

# Why Dress Like a Pioneer?

During the mid-19th century, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints dressed very much like their non-LDS counterparts. Their lives, too, were very much like any other life of similar location and livelihood. Their personal tests and trials may have been different from our own today, but there are many similarities, and much we can learn from their tragedies and triumphs, and most particularly, from their faith.

Dressing in historic clothing is one way to form an immediate connection to the past. When we take on their clothing, we get a better feel for the physical conditions of their lives. We step outside our own known world, and enter theirs, for just awhile, setting aside our daily worries and distractions. We can have some wonderful “time travel” moments, when it feels as though the veil is very thin, and our pioneer friends are standing right beside us, encouraging us in our personal journeys.

Not everyone wants to play pretend to the same degree of immersion, however. This dressing plan allows for multiple stages of historic clothing, from the basic flavor of the past, to a fully authentic wardrobe. By setting an expectation of participation at the basic level or above, a variety of personal preferences and budgets can be accommodated without compromising the “time travel” moments of those who prefer a more immersive experience.

## Safety Notes

**All young and adult men must pull up trousers and use suspenders or a belt to keep them in place!** Sagging crutch seams and hanging hems are a safety hazard, as you cannot move freely and quickly in overly-baggy clothing.

**100% Natural Fibers (wool, cotton, linen, silk) are vital for safety at all levels!** Man-made fibers melt when exposed to high heat or flame. Natural fibers pose less danger around campfires, lanterns, and candles. Stop, Drop, and Roll is a skill you may need.

**General Notes:** Girls wear full-skirted dresses hemmed between lower calf and a hand-span above the ankle bones. Women wear full-skirted dresses hemmed between just above the ankle bones and the top of the foot. **Any female under 18 years is a girl in this era, not an adult woman.**

Bring modern, unscented sport sunblock, and re-apply it at least every three hours to the face, ears, neck, upper chest, hands, and forearms.

## Basic Look: Historic Flavor

Young & Adult Women	Young & Adult Men
Sunbonnet	Cap or wide-brim straw hat
Full-gathered long skirt	Denim or khaki pants
Solid color long-sleeve button-down shirt	Solid color or plaid long-sleeve, button down shirt
Comfortable walking/hiking shoes White, tan, or black cotton or wool stockings Neckerchief	

## Basic Plus: Increased Accuracy & Comfort

Young & Adult Women	Young & Adult Men
Historic pattern 1-piece dress	Historic pattern shirt
1 to 2 white cotton petticoats	Historic pattern trousers
Sunbonnet, apron, shawl	Cap or wide-brim straw hat
Comfortable black or brown leather boots white, tan or black cotton or wool stockings Neckerchief	

## Stepped From the Past: Duplicate Historic Clothing

Young & Adult Women	Young & Adult Men
Chemise, calf-length drawers, stays or corset, corded petticoat, plain petticoats	Undershirt, drawers
Historic pattern 1-piece dress	Historic pattern shirt and trousers
Apron, shawl	Historic pattern wool sack or frock coat and vest
Sunbonnet	Cap or wide-brim straw hat
Comfortable black or brown leather boots White, tan, or black cotton or wool stockings Neckerchief	



©2012 Elizabeth Stewart Clark. For personal, non-commercial use only.

This article is protected by copyright and licensing rights. Items made from this article may not be sold.

The article may be printed or photocopied for free distribution within families, wards, stakes, regions, and for historic site use. Not for resale.

Distribution of this article does not constitute a recommendation of the distributor by ESC Publishing.

For more information and additional articles & projects, please visit [www.TheSewingAcademy.com](http://www.TheSewingAcademy.com) or [www.ClothingTheSaints.com](http://www.ClothingTheSaints.com)