

LIVING YOUR DREAMS AT FORT MARTIN SCOTT

Become a Living History Reenactor

What is a Reenactor?

Have you often wondered what it might have been like to actually live in the past? Historical reenacting gives you that chance. Becoming a historical reenactor requires an unquenchable thirst for history. Re-enactors recreate history by portraying the look, actions and lives of a person from a particular time period of history.

Who Can Become a Reenactor?

Just about anyone with an interest in living history and reenactment can become a reenactor. Children can usually participate, although most reenactment groups have a minimum age for children to be allowed in more dangerous roles - such as on the battlefield. Reenactment organizations also won't allow children under 16 to bear arms. Most reenactors are everyday people from all walks of life and all ages.

What to Expect From Reenacting:

Reenacting for many is a serious, but fun event. Most people take their roles seriously, and pride themselves on representing history as accurately as possible. Reenacting does require a commitment, however, in both time and resources. This can be as little as a 2-3 hour event once or twice a year, to a half-dozen or more three-day weekend living history functions or encampments.

How to Get Started With Reenacting:

You've probably thought to yourself that reenacting sounds like fun, but you're just not sure about committing yourself due to time, money, and lack of know-how. Don't let that stop you! Most reenactment groups are very welcoming to new people, and will show you the ropes and even help outfit you until you can gradually acquire your own clothing. In other words, you can try it out and see how you like it.

Some Basics of Becoming a Reenactor:

Choose a Persona. In reenactment, a persona is the character and role that you choose to portray. The persona is sometimes referred to as an impression. Depending upon your reenactment scenario, this may be based on a real

individual or a fictional one who could have lived during your time period of interest. Think about who you are in real-life -- or the person you secretly want to be -- and translate that to an individual who lived during your time period of interest. For instance if you always wanted to be a craftsman, portray such a persona. In a reenactment group there are characters, such as military, civilian men and women, laundress, cooks, nurses & surgeons, craftsmen, and Suttler's (merchants). The persona you select should have some personal significance to you. It is important to know and understand what you as a reenactor are portraying, as far as a character, etc.

Research Your Persona:

Once you've chosen a time period and character, you need to learn everything you can - from the way they dressed and ate, to their manner of speech, cultural beliefs, and social interactions. Immerse yourself in the time period by reading books and primary source documents related to the area, and the type of person you've chosen to portray. Whatever time period you are portraying, the clothing and accessories you select should match your persona. Take the time to fully research your character and period -- considering where your persona lives, age, occupation and social status -- before purchasing items, which may or may not be authentic or appropriate.

Assemble Your Reproduction Clothing:

Reenactors refer to their clothing and equipment as their reproduction clothing and accoutrements or period dress. First of all, do not call the clothing worn by a reenactor a "costume." Although some reenactors do not make the distinction, serious reenactors wear reproductions of clothing from the period "not costumes" which might be fine for Halloween or amateur stage productions, but that compromises authenticity.

We acknowledge that there is a wide range of items available to the living historian - all billed as "authentic reproductions" but actually exhibiting a range of qualities from excellent to very poor. Although cost is not an ironclad indication of authenticity, the tendency is for less-expensive items to be of lower quality in terms of construction, materials and authenticity. We would **STRONGLY** discourage anyone new to reenacting and living history from going out and bargain shopping with vendors of reenacting wares for the cheapest deals in clothing. In the long run this is likely to be **MORE EXPENSIVE** as the reenactor will find him or herself with inferior period clothing - as opposed to a functional and authentic reproduction of period clothing - that must eventually be replaced in order to meet desired authenticity

standards. If you have the time, it can even be fun to learn to make some of your clothing or items yourself, just as it was done in the past.

Fort Martin Scott Living History Groups:

There are several living history groups that are associated with Fort Martin Scott. Each group specializes in the representation and interpretation of their selected group that was related to the fort during its several periods of activity. Those groups are:

<u>Name of Group</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Fort Martin Scott Garrison	U.S. Army Infantry
Fort Martin Scott Garrison	U.S. Army Dragoons
Fort Martin Scott Garrison	U.S. Indian Agents
Fort Martin Scott Garrison	U.S. Army Engineers
Old West Rangers	Texas Rangers
Gillespie Rangers	Texas Rangers
Fort Martin Scott Friends	U.S. Army Infantry
Fort Martin Scott Friends	Civilians & Medical

Please feel free to seek out the advice of established reenactors that are affiliated with Fort Martin Scott or Fort Martin Scott Friends. Several members of each group are especially knowledgeable in the area of living history and reenactment. For more information contact us at: fort@fbg.org.