citizenry wanted to modernize. When they found they couldn't in Stensjö, they moved away, leaving the government to find ways to repopulate the village.

The story of Stensjö is a classic reduction to the absurd from which those of us who might become too enthusiastic can take warning. Obviously, we are not going to be able to rip the electric wiring and modern plumbing from the Government quarters at Yorktown, Harpers Ferry, or Appomattox Court House and require our wives and children to live in the 18th and 19th centuries. But, like Colonial Williamsburg, we can arrive at some compromises that will still impart an air of the past, allow us to put on a convincing program for visitors, and at the same time, prevent our wives from taking the children home to mama, indoor plumbing, and television.

In fact, when that first automobile, that first sport shirt, arrives in the environs of a restored village, compromise is upon us. No question about it—automobiles and visitors are intrusions on the pure historic scene. Automobiles can be shunted off to a parking lot; visitors, unless they are overcrowded beyond endurance, tend to overlook the crowding if they have something upon which to focus their attention. The living town can give them just that.

A working industry, such as a smelter or an armory, craftsmen at work, shops in which craft wares and authentic reproductions, as opposed to post cards and modern souvenirs, can be purchased, will help take visitors back in time. Just as important are homes in which housewives are working and apparently living. A freshly baked pie on the windowsill and stew in the pot are part of the picture. So are children. A few costumed youngsters, unencumbered by interpretive duties, but wandering and playing at will, would lend a bit of realistic window dressing not generally found in historic areas. There are problems, the first of which is the willingness of parents and children, but it's worth a thought.

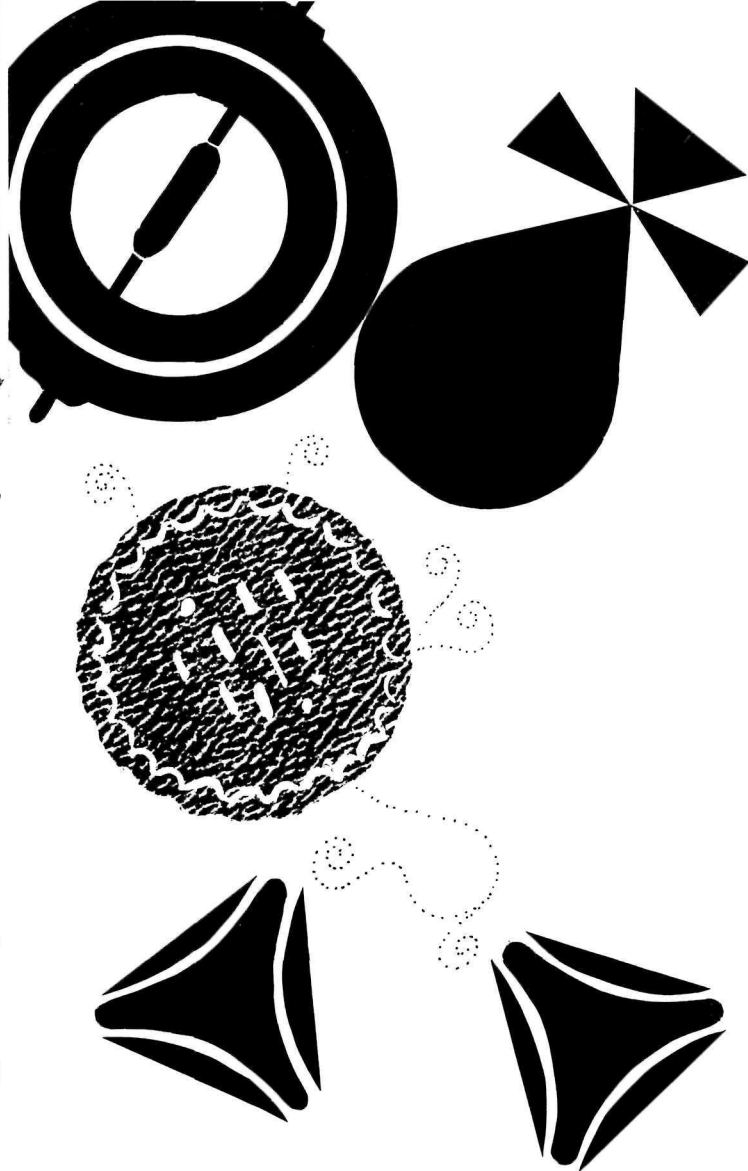
The whole idea is to populate the village with enough period-type characters busily engaged in period tasks to make visitors unaware of crowding by drawing their attention to the interpreters and the village they are interpreting.

Now that we have the visitors' attention centered where we want it, we'd better have something worthwhile to show them. If they are perceptive, they are going to wonder how all these people tending shop, baking pies, and weaving rugs actually make a living—aside from Government salaries. Where does that housewife get the money to spend on flour for the pie, and on hoops and marbles for the children? From whence comes the money to pay the merchant and weaver? The answer, of course, lies in the town's original reason for existence. If it was an agricultural trading center, then the factor's warehouse is even more important than the local tavern, and it had better be stocked with some vestige of the area's export crop. If the town was supported by an industry of some sort, then that industry should be very much in evidence and, if at all possible, operating.

One last warning: the Living Town inhabitant cannot simply be a period character with a general knowledge of his era. No! Each village differed. The oft-mentioned iron founding village differed in tempo and temper from the purely agricultural trading center a few miles away. The interpreter will have to know his own town thoroughly and will have to reflect its feelings.

The living military post. Unlike the temporary hut or tent camp, but like the town, the permanent military post offers an opportunity to portray a relatively stable community life. Unlike the village, the post needs no display of industry or trade as an economic base. There may be trade, such as the sutler's store, and there certainly should be craftsmen, such as the farrier and the armorer. But above all, there must be an indication of government, of directed effort.

It is just this air of close government that can be too easily overlooked in demonstrating the usual appurtenances of post life: reveille, retreat, inspections, guard mount, parades, and weaponry. There is much more to be gotten across to visitors. The post, whether a seacoast fortification, a Midwestern barracks, or a frontier cantonment, embodied a way of life



completely foreign to most people today, including wartime veterans. Simply, the post revolved around the commander and his headquarters. From that headquarters came orders directing every phase of life, including what time garrison wives could hang their laundry out to dry, and by what time children's toys had to be taken in from the quarters' yards.

It is hardly feasible to uniform an interpreter as Colonel Allgood or Major Grumpy. Neither the colonel nor the major would be likely to carry on extended conversations with causal visitors. And neither, surrounded by junior officers and enlisted men, would be likely to put on a particularly inspiring demonstration of headquarters routine. But the in-

fluence of those long-dead post commanders must still be felt on the Living Military Post; that influence must be put across to visitors by the Living Historians.

It was not just individual commanders' quirks that were felt on a post. The regiments themselves developed distinct personalities. Officers tended to remain with one regiment for years; enlisted men were likely to spend their entire careers in one organization. Consequently, subtle but very real differences in patterns of life evolved and were carted along on change of station as a sort of unseen regimental baggage. One difference might be the severity of punishment meted out for a minor crime. But whatever the differences, and there was always a fair collection of them, they stamped the character of regiments and the posts they occupied. So, to the experienced observer, good old Fort Flagstaff might have changed considerably between March and June 1880 when the Umph Infantry relieved the Umpty-umph Regiment. It's something for the planner to keep in mind.

The vast differences between soldier and civilian cannot be overlooked. The army was psychologically isolated in a manner that modern regular officers do not wish to see return. The isolation was almost as great at a seacoast fortification guarding a major city as it was on the frontier. The officer, by title a member of the upper class and theoretically welcome in good society, often found he had little in common with the local citizenry. He was likely to retire to his post where people were interested in "the real things of life"—like progress in modern gunnery.

The enlisted men were generally unwanted and unloved. "Soldiers and dogs stay off the grass." After they repeatedly expressed their exasperation at such a reception, they were even less appreciated. They, too, began to look to the post as a safe refuge from a hostile world.

While the Living Historians may be able to get across the feeling of isolation with relative ease, it will be more difficult to live the rigid caste system of the Old Army. Let's face it, no military post existed in the manner so often seen on television.

Officers, sergeants, and corporals kept their distance from one another, and woe betide the private who got smart with any one of them. Retribution could be quick and savage, either behind the stables, or on the carpet before the "old man." So, among Living Historians on Living Military Posts, let's have no shenanigans or familiarity between privates and non-coms. No militia hanky panky because, to paraphrase a British general, "These are Regulars, by God."

Since the post presented a relatively stable community, its Living History counterpart needs women and children just as much as does the Living Town. Here again you have a rigid caste system, and there are some definite problems to present: the officer's wife trying to maintain at least an appearance of upper class life without getting her husband

cashiered for debt; the sergeant's wife struggling to make a decent home on inadequate pay; and down on Soapsuds Row, the private's wife, being tolerated on the post only as a laundress. Naturally, their attitudes, their dress, and their ways of life differ. As a start, we might mention the curious, regimental-type clothing affected by many officers' ladies in the West, clothing that would be considered bizarre on a seacoast post.

All of these nuances deserve just as much thought as do the more obvious troop duties. Indeed, they deserve more because they will be harder to interpret. And after all, they are part of the Living Military Post.

The living farm. At the time of the American Revolution about 90 percent of the population was rural. In 1970 about 8 percent remain down on the farm, producing food for the other 92 percent and for a sizable portion of the rest of the globe. As one agricultural journal said, "Today in America more food is produced by fewer people than ever before in the history of the world."

All of which indicates that agriculture has become a highly technical, mechanized industry. True, it is a risky way to make one's living—droughts, rainstorms, and boll weevils, being what they are. But it has always been risky; the farmer has always struggled with the elements, using whatever technology he possessed.

It is that technology, or lack of it, between 1607 and the present that concerns the Living Farm. The concept did not originate in the National Park Service, nor even in the United States. Like the Living Town, its genesis lies in Scandinavia. And like the Living Town, it will never be the special province of the Service. The first major study of the idea in this country was a joint effort of the Department of Agriculture, the Smithsonian Institution, and the National Park Service. Other organizations, governmental and private, have taken up the hoe and are engaged in historical farming.

The idea is not new. It is, however, a logical outgrowth of agricultural and outdoor museums. Such museums displayed numerous antique farm implements, but even the best written labels could scarcely give an understandable idea of how the objects were used. So—if you can't tell 'em, show 'em. It was just that simple. But the first struggling effort in Sweden, in the 1930's, didn't work out too well. The citizenry walked off with too many of the tools. The project was abandoned. Once again we can learn a lesson from the Swedish pioneers, and from anyone else who is, or has, engaged in historical farming.

The idea, basically, is to establish a series of farms across the continent demonstrating the development and spread of American agriculture. Plimoth Plantation now illustrates 17th-century New England farming; Freeman Farm at Old Sturbridge, agriculture of a later date; and George Washington Birthplace will represent an 18th-century Tidewater tobacco

plantation. Eventually the list may include Indian farms, cotton plantations, rice plantations, dairy farms, grain farms, livestock operations, orchards, truck farms, and irrigation farms, all illustrative of a particular location and period.

Some of these farms will simply be types indigenous to various periods and localities. Others, particularly ours, will center upon some historical event or personage. It hardly matters. There is no reason why a Washington family tobacco plantation shouldn't be just as valid an operation as any other family's, and it is unlikely that the working plantation will take anything away from the Washington story. On the contrary, it will vividly show the culture into which he was born.

The trouble is that farming in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries was not an exact science. A 19th-century founder in Tennessee would cast a stove lid or a frying pan in about the same way as would his counterpart in Pennsylvania. But if you peruse the agricultural journals of the cotton States of the same period, you will find that the correspondents all had their own definite ideas about farming procedures. Sometimes there was considerable variance of opinion. Certainly, many of them were continually experimenting. Just as certainly these men were not purely speculative experimenters; many of them were entrepreneurs on a grand scale, running agricultural factories that turned out immense quantities of saleable commodities. Their products bought for them, among other things, the paper, ink, and leisure that permitted them to record their ideas. Obviously, they were reasonably successful. But if there were disagreements about the culture of one staple, granting the differences between the Georgia Green, Sea Island, Mexican, and Petit Gulf seed varieties, the mind boggles when confronted with the immensity of problems arising in historic farming in the Middle Atlantic States, the Southeastern seaboard, the gulf States, the Midwest, the central South, the Southwest, the far West, and the Northwest, with all their differences in crops, climate, labor forces, economies, societies, and customs.

The only possible solution, from the historical point of view, is local investigation. Wills and their consequent inventories are the classic methods of determining what implements and household furnishings were to be found on a particular farm. Census records will indicate, at least for part of the 19th century, what the labor force was and what crops were raised. A check of the census records will give some indication of local crop rotation practices, and, on Southern plantations, will indicate what subsistence crops were raised for the labor force and animals. These records can also prevent some misapprehensions. For instance, one is all too likely to assume that central Virginia, in the first half of the 19th century, was entirely given over to tobacco, but the records reveal that a large number of small farmers and some large planters along the James River moved into truck crops and grain after the War of 1812. A look at such records would prevent us from attempting to establish a 19th-century tobacco farm

on what was, in reality, a truck farm. Other local records such as deeds, deeds of trust, and even newspapers, can throw light on a particular operation.

Techniques of historical farming pose our greatest problem. For the historian we can propose a "Fog of Agriculture" approach, patterned after Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman's "Fog of War" writing. The reader of Freeman's *R. E. Lee* or *Lee's Lieutenants* learns only as much of a military operation as was known to the Confederate officers involved. Similarly, the Living Farm historian should look at his operation through the eyes of his period. For the 19th century, it is fairly easy; a considerable number of agricultural texts were published and there were excellent journals. The 18th century is a bit more difficult; there were agricultural texts printed in England which American farmers attempted to adapt to transatlantic conditions. In the South, plantation journals and commonplace books will throw light on practices in the rice and tobacco colonies. The writings of Thomas Jefferson and John Randolph, the Tory, give good gardening advice, and the letterbooks of John Ball, in the Library of Congress, give detailed instructions on running a tobacco plantation. In other areas, farm journals and account books may be a great help. Seventeenth-century letters and journals are about all that can be found, although some agricultural texts were printed in England and can occasionally be located in university, historical society, and State libraries.

These are a few of the tools with which the fledgling agricultural historian can start. He'll find others as he goes along. But the historian will be only one member of a farm team. While it is his job to keep the operation within historical bounds, he will have to learn to compromise. Compromise, naturally, is a nasty word to a purist, but anyone who knows anything about the stench and pollution caused by indigo undergoing the curing process or the feelings of narcotics agents about hemp will understand why those two crops are not feasible. There will be other problems which the agricultural members of the team will certainly point out since they will be faced with overcoming them. Chief among these is the difficulty of finding unhybridized seed and animals. This problem is now under study by several agencies. Another is the need for disease and pest control. We simply can't have a herd of tubercular cows even if they were much in evidence in a bygone century, nor can we expose neighboring farmers to pests from our infected fields in order to preserve a historic scene.

Safety is another consideration. Farm machinery can be just as dangerous as cannon, and few visitors would thank us for a park experience that included being butted by a fractious goat. Consequently, we may have to have more fencing than a farmer of the period would have found necessary. Similarly, farm buildings will have to be strengthened beyond normal to bear the traffic. Also, remembering the Swedish project,

we will have to safeguard tools and artifacts more stringently than did the farmer we are trying to imitate.

While we are thinking about the golden grain blowing in the sun and the horned beasts of the field gently lowing, let's not forget about the dwellings. Everything we've said about making the houses of the Living Town look lived in goes for the Living Farm. After all, life in the farmhouse, the quarters, or the big house, is all part of the agricultural story. Indeed, the differences in life in those various domiciles more than once brought a considerable amount of conflict, all the way from Jamestown in 1675 to Appomattox Court House.

Are the Living Farms worth the trouble? One might well ask, in turn, if any historical interpretation is worth the trouble. Certainly from the point of view of visitor reaction, Living Farms are highly successful. Visitation rises annually as city folk head for the country to gaze on the ox, the ass, the boar hog, the sow, the cow, the horse, the sheep, and the crops. For city-bred children it is a new world. For the city-oriented adult it is often a reminder of a more leisurely, more innocent day when our ancestors lived close to nature. Here again he can experience the sights, the sounds, and the smells that are becoming increasingly rare. Or perhaps the Living Farm is just a place to take the children—and to find oneself becoming fascinated. After all, most persons do have some interest in food!

Whatever interest visitors bring to the farm, or acquire while they are there, the establishment can be used to illustrate a way of life that had immense impact, politically, economically, emotionally, and culturally, upon our Nation. This impact must be a part of the interpretation of the Living Farm.

The scheduled demonstration. Where the whole park cannot demonstrate, as, say, a battlefield park cannot, the individual demonstration can offer Living History interpretation. It is also an excellent way to lay the groundwork for an eventual whole park demonstration, and it sometimes lends itself to interpretation elsewhere—schools, women's clubs, and even army posts!

Whatever its purpose, its scope, the program demonstration must not be a slapdash, thrown-together affair. It needs much planning and care and the same attention to detail as one involving an entire park. Indeed, minor errors show up much more plainly in a small program than they do in a large, many faceted one.

The military demonstration. Too many persons think of the military demonstration only as a matter of shooting weapons. In truth, there are many facets to the military, allowing many different types of demonstrations. An army doesn't just march and shoot; it eats, it sleeps, it trains, it transports supplies, it sends signals, it builds huts, barracks, roads, and fortifications, it cares for sick and wounded men, it looks after animals, it keeps house, it enforces discipline, and it does a host of other

things. Any of them can become interesting subjects for demonstrations.

Of course, the firearm demonstration is an attention-getter. There's no question of that. But it can also be coupled with other demonstrations. At its simplest, the individual soldier can be completely equipped for field service, and can display and explain his pack or blanket roll, rations from his haversack, and personal gear and trinkets that he might carry along. These, of course, would differ from war to war and from period to period within a war, as anyone knows who has looked at Sheppard's illustration "The Outfit of 1861," and his drawings of the later period of the war.

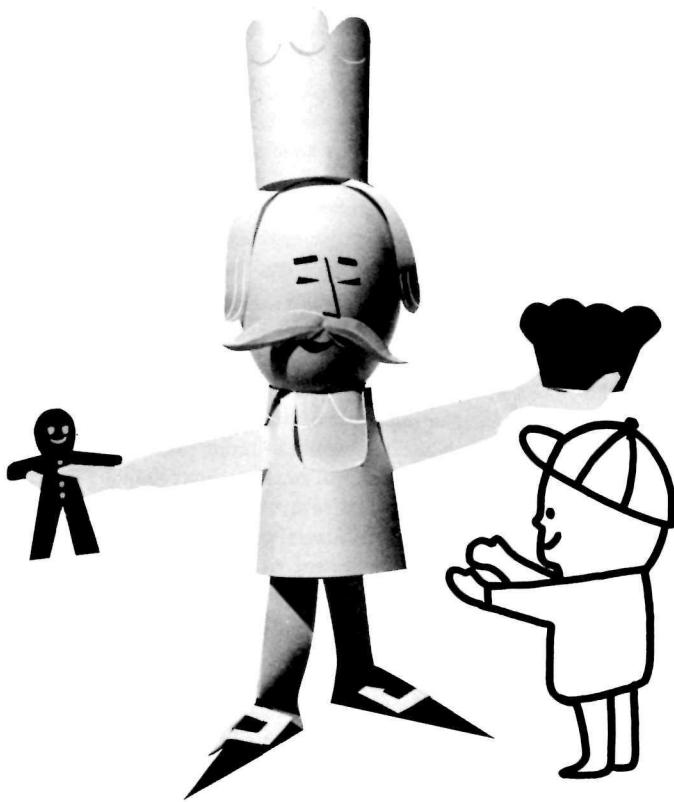
There are some warnings about military demonstrations: First, it is futile to put a man into military uniform and assign him to *any* military task without first putting him through the recruit instruction, manual exercise, or school of the soldier of the era and army he represents. The army puts its recruits through basic training to make them effective soldiers. It has always done so; even the most ineffective colonial and State militias attempted such training. Witness Col. William Byrd, II, writing of the Henrico County, Va., militia muster of October 2 and 3, 1711: ". . . I caused the troops to be exercised by each captain and they performed but indifferently for which I reproved them. [Massot] one of the French was drunk and rude to his captain, for which I broke his head in two places."

If it took training and discipline to make a man an effective soldier, it will take the same type of training, minus, perhaps, the broken head, to make an interpreter an effective military demonstrator. If he doesn't have the training, he won't convince himself or anyone else.

In demonstrating weapons, the basic training of the period is absolutely essential. A man handling a musket or rifle as though it were a broomstick, a crew handling a field gun as though it were a surry with a fringe on top, is hardly likely to exude an air of authority and competence. The military manuals of the period instructed the soldier to handle his weapon in the safest manner possible while, at the same time, laying down a volume of directed fire. From the safety aspect alone, it is much better to be a book soldier.

Following the book will also allow us to dispel the myth of the individual soldier hunting down the individual soldier. Massed and disciplined fire and movement in the Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Mexican, the Civil, and sometimes, in the Indian Wars could generally be counted on to win a battle. If, through weapons demonstrations, we can get across that one lesson, we will have done much to improve visitors' knowledge of American military history.

A further thought on artillery demonstrations: simply loading and firing the piece is not enough. Visitors must be shown how the gun was pointed, aimed, or laid. This, of course, entails the use of the quadrant, level, pendulum hausse or sights, and the acquisition of knowledge of elementary gun-



nery. A similar thought on authenticity: If a linstock was used to fire the piece, then use it; if a friction primer was used, use a friction primer, not a reasonable facsimile. Incidentally, the cannoneers' hop (the drill of a crew) is a beautiful thing to watch when done properly—which is one more reason to train a crew properly. It is precision drill with just a bit of the ballet thrown in.

Speaking of training, there is little reason to hide the recruits from public view until they are proficient in drill. Visitors find the awkward squad or a new crew just as interesting and perhaps even more instructive than completely competent troops. However, the first firing of live infantry rounds or any artillery rounds, had better be done in private.

But, we can't say it often enough: the military demonstration should not begin and end with weaponry. And, certainly, the military demonstrator's knowledge cannot end with knowledge of his weapon. He must know his army, its tactics, its living conditions, its administrative structure, its discipline, and all the other facets of military life that can be gleaned only from contemporary regulations, military dictionaries, manuals, journals, and diaries. Moreover, he must know where he, as a soldier, stands in society; whether he is one of our brave boys in blue or gray, or whether he is simply the scum of the earth, dumped in some God-forsaken wilderness or seacoast fortification to protect an ungrateful citizenry

against attack. He must know how and why he enlisted or was conscripted, the kind of men with whom he associates, and what he can look forward to in later life. In short, he must know where he fits into the scheme of the universe. He must learn the attitudes; to act like, to think like, to be a soldier, whether of the King or the Republic.

Crafts and skills. Whether a single demonstration or a part of a whole park demonstration, crafts and skills have great appeal to visitors. After all, they are simply the day-by-day tasks carried on by a simpler society that had to look close to home for food, clothing, shelter, and a few amenities.

Many crafts differed little in execution from locality to locality. A pewterer in the Spanish Natchez District cast spoons nearly the same way as his counterpart in 17th-century Massachusetts; the village blacksmith shod horses in much the manner of a military farrier. The problem here is to make sure that demonstrations of crafts and skills do not duplicate a nearby effort. Visitors, as they proceed from park to park, will quickly become weary of a seemingly unending procession of candle dippers, spinners, and weavers.

Still, we should not hesitate to illustrate differences in crafts, whether the result of technological advance or a difference in cultures. An Indian pottery maker could work beside an 18th-century European potter with little similarity in techniques. Similarly, a skill such as cooking could vary from house to house in a Living Village; the wife of a German immigrant would dress her viands differently from her Welsh neighbor.

Before we go further with crafts and skills, let's arrive at some definitions, arbitrary as they may be. Basically, a craft is an activity which in past centuries a person learned through apprenticeship; a skill is something learned at one's mother's knee or in some equally informal way. A craft is a commercial activity; a skill need not be. It's not always easy to draw a hard, fast line. There were tallow cndlers who were definitely craftsmen, but there were plenty of housewives who dipped candles who weren't. There were bakers and people who baked bread at home; chefs, and people who cooked. Their products often showed the difference.

In Living History, the definitions are almost valid today. For instance, nearly any of our interpreters can learn or be taught a skill, but the National Park Service hardly has a way of teaching a craft. Consequently, our millers, weavers, blacksmiths, glassblowers, and foundrymen are likely to come from outside the usual ranks of interpreters. Training for the two categories of Living Historians is a matter of opposites. The craftsman we train as an interpreter; the interpreter we teach a skill.

Regardless of the craft or skill, it must fit the park story. A demonstration of something of only peripheral interest to the main story must not overshadow the park's interpretive theme.

A craft must be equal in competence to the period it represents. This can work both ways. A duffer who obviously had never seen a loom until 2 weeks before, couldn't spell weaver, and now is one, is hardly going to put over a convincing demonstration of weaving. Unless, of course, he is obviously an apprentice learning his trade under a sharp-eyed master. At the same time, a craft object can be too good. For instance, products of many 18th-century potteries are known, at least to archeologists, to have been notoriously poor. Were we to reestablish such a pottery, complete with oil-fired kiln, and start turning out *objects d'art* equal to the best English and German products, we would be doing historical accuracy an ill turn. We would be doing visitors, who bought such objects under the misapprehension that they were accurate reproductions, an ill turn. Clio would weep—and everyone involved with the project would deserve to be chastised with rods.

Skills are less ticklish. Almost anyone could sympathize with the housewife who turned out a poor meal, particularly if she were an attractive bride. Most visitors might chuckle at a homemade candle that suddenly collapsed and died. But here again we have to look to fitness. An ill-cooked meal displayed in a mansion is going to seem strangely out of place to many visitors. And why were candles being made there anyway. Didn't those people buy the finest product of the candlemaker's art?

So, whatever we do, it must fit area and era. If there is something seemingly illogical about the demonstration, it had better be historically accurate.

Agriculture. Here, in the small plot, we have a type of exhibit and demonstration that fits almost any historic area: the kitchen garden of town and country, the formal garden of grander residences, the garrison garden of the military post, the innumerable orchards, cornfields, and wheatfields that dotted battlefields. How far we go with it is determined by how germane it is to our story. If we are using a plot to illustrate a type of crop that gave character to a locality or a kitchen garden that helped subsist the family of a farmer, merchant, or industrial worker, we may want costumed hands tending the crop. As in the Living Farm, any modern machinery had better not be visible.

If the plot is simply landscaping—a battlefield peach orchard—then let us have peach trees as nearly as possible like those growing there at the time. And let's keep it productive looking. There is little reason to present visitors with an orchard that obviously can't produce a single peach.

Where we have fields leased to local farmers, as in some military parks, we can't expect the lease-holders to cultivate primitive, and less productive crops, with antique equipment. In such circumstances, visitors are not looking for an agricultural display anyway. But if we are cultivating a plot for historical interest in itself, let's do it right or not at all.

THE INTERPRETER AS LIVING HISTORIAN AND VICE VERSA

Not everyone can live history. There are some who believe that living historians are born, not made, and perhaps there is a certain amount of truth to that. The interpreter who becomes a successful demonstrator must have certain qualities. Curiosity is one; a never-ending curiosity about the area and era with which he is dealing. Energy and scholarship come into play; energy to keep him constantly following the bent of his curiosity, and scholarship to prevent him from giving visitors a twisted picture of the period.

Perfectionism is a must. No Living History program can survive an attitude of "Well, this will be good enough." It won't be. That long cotton dress of indeterminate pattern and period, with a zipper, mind you, worn simply because it looks old fashioned; that 18th-century man wearing his breeches up around his waist; that soldier with a plastic chinstrap on his kepi; those creases in 19th-century trousers; that 20-century hasp and padlock on an 18th- or 19th-century door; those 20th-century eyeglasses; that store-bought cigarette; that makeup on a Victorian belle or, just as bad, obvious 20th-century makeup on an 18th-century woman—all of these say to visitors that someone hasn't been doing his homework, that someone just doesn't care. If we're going to have Living History, then let's live it. Let's do it right, as perfectly as we can, or not at all.

A lack of bashfulness is essential. The interpreter should be something of an extrovert, possibly even a slightly frustrated method actor. But discipline is also needed to prevent the demonstrator from becoming the show. He must remember that visitors are not there to see him, but to have something interpreted, and that he is simply a vehicle to interpret that something.

Method acting? Yes, at least a type of it. Role playing might be a better term. The method actor, of course, lives his part. But he has lines to learn, and he puts his whole being into them. Then he goes on to another part when the show closes. We are asking something a bit more difficult. "*Lines*," as such, are not the Living Historian's vehicle. He must live his part—not an assigned role, but one he develops largely for himself against the background of the time and place he is interpreting. His knowledge must be far broader and deeper than an actor's; he must react to different situations, to different questions, in the character of the role he is playing. A classic example is the Civil War interpreter in a Union uniform, talking to a group of school children. He had gotten so deeply involved that when an adult bellowed out, "*Was Grant drunk here, too?*" the interpreter answered, in all seriousness and without thinking, "*I don't know sir. I'm just a corporal and he doesn't invite me to his parties.*"

That is role playing with a vengeance, and not every interpreter can match it. In fact, it is nearly impossible to rise

to such heights at the beginning. It takes time to master the character bit, but it can be done, and naturally. If it is unnatural, it will drive visitors away in droves.

That looks pretty grim, doesn't it? You have to have experience to carry off the role properly, but you can't get experience without getting out in front of visitors and taking a chance on being unnatural. It's not that bad. We've watched fledgling Living History interpreters struggling, before the public, to perfect their roles. Where it seemed natural to them, they acted the role. Where it was still unnatural, they slipped out of it. Out and in. And the visitors either didn't notice, or realize, somehow, what the situation was. They were taking in the demonstration with a considerable amount of pleasure.

We have been thinking in terms of an interpreter learning an additional skill and becoming a demonstrator. Now, for the other side of the coin, the craftsman or skilled person who learns to be an interpreter and a demonstrator. Generally, this type does not have to have a role pointed out to him. He brings it with him. He knows his job or he wouldn't be there. Still, it sometimes takes patience to make an interpreter of the man. Sometimes it seems impossible. And sometimes the supervisor expects far more than visitors. Take for example an Indian basketweaver, shy by nature, or a cheerful but inarticulate mountain craftsman. He may not be able to delve deeply into the history of his craft; he may not, through sheer shyness, be able to conduct a guided tour of his shop or mill. But, he is just what visitors expect to see: a mountain craftsman. He lives up to their expectations. Any more would be too much.

Perhaps the hardest task for a supervisor is teaching both hand skills and interpretive skills. This is particularly true when dealing with youthful seasonal employees. They require considerable supervision and a great deal of teaching, but they can make most appealing Living History types, well worth the time and trouble.

In some parks, mainly military, outside demonstrators come in for special events. A few parks avail themselves of such volunteers on a recurring basis. They come from the many private, historical, quasi-military units scattered over the country. Many of the organizations are affiliated with large associations, by whose works ye shall know them. The largest Civil War association is primarily interested in weapons competition. Indeed, after reenacting the "Third" Manassas, it declared itself officially out of the reenactment business. Some of its member units will participate in limited demonstrations, however. These people follow rigid safety practices. The problem, from our point of view, is that some units, while superbly armed, are indifferently uniformed and their drill, aside from addressing their weapons, is not up to Civil War standards. Still, they are far better than other groups that are wretchedly armed, wretchedly uniformed, wretchedly drilled, and seem to have a complete indifference to safety.

A similar Revolutionary War group has reached almost impossible standards of authenticity. Its units will put on demonstrations, and good ones, at the drop of a tricorne. Another willing Revolutionary War association still has much to do to achieve the excellence of its rival. There are yet other organizations attempting to memorialize periods of American military history. In fact, name your war, and you are likely to find someone, somewhere, ready and willing to demonstrate. The trick is to make sure you will be getting safe, dependable, and accurate volunteer Living Historians. A check of an organization's past activities and a look at the men going through their paces are certainly in order before agreeing to having them in the park.

Some parks have found that local organizations are willing to equip themselves simply to demonstrate. These groups, usually from genealogical organizations, bring a high degree of enthusiasm to their programs. The problem is that they are not only volunteers, but park friends. The interpreter can't order them around. He can only gently lead. And he had better do it from the very beginning, gently coaxing and counselling them into proper kit and drill. In the long run, they'll be prouder of themselves if they know they haven't taken shortcuts, and that the most critical buff can't find fault.

But, whatever types of demonstrators we have, it takes work to whip them into shape. If the interpreter isn't willing to work, and continue working, with his Living Historians, then he had better plan something other than a Living History demonstration.



WHY COSTUME?

Costumes help set the stage and help open that window into the past for our visitors. Yes, you can spin, weave, cook, cobble, shoot, or plow in modern dress—even in NPS uniform. But the period costume, if it is authentic and worn with aplomb, will add much to the demonstration. It is, indeed, the central part of Living History.

We have learned something else from our first, stumbling efforts in the program: two interpreters can be standing side by side, one in NPS uniform and the other in period dress. To whom does the visitor automatically turn for interpretation, or even general information? To the man in the costume. But naturally. He's obviously there to answer questions, in between acts, or whatever he does. The other man is probably a guard, a policeman, or something of the sort. He's not so likely to know what the story of this place is all about.

There's another facet. While the costumed interpreter, in the minds of some visitors, is more readily approachable, he is still very obviously a member of the establishment. Otherwise, he wouldn't be there in that funny suit. Consequently, his authority is usually not questioned.

There are, of course, situations in which period dress would be ludicrous. One would hardly expect to see an 18th-century craftsman or a 19th-century soldier out directing traffic or doing law-enforcement work.

There are still other situations in which one could question the use of costumed interpreters. One that comes to mind is a great mansion in the East. Obviously, members of wealthy families did not answer the front door. Whoever greeted visitors would, if in costume, have to be in domestic livery. It could work, but one wonders if it is worth it; if visitors would accept interpretation from a domestic. In one of the great houses of Virginia, owned by the ninth generation of the family that built it, visitors are greeted by a servant—a servant, however, whose ancestors served the ancestors of the present owners. She is marvelously effective, but obviously she considers the house and the family to be her own, and her pride in both shows through what is frankly a canned spiel, accurate as it is. One can question if our interpreters, dressed as footmen or as downstairs maids, could carry off such an assignment with equal effectiveness.

But, if we're not housemaiding or directing traffic, what about costume? How far do we go?

All the way! We either do it right, or not at all. We have no choice. Unlike motion pictures, or most theaters, our audience is within touching distance of the demonstrator. Consequently, the costumes must be faithful reproductions of period garments.

It's not simply a matter of adapting a modern pattern to look something like an 18th- or 19th-century garment and making sure that the zipper doesn't show. That may be good stage costuming, but it isn't good for our purpose. Ours must

bear the closest inspection at the closest range. The costumes must duplicate original garments in cut, workmanship, and material. For instance, 18th-century garments were cut to fit; tucks simply weren't used. The quality of tailoring of a frontiersman's work clothing was considerably different from that of a city dandy's morning coat. And, right here, let's say it: if wool was used in a garment—say a Civil War uniform—then we will use wool. We won't use a synthetic and we won't use cotton. We'll use wool! The same thing for linen for the everyday costume of the era preceding Eli Whitney's invention. Remember, before the invention of the gin, cotton was a luxury cloth. Sure, wool is hot. But wearing period costumes is very much a case of that old-time religion; what was good enough for grandpappy had jolly well better be good enough for us or we'll lose our prized authenticity.

It's not that we're just trying to impress a few costume buffs—although there are more of them than one might think. It's simply a fact that properly cut costumes of proper material arrest the attention of visitors. They may never know why that costume strikes them as being so different, but they'll know it's different from what they wear, and they'll start paying attention. And then, too, a truly authentic costume is a good conversation piece in its own right.

Consider the accessories. Many a good costume has been ruined by a wristwatch or plastic-framed eyeglasses. The wristwatch belongs on the dresser or in the pocket or reticule; not on the wrist of a costumed interpreter. Copies of 18th- and 19th-century spectacles are available with modern prescription lenses.

Don't forget tobacco. If one must smoke cigarettes, be sure they are the right kind for the period and personality. Generally, cigarettes were little known in this country until World War I. There were some, the earliest being wrapped in brown paper, and considered by most to be somewhat effeminate. It would probably be better to eschew the cigarette and stick to the proper pipes, cigars, snuff, either dipping or sniffing, according to time and place, and chawin' terbaccer.

It is impossible to outline every problem you will meet. You'll simply have to determine what is proper and get to work. But a few pointers are in order.

Certainly the costume and the role must fit the interpreter. This writer, rotund as he is, could never pass as a hard-marching infantry private of any war, but he has successfully carried off the role of sergeant—in two different armies. Similarly, a handicapped interpreter, say missing an arm, would not fit into some military situations. But he could very well portray a member of the Veterans Reserve Corps in some of our Eastern Civil War parks, or an officer in any number of wars.

There are ethnic considerations that cannot be overlooked. A blond, obviously Scandinavian type might look a trifle odd in a Spanish army uniform. Of course, seeming ethnic contradictions can sometimes be used provocatively and validly. If that particular Spanish garrison had on its roles a number

of Swedes, then for heaven's sake, recruit some Scandinavians and let visitors start asking questions. In the same vein, we could certainly use German- or French-speaking troops in any of a number of battlefield parks, Revolutionary or Civil War.

The condition of the costume must also fit the endeavor. A soldier in the trenches is naturally going to look dirty, sweaty, ragged, and patched. But if his counterpart in a sea-coast fortification shows up looking so disreputable, we hope his supervisor immediately tosses him into the pokey and prefers charges. Say! That's one way to use the cells in some of our forts.



Hair and beards must be considered. Here we must arrive at compromises, detestable as that word is. A bearded *coureur du bois*, settler, sutler, or soldier will look fine in costume, but if he has to switch back into NPS uniform, there are a few superintendents who might have second thoughts. If so, the beard had better be eliminated completely. False whiskers just won't work unless the wearer is a master makeup man. Good, bushy, 19th-century mustaches are now socially acceptable, and I hope we see more of them. But *not* on 18th-century characters. And as for hair—well, we'll have to give some consideration to really good wigs, expensive as they are, for use at some of our 18th-century sites. But, let's have no flat-top cuts under those 18th- and 19th-century hats.

The ladies, God bless 'em, deserve special consideration. Let's consider them. These delicate creatures, who generally out-live us, and who sometimes can out-hike, out-work, out-bowl, and out-think us, very often have definite ideas. Now a man can function, if necessary, in an unattractive, even ragged and dirty costume as a blacksmith, soldier, or what have you. But most of the gals work best if they feel that they're reasonably attractive. And that is no great problem. In every age they found ways to make themselves attractive even when engaged in such relatively unattractive jobs as slopping the hogs. There's no reason why an 18th-century farm girl couldn't be just as attractive as a college coed today. And by today's standards, truly authentic period costume can be most attractive. In point of fact they are much more attractive than the poorly done, half-modern, half-period compromises turned out by some costumers. But, there are problems.

Again, the costume must be appropriate to the time, place, occupation, and, even, time of day being depicted. Remember what Mammy told Scarlet O'Hara about the inappropriateness of evening dress in the afternoon?

Most of the roles our girls play run more to the "Tilly the Toiler" type than to the grand dame. Fortunately, a workday costume is more comfortable than period formal clothing. No stays or corsets. A girl simply can't bend over to stir the pot on the hearth while encased in stays. About all she can do is stand around, looking pale, wan, and interesting. But although the girl in the working clothing will be more comfortable, the planner is going to have some mighty uncomfortable research moments. There is plenty of information available about high-fashion clothing, but there is an acute shortage of information, printed or otherwise, about everyday clothing, particularly between 1760 and 1830. The planner is going to have to dig, and dig ingeniously in scholarly works on costume, in museums, and local collections to come up with authentic design.

Now, while we want the girls to be purty, we want them to be that way by period standards. Consequently, no bouffant hairdos and Washington Square makeup. Let authenticity be the watchword, although we hesitate to suggest that any of our early 18th-century costumed ladies use the powdered white

lead then in vogue. Where makeup was used, let it be duplicated to the heart's content, beauty patches and all. But let us have none of our Victorian belles, stationed in stately mansions, made up like ladies of the night!

We mentioned the bouffant hairdo. It's impossible. But, short of that, a mobcap, for 18th-century costume, will cover most hairdresser's sins of commission or omission. For the 19th-century we can think of nothing better than the present style of long straight hair—not worn that way, but dressed simply in the everyday manner of that period. There are plenty of photographs available to copy.

One final word about 18th- and 19-century women's clothing. If a dress has a close-fitting bodice, and if it is *properly* cut, it cannot be worn over a modern foundation garment. Even the looser gowns do not have an authentic appearance if worn over today's underwear. Figures haven't changed that much, but fashions have changed. The proper effect can be achieved by manufacturing period undergarments of the proper cut and contour. The dress, worn over a shift and the requisite petticoats, fits well, hangs properly, and is considerably more attractive than most supposed period dress seen on TV. What's more, it's right!

Indian dress can cause problems. Too often, too many of today's Indians don't feel properly costumed unless they are wearing Plains Indian war bonnets, even if their ancestors never saw one. That's all right, I suppose, for Frontier Days, centennials, and other fiestas and celebrations. But, on National Park Service property, let's have Indians in proper tribal attire for the period. There's plenty of source material: thousands of sketches, paintings, and photographs of Indians of every conceivable culture reposing in various collections, published and unpublished. It's time we started using them.

Women's dress for some tribes and in Polynesia can be something of a nuisance to the planner. Not only the dress of Indian and South Sea Island belles, but the dress of unmarried, upper class, non-Puritan Englishwomen of the first half of the 17th century and the *haut mode* of France, England, and parts of the United States during the Empire period would undeniably cause lifted eyebrows in some parts of the country.

The point here is, again, do it right or don't do it at all. If a costume is acceptable to a locality and to the wearer, then use it. If it isn't and if it can't logically be made acceptable, then don't twist it into something inaccurate merely for the sake of propriety. Drop the whole idea.

HOW TO GET STARTED AND KEEP ON GOING

Now that you are all enthusiastic about Living History and want to start living it up, let's sum up with a few timely tips.

Allow yourself plenty of time. It can't be done overnight. For instance, it takes about 3 months to get the least expensive 18th- and 19th-century shoes. Ideally, costumes should be ordered in the December or January preceding the visitor season. Your Living Historians are going to need months of reading in their period. And you will need time to cogitate about the direction your demonstration will take.

While you are thinking, you must ask yourself, "*What is the purpose of this demonstration?*" We know of only one valid purpose: to introduce a significant part of the park story, illustrate it, and lead visitors to an appreciation of the park's features and theme. A demonstration, regardless of how dramatic it may be, is simply another form of interpretation. Used in conjunction with museum exhibits, personal contact, audiovisual programs, and publications, it is a valuable tool that will help visitors understand that most important of all exhibits, the park they have come to visit.

The purpose must not be one of simple showmanship, of putting on a cut-and-dried performance, unvarying in content, freezing out visitors. The demonstration that includes visitors, allowing them to examine the artifact or equipment, savor the product (if edible), ask questions, and make comments, will spark enthusiasm.

Consider the practical aspects. Do you have the time, the money, and the people to carry it off? Do you have the time to train your people? Are they capable of being trained to do a competent job? Are they sufficiently interested to fight half the battle by training themselves in techniques and attitudes of the period. Do you have money for proper equipment? If not, it doesn't mean that you can't have a Living History program. It simply means that your plans are too grandiose for the coming year. So, think again, this time in terms of starting small, of constructing a base on which you can build a larger program over the coming years. You need time to gain experience, to try various approaches, and to learn about public reaction. Remember, a small, well-done demonstration is far better than an elaborate, sloppy one.

Just as important, you must also determine what compromises can be made without destroying the demonstration. Conceivably, an 1880 kitchen range could be gas-fired in one area's demonstration, but would be all too obviously fake in another's. You will just have to use judgment and feeling for the area and the story.

Don't forget authenticity. Here, it would seem, National Park Service personnel will need little counseling. We all know the basic role of research in other interpretive media. But demonstrations raise additional problems. The Living Historian is not telling visitors *what* happened, but showing them *how* and *why* it happened. He demonstrates not only the

manual, but the mental processes that went into each activity. Consequently, each tool, each weapon, each prop must fit time, place, and function.

If a good workman deserves good tools, a Living Historian needs the most authentic material available. Authentic—but not necessarily the most expensive. Let it be battered or shabby or perhaps even shoddy, but above all, let it be authentic. Before you buy that ax, that spade, that bolt of cloth, be sure it's right.

Remember that authenticity is not achieved simply in planning and preparation. It derives from attention to detail, continuous training and expanding knowledge and interest on the part of the Living Historians. If a Living Historian ever comes to believe that he knows all there is to know about a particular area and era, he is no longer a Living Historian. Mentally, he becomes just the opposite, and so does the history he's supposed to be living.

While planning, shop the competition. See what other nearby parks—NPS, State, and local—are doing and avoid duplicating their efforts. Remember that there are a lot of history buffs around, and not just Civil War ones, but persons who have a keen interest in various phases of our history. Even the most enthusiastic will tire of seeing the same old demonstration as they trek from park to park. The general public will weary long before the buff.

Make your demonstration provocative. Don't limit the program to a single obvious objective. Rather, be sure the demonstration leads visitors to want to inquire into other facets of the park story.

Finally, don't forget staging. Look with the jaundiced eye of a tired spectator at the theme, the setting, the cast, and the costume. For instance, one does not demonstrate watchmaking to 500 persons at once—perhaps to 10, but certainly no more.

The setting must fit the endeavor. A watchmaker in his little shop can be fascinating. The same watchmaker plying his trade on an outdoor stage would be ridiculous.

At the same time, the Living Historian must fit the setting. Interpreters who look too well fed can hardly palm themselves off as under-nourished foundry workers.

All of which is to say that the Living History supervisor is a planner, stage manager, casting director, psychologist, savant of nearly forgotten arts and crafts, instructor in obsolete skills, and, with costumed ladies, a sympathetic listener. It can be rewarding; it can be fun for everyone, interpreter and visitors alike; but it takes work, resiliency, and a willingness to lick a continuing parade of unanticipated problems. So, good luck. Live it up. **KEEP IT ALIVE.**

