

Lancaster Farming *Antiques Center*



Living history participants take time out from the busy activities for a chat.



Taking a stroll through the village.

Living History Participants Relive The Past



This gal in the straw hat and pantaloons looks as though she just stepped from the pages of a history book.

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Bedford Co. Correspondent
BEDFORD (Bedford Co.) — "Living history is not just about firing guns and having mock battles," said Roger Kirwin, director of Old Bedford Village.

"Instead, it's about men, women, and children who want to know what it actually felt like to live during a specific period of time."

On a rainy June weekend at Old Bedford Village, it was the Civil War era.

"This was a romantic period of history," said Carolyn Kegg, a faithful volunteer at the Village. "The people who participate in Living History are families. Everyone gets involved including the children."

They make costumes so au-

thentic that even the fabric is exactly the same as that made in the mid-1800's. Living history participants carry purses, guns, powder flasks, just as they did during the Civil War. On their feet are high button shoes and long stockings. Eyelet trimmed pantaloons peek from beneath long gingham skirts.

If it's raining, they have to lift their skirts to jump the puddles.

"They truly learn how it feels to cook over an open fire in pots and pans used during the Civil War era. Women quickly learn the dangers long sleeves and long dresses pose while cooking over an open flame. They learn what it is like to sleep in a tent on a wet, rainy night," said Roger.

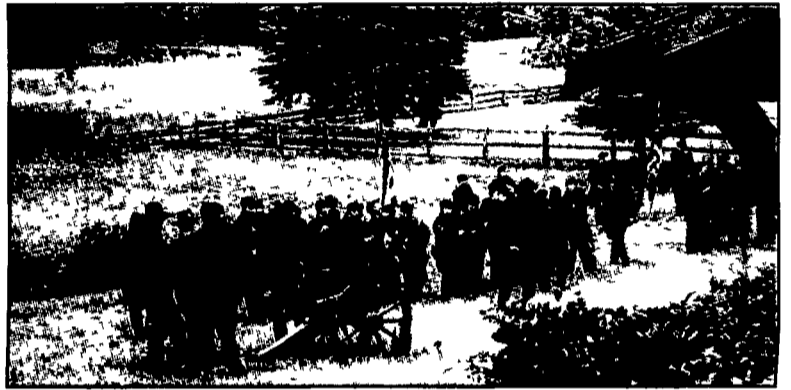
Both those who participate in living history events and the Civil War re-enactors meet at Old Bedford Village the third weekend in June each year.

"This past year we had 420 who portrayed every part of Civil War Era living, from cooking to doctors and surgeons. They did everything from re-enact a Civil War battle to hold a grand ball in the village barn during the evening.

Some of the most popular living history participants at the village were Joseph and Christine Mieczkowski who portray Simon and Margaretta Cameron. A senator from Pennsylvania in 1799, Simon Cameron began his political career when he replaced future president James Buchanan in the Senate. A former Democrat, turned Republican, Cameron had widespread interests in such things as newspapers, banking, canal building, railroad construction, and manufacturing. He served in Lincoln's cabinet.

He was a visitor to the Gettysburg battlefield shortly after hostilities ceased. Later, Cameron was present for the address Lincoln made at the dedication of the National Cemetery in Gettysburg.

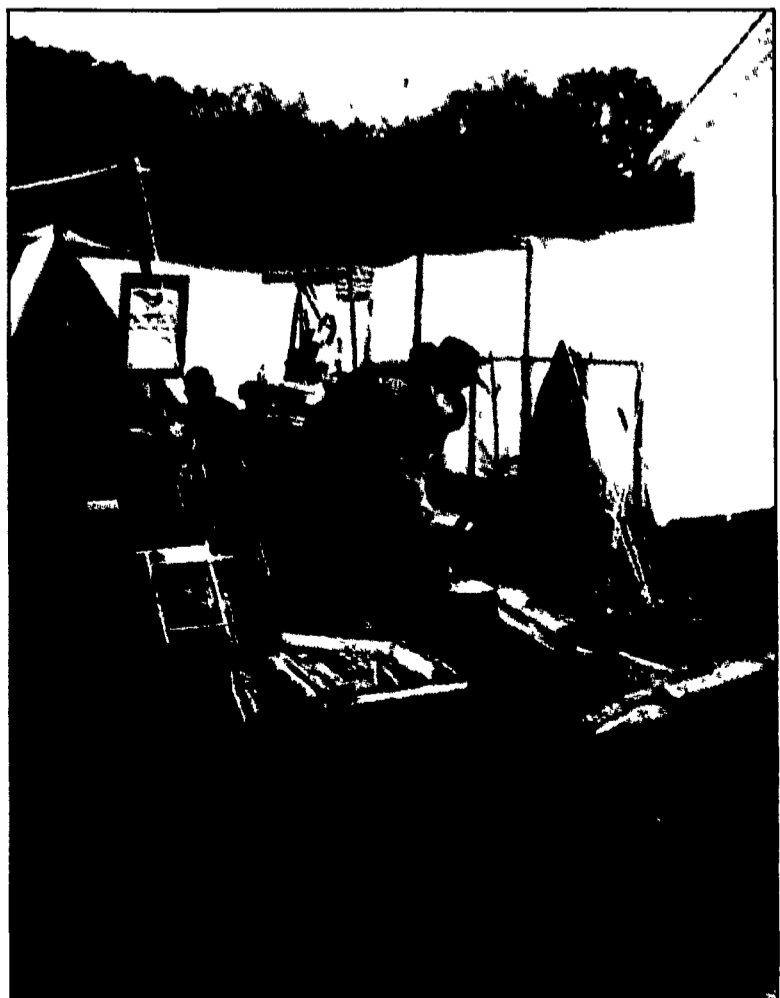
Joseph Mieczkowski says he looks so much like Simon Cameron that many people think the old portrait he has of the senator is actually him. Christine, on the



Ready for the battle.



Is this Huck Finn or a living history participant? It's difficult to tell the difference.



Cutting wood for a cooking fire.



The general sits down to read...battle plans perhaps.



"Senator Simon and Margaretta Cameron" as portrayed by Joseph and Christine Mieczkowski near Harrisburg.

other hand, says she does not look that much like Margaretta but enjoys the role anyway.

The costuming and all of the other necessary paraphernalia are purchased through publications such as the Civil War Times and at stores located at all living history events.

Living history enthusiasts haunt antique shops in hopes of

finding even more authentic items.

Participants in the living history event attended the Village from California, New England, Ohio, and all parts of Pennsylvania.