

Living In The Past

(Continued from Page B2)

said jokingly.

The men credit the ladies for making the re-enactments a class act and a family affair. "We couldn't be in this hobby without them," said Mr. Underwood. "The ladies in their finery make the event," Mr. Barber concurred. When Cecilia is all dressed, "she wears 22 pieces of clothing," reported her husband, Charles Underwood. "Ladies were supposed to wear no less than five pieces of clothing," she explained. "Women could hide things under those hoop skirts," she said, as she lifted the hem of her dress to reveal a small derringer pistol strapped to her leg. "That's to protect us from the Yankees," quipped Brenda.

Brenda Barber stitches everything from her sons' cotton shirts, her husband's wool uniform, to her own frilly undergarments and hoop skirts. In their costumes, they resemble photographs from the pages of history.

The Unit is family oriented. The duties of the women include cooking over open fires, laundering clothes, tending the children, "and we go shopping," said Brenda. They spend their Confederate money at tents run by sutlers, just like the women did more than a century ago. The sutlers follow the military units and sell their wares from wagons, tents or blankets spread on the ground. The women find everything from hat pins and snoods to material and brogans, the leather shoes that are worn by the troops.

When the period clothes are donned, re-enactors assume the personalities of Civil War era characters. As a Georgia unit, the Barbers and Underwoods also add a bit of southern jargon and a drawl to their speech to add authenticity. They talk about sowl-belly (bacon) and sing a song about goober-peas (peanuts) and they keep an eye out for the Federals (Yankees).

After the excitement of a battle, the men go back to camp to the dinner that the ladies have prepared. It may be a rump of venison or a chicken roasting on a spit. The children are involved in period games and sing-a-longs, and everyone sleeps in a tent. A fire and brimstone church service is offered by a circuit preacher on

Sundays at the site of an event.

The Barbers host boot camp for their unit twice each year at their New Windsor farm on Dr. Stately Road. He packs his haver sack with hard tack that Brenda bakes from an original recipe of flour, salt and water, a tin cup, a plate made from half of a canteen, a fork and knife, rations and letters from home. "I slept out on a 16-degree night on a pile of straw when my bed was just 600 feet away," recalled Rick.

The Underwoods and the Barbers say that they participate in re-enactments for their own enjoyment and sense of historical responsibility. "We do it for ourselves," said Cecilia. "The best part is the comradeship," said Rick. "We're like an extended family. And we're historians." The group occasionally sets up an authentic-looking camp for school and community groups. "I'm forever reading and looking for more," he added. "People test you, especially the kids. They can come up with some good questions."

Rick said that his favorite re-enactment site is at Cedar Creek, Virginia. "Marching through that field... it was like they were there with us," he recalled. There were about 1,000 men in the 19th Georgia regiment and 250 remained at the time of their surrender.

"It's hard to leave the century you're in and come back to this," said Mr. Underwood. "It's a great way of getting away from the stresses of modern day life," said Cecilia. "There's nothing like it. It gets you real deep," added Mr. Barber.

The 19th Georgia Infantry marched from the Carroll County Farm Museum on July 3rd through Union Mills and on to the Gettysburg Battlefield where they engaged in mock battles on the fourth of July. The 19th Georgia is always looking for a few good men (there is no place for women on the battlefield, "unless she can pass for a man," said Cecilia). Recruits must be at least 16 years of age to carry a rifle, in good shape (it's a physically demanding hobby, reminded Cecilia), and have a serious interest in Civil War history. Call Rick Barber at (410)-635-2819 for more information on the local re-enactment group.

New York Royalty Dishes Ice Cream



New York's Onondaga County Co-Dairy Princess, Karen Sweetland, was on hand to serve ice cream at the Syracuse YMCA Folksmarch, held during June Dairy Month. More than 1,300 participants walked the course, winding through country lanes and wooded trails on the John and Nancy Hourigan dairy farm in Elbridge, NY. Walkers were encouraged to stop to learn about dairy farming and enjoy refreshing milk and ice cream products. The Syracuse YMCA June Folksmarch, sponsored by American Dairy Association and Dairy Council, Eastern Milk Producers and Borden Ice Cream, has been held in honor of June Dairy Month since 1982.

Fat Cut In Ground Beef

LEESPORT (Berks Co.) — You may have noticed a new addition in your grocer's meat case. The beef industry has cut the fat content of ground beef. Lowfat Ground Beef (LFGB) has 50% less fat than the familiar 80% lean ground beef. That means 7 grams of total fat instead of 15 grams per 3 oz. serving.

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