

# *Creature Comforts – Furniture, Lighting, etc.*

When looking for furniture, you can look at several styles including Federal (c. 1788-c1830s), Empire (c1799-c1815), Rococo Revival (c 1840s-1870s), and Victorian (c 1840s-1900).

## **Rugs**

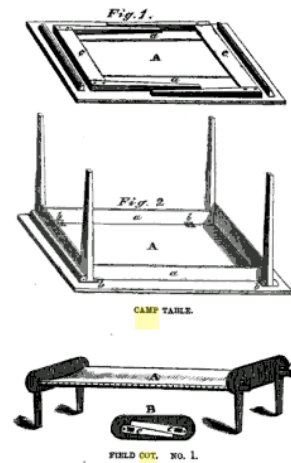
Floor coverings used in the mid-century included manufactured carpets, floor-clothes and homemade rugs.

Many reenactors chose to use carpets as floors within their tents even there is little or no documentation for this practice. Most carpets available during the mid-century are not available today such as **Brussels** and **Axminster**. Others are reproduced such as **ingrain** and **Venitian** at prices ranging from \$60 to \$165 per yard. Some of the Oriental style carpets are available as well. Most reenactors are not consider using carpeting at these prices. Instead, carpets reflecting the styles of the era are chosen made from modern materials.

Other options include floor clothes or handmade rugs. Floor clothes are made of painted and varnished canvas. (Directions are available online.) Handmade rugs can include woven or braided rag rugs, which can be made quite large, and a number of sewn rugs which are generally smaller.

## **Tables**

You may want a table for some scenarios such as demonstrations or cooking. Some find folding tables to be easier to pack and transport. To the right you will see a folding table meant for camping from *The Prairie and Overland Traveller*, 1860. Several folding tables are reproduced in various forms. Look for tables using period construction and hardware.



## **Chairs**

Your choice in chairs will depend on your impression and you packing space. If you portray a working class person or a rural farmer, basic period farm chairs are a sturdy choice. If you portray a person of some means you may want to use any of a number of formal chairs including a **button back chair**.

While most manufactured civilian **folding chairs** were made after the Civil War, they are generally accepted at most living history events.

Reproductions should follow 1860's and 1870's folding chair styles with period carpet or needlework tapestry for seats and chair backs.



### Lighting

You will want some type of lighting for the evenings. When choosing lighting, be sure to consider safety. Most lighting used inside a building such as gas lanterns, oil lanterns and candles are not as safe in mobile and potentially windy outside conditions. Lanterns to consider include pierced tin lanterns or wooden or tin framed lanterns with and glass panes.



### Chamber pots

Some people choose to have a chamber pot in their tent for convenience over night. There were a variety of chamber pots available in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century including ceramic, ironstone, and stoneware. They came with lids. The one to the left is a transferware piece. A chamber pot was often placed in a cabinet.

### Further Reading:

*The Bulfinch Anatomy of Antique Furniture* by Paul Atterbury and Tim Forrest  
*Field Guide to American Antique Furniture* by Joseph Butler and Ray Skibinski (ill.)  
*The Prairie and Overland Traveler* by Captain Marcy (London, 1860)  
*Oil Lamps II: Glass Kerosene Lamps (Oil Lamps)* by Catherine Thuro  
*Oil Lamps 3: Victorian Kerosene Lightign 1860-1900* by Catherine Thuro