

Getting Started in Living History

Most living historians take their impression seriously and pride themselves on representing their character or persona as accurately as possible. To be able to do this you need to know certain things about the character, be they fictional or a real person from the past. These bits of information will inform your clothing choices, gear, manners, and most importantly how your character thinks about the world around them. Read through the questions and answers below. Then answer the questions for your own impression.

Creating a Persona

Decide who you are going to portray using these questions.

When

Choose a time period. Start with a century, then choose a decade, and narrow it down to early, middle, or late in the decade

Where

Start broad and work to a more specific location such as country, state/territory, county, town, even historic site.

Age

How old is this person at this specific time?

Work

What is this persons job?
Consider both paid and unpaid labor.

Class

What class are they? Poor, working class, wealthy, ultra wealthy?

Specific Persona

Sam Houston

When

19th Century
1850s
Early 1850s

Where

United States
Huntsville, Texas
At his home known as the woodland residence

Age

58 years old

Work

United States Senator

Class

Wealthy

Generic Persona

Man

When

19th Century
1890s
Late 1890s

Where

United States
Texas, Williamson County
Western edge of county on rented acreage

Age

28 years old

Work

Tenant Farmer, main crop cotton

Class

Poor

When

Choose a time period. Start with a century, then choose a decade, and narrow it down to early, middle, or late in the decade.

Century:

Decade:

Early/Middle/Late Decade:

Where

Start broad and work to a more specific location such as country, state/territory, county, town, even historic site.

Country:

State/Territory:

County/Town/Site:

Age

How old is this person at this specific time?

Work

What is this person's job? Consider both paid and unpaid labor?

Class

What class are they? Poor/working class/wealthy/ultrawealthy

The questions above will get to the basics of your impression but if you'd like to go a little deeper consider the following:

- Marital status (single, married, divorced, widowed, how many marriages?)
- Family including children, parents, siblings
- Have they always lived in this location or did they move?
- What work have they done previously?
- What pivotal or triggering events have happened in their lifetime. Consider both historic events and personal events.