Civilian Half-Gaiters #215

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The following pattern is based on two sketches of British soldiers at Warley Camp done by de Loutherburg in 1778 (both of privates in the 25th Foot, see Katcher, pp 52 & 70), and a pair of civilian spatterdashers from the mezzotint "The Enraged Farmer (ASI Baumgarten, p 65 and left). Wool is a good choice for fabric (like an old dark blanket), as it's flexibility would make a more forgiving fit, but any dark natural material would do.

Cut 2 (two) strips of this fabric 9 inches wide and 16 inches long. Place the right sides together (the sides that you wish to be on the outside) and measure 5 inches from the right on the long edge, then cut a slit about 4 1/8 inches long (Figure A).

Cut 2 (two) pieces of the fabric in a pie shaped wedge, using for a pattern Figure D. Sew one pie shaped piece in the slit placing the edges to the wrong side (inside) with a 3/8 inch seam. Now do the same with the other pieces of material, yielding two gaiters.
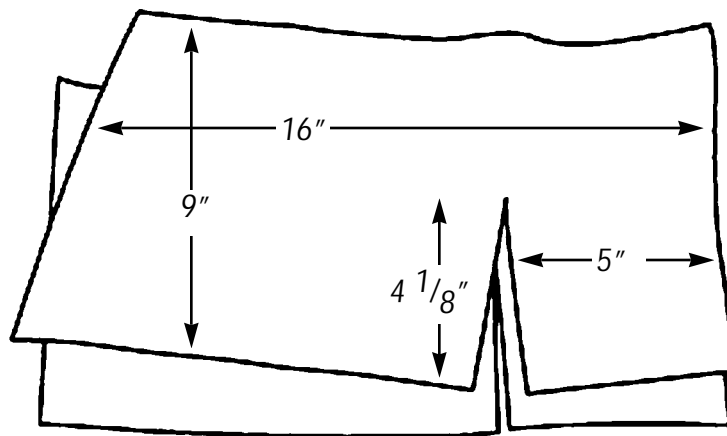

Figure A

Black horn or plain pewter buttons are authentic. Place 6 to 8 button holes on the short outside flap, depending on the size of buttons you use (Figure B). Pin to mark, and sew buttons in place, or use "button pins," which are safety pins with a kink on one side. Used with shank buttons, they make button placement simple and infinitely adjustable. To adjust the fit for a narrow legged man for a weekend, you may otherwise need to bring along a needle and sturdy thread.
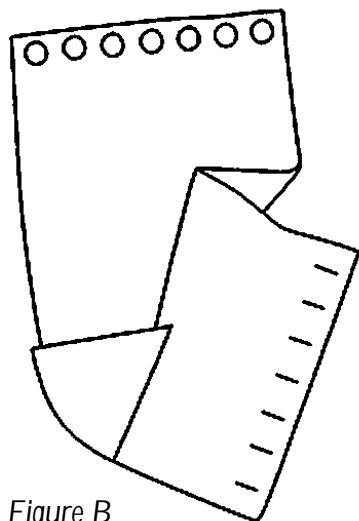
If the wool is not felted, you may finish the edges with a blanket stitch, or bind it with bias tape. If using another fabric, turn all the raw edges under 1/4 inch and stitch.

To hold gaiters from riding up, cut a 3/4 inch wide leather strap 7 inches long (you can use and old lightweight leather belt), to fit just under the instep of the shoe. Sew the leather by hand 1 1/2 inches from both sides of the wedge bottom (Figure C). It's easier to stitch through leather if you punch holes in it first with a leather punch- even a hammer and small nail will work. Use a heavy duty thread and a cross stitch (X) to hold it in place.

Figure B

References

Baumgarten, Linda, *Eighteenth-Century Clothing at Williamsburg*, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, VA, 1986

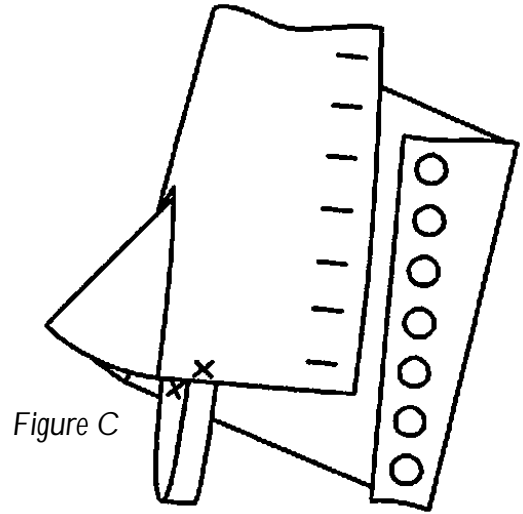Katcher, Philip, *Uniforms of the Continental Army*, George Shumway, Publ., York, PA, 1981

Figure C

Figure D. Toe-piece, full scale.