

## The 'Bedroll' or 'Blanket-Roll' from the Frontier to the Civil War

27-34 minutes : 1/30/2021

Knowing the old ways of the blanket-pack is important for bushcrafters and historians alike. Here is more about the lightweight knapsack alternative that Emigrants, Soldiers, and Frontier Travelers of America's early history often preferred.



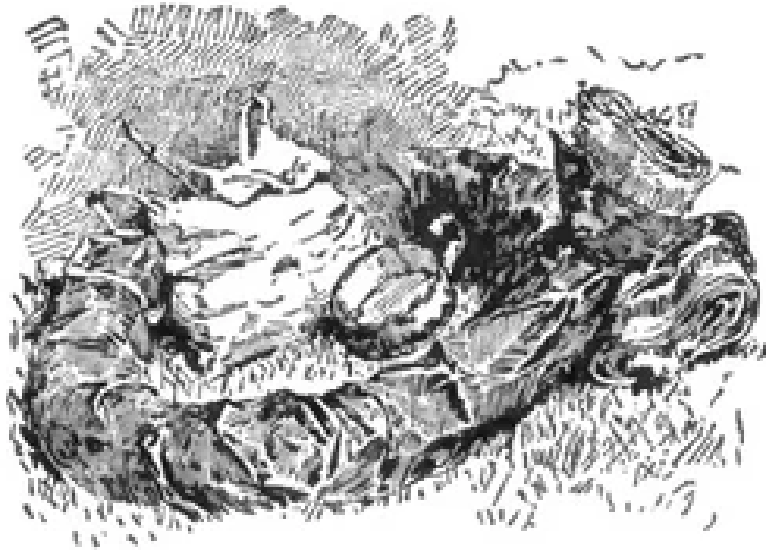
### Along the Santa Cruz River near Tucson, New Mexico Territory - January, 1854

*The bronze glow of the late-day sun illuminated golden hills and green fields beneath the darkening canopy of a winter rain. The aroma of wet desert creosote and sand filled the air as the gathering storm rode in on a southern wind. William Johnston and his cousin 'Tsali' led their pack mules at a canter toward an old estancia to shelter for the night. Trees swayed in the rising breeze as a rumble of distant thunder announced the first drops of rain. The two-room adobe was in ruins with one wall and half of the roof fallen in. The 'open' room was also the largest. It made the perfect corral for both mounts and the pack-mules as just enough of the old roof remained. The other, smaller room was barren with a ceiling that creaked softly in the wind. An open doorway and empty window frame being the only source of light were also on the leeward side of the gale; this would make a good camp. Tsali cut grass for the horses as William tended to the animals, saddles, 'cargas', and tack.*

*In minutes the packs were arranged as bedding; blankets spread and pipes lit. In the center of the room, a fire was kindled upon the earthen floor and coffee set to boil. In the following hour, the sky turned black as sheets of rain cascaded down upon the empty windowsill. A bright flash turned night to day. Seconds later, a loud peal of thunder shook the small*

adobe. William took up his heavy four-point blanket; a thick cotton sheet was sewn onto the inside for added warmth. The air grew colder as the fire bravely hissed and crackled against it. Wrapping himself against the cold, William settled into bed while watching the storm rage outside. Tsali was now fast asleep as rain continued drumming down upon the roof. He closed his eyes listening to the wind rush past the doorway almost in melody with nature's rumbling fury with the rattle of countless drops. Laying in a comfortable bed, he thought to himself "The greatest of pleasures at a moment like this, is warmth."

## What is a Bedroll?



Confederate soldier's blanket-roll with haversack and tin cup (ca. 1861-65)

Actually, I have not seen much in the way of using the word 'Bedroll' until the latter-half of the 19th century. People of the 1800s more commonly referred to it as their 'blankets' or 'bedding' in addition to the ways they preferred to 'pack' or 'roll' it. For the sake of this article, I'll say bedroll or blanket roll since it's easily identified today. Regardless of what you choose to call it, this is still something every bushcrafting outdoorsman and armchair historian should take interest in. It's just one more small detail on how our forbears lived in the early days of a growing pioneer nation.

## Blanket & Specs.

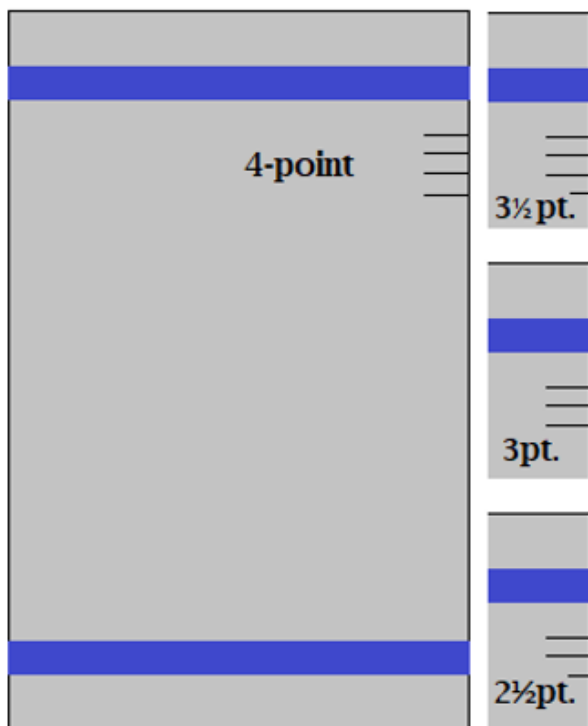
The crucial ingredient to a blanket roll is the blanket itself. The best of which are entirely of wool. Compared to cotton, wool is far more water resistant and can retain up to 80% heat capability when wet. It is very durable and with proper care, will last generations. \*Note: the author has an example of a woolen 'homespun' blanket of the '4-point' size that was manufactured sometime between the mid-18th century to the early half of the 19th century, yet it is still durable enough for regular use. The 'jean wool' or 'homespun' materials are typically wool and cotton woven together or "cotton warp and woolen weft". 'Linsey-woolsey' is similar but with linen instead of cotton aka "linen warp and woolen weft". These

mix materials trade the superior insulation and higher cost of pure wool for a lighter-weight and cheaper alternative that is still good but not as warm or as water resistant.

**\*Tip: If at all possible, a pure wool weave blanket of a 4-point size is arguably the best for primitive outdoorsmen and historic campaigners.**

## What does “Point-Blanket” mean?

### Point System of Measurement



Note the half-lines stitched onto point blankets to denote a half-point.

**‘Points’** are the size categories of blankets in common use during the days of the American Frontier. They are a series of horizontal stitched lines on the blanket's selvage to denominate if it is a 1, 1½, 2, 2½, 3, 3½, & 4 point size. This was done so that a blanket's size can be seen without removing it from a stack and unfolding it. The method was developed by mid-18th century French mill workers and would be adopted by other firms such as Hudson Bay Company. Trade-blankets were bulky and were often transported to various trade outposts and rendezvous locations by canoe and portage or pack animals. This meant that the heavier blankets commanded significantly more in trade. Even despite this, they were well-worth the price to the residents of the distant western lands. In a store, a good blanket may sell for around \$3 to \$8 dollars.

## Common Fur Trade Blanket Sizes

Size	Basic Blanket Dimensions (Inches)	Weight (pounds)	HB Company Modern Dimensions
1 Point	44x34	1lb. 8½ oz.	46x32
1 ½ Point	48x36	1lb. 12½ oz.	50x36
2 Point	54x48	2lbs. 3½ oz.	58x42
2 ½ Point	64x51	3lbs. 5½ oz.	66x50
3 Point	72x62	4lbs. 9oz.	N/A
3½ Point	80x65	5lbs.	81x63
4 Point	85x70	6lbs.	90x72

*\*1-4 Points are most common for the fur trade and pioneer eras.*

Note: The typical blanket used for Indian Fur-Trade was the 3-point size.

## Why not just wear a knapsack instead?



Image of Border Ruffians by Felix Darley presents a good study of bedding rolls for both mounted individuals and footmen. Note the pack on the footman is more suitable for carrying essentials than other methods.

Many did prefer a knapsack. You can carry more and a knapsack keeps things conveniently organized. First hand accounts from Civil War veterans indicate they carried upwards of 20 to even 40 pounds or more in their knapsacks. If I fully load up a blanket roll, it weighs

about 10 pounds. Wearing a blanket roll while on foot is a good way to travel lighter. A true roll of bedding is what you would carry in a wagon or on a pack animal. Here are some first-hand accounts from those with experience on the matter in the western states and territories.

## **Part 1:**

### **Contents of the Traveler's Bed-roll or Blanket-roll & How to Properly Pack it**



In his endorsement of a new "Tent Knapsack" Randolph Marcy (Captain, US Army) gave good insight as to what a soldier of the 1840-50s carried when he stripped down his pack. This is a good reference to use when considering what should be carried when one shucks the pack to lighten the load.

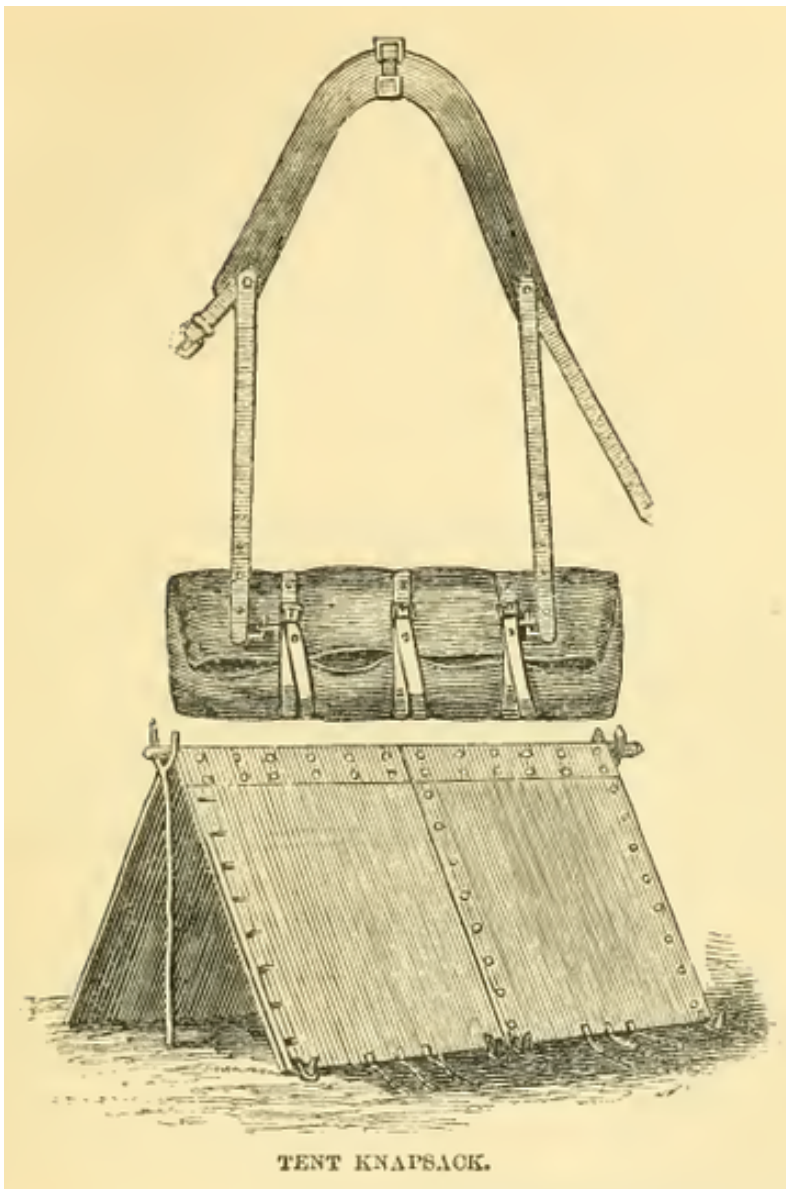
*On a scout a soldier usually carries only a blanket, overcoat, and at most a single shirt, pair of drawers, and a pair of socks, all of which can be packed in the tent knapsack in a small bundle, perfectly protected from rain, and capable of being suspended from the shoulders and carried with comfort and ease during a march.*

**The Prairie Traveler, Randolph Marcy – 1859**

## **How to Pack a Blanket-Roll Like a Frontiersman**



The complete contents of a fully loaded bedroll. There is a full set of underwear, camp moccasins, mittens, work gloves, spare fire supplies, compass, medicine, rope, extra powder, shot, and tools. (Note: Much of this is unnecessary for an Infantryman marching with a column but essential for a hunter who is heavily engaged.) I normally carry the hatchet on my knapsack or belt.



The Tent Knapsack as shown in Marcy's 1859 book forms what many modern bushcrafters call a 'short-roll'. Four-panels unroll and join forming a shelter for 4-men.

### **The Author's Favorite Pack Method**

The blanket shown in the photo above is an original 4-point wool homespun made some time between 1750 and 1850. It is still durable enough for regular work if needed. In the picture above, I have a full change of underclothing including work gloves, mittens, and moccasins. Always carry lightweight footwear around camp. Living in your boots and hard-soled shoes breeds infection and other foot problems. Harden your feet to get used to going about barefoot. Moccasins also allow the feet to 'breathe' and are much more comfortable to wear while running a forest floor. The pair I have here are Delaware pattern which by the mid-1800s was a fairly common craft project that rural people such as my family from Tennessee and Kentucky had learned at an early age.

The image here, is a proposed military tent design that resembles what many outdoorsmen now call a short roll. It is merely a blanket that is rolled up by the width instead of length just

as it would be when riding on a knapsack. I have found this method to be a favorite with primitive outdoorsmen. Personally, I find it to be an easier way to carry small items and access them conveniently. The method of rolling by the length and draping it over a shoulder was much more popular with soldiers in the American Civil War. I have included a full write-up on that in the latter-half of this article.

My years of outdoor 'trekking', 'campaigning' and primitive outdoorsmanship have left me with many conclusions about packing. Two of those that stick out the most are:

- 1. If it's absolutely essential, carry a spare or alternative if you can afford to.**
- 2. You will get wet...no matter what.**

By 'carrying a spare' I mean, split the load where you can. You have over a half-pound in your powder horn but keep a spare flask of powder with balls, caps, or flints in the pack just in case. You have a tinderbox or matchesafe in your pocket but carry a spare flint, steel, and punk or watertight matches in the pack. This has saved me and a few of my friends a lot of grief over the years. This rolled pack is good for someone on foot hunting or checking trap lines for a few days, especially on terrain where horses cannot go.

Even though I am showing a pretty loaded pack in the example here, it's more to give you ideas if you're up for seeing how the other guy does it. However, if you have an animal which was a far more likely the case on the frontier, try to offload as much superfluous weight into your saddle bags, possible-pack, or carga so that your hooved friend can carry it for you. If you plan and are careful not overburden your animal, it will save you a lot of grief such as carrying a veritable portage of unnecessary junk as most who are new to the trail often do.

## **So, Here Are The Basic Steps to Making the Pack**





**Don't put all your eggs in one basket!** Extra ammunition should be carried in the pack. Here is an original 1-pound tin flask of gunpowder along with a pound of rifle balls, caps, flints, extra whetstone, gun tools and patches. In case the bullet pouch (hunting bag) is lost or soaked, there is a 'plan-B'. Carrying extra 'powder and ball' is a good idea for the company you travel with and it is useful for trade with the Native People you do business with.



Sewing and hygiene kit, matchesafe, tinder box & spare compass

**Personal maintenance** - Items that are packed in the knapsack or blanket-roll should be articles to be used while in camp. This includes spare powder, shot, caps, and flint. A 'huswife' or sewing kit along with hygiene kit should be kept here. Some may prefer to carry these items in their pockets or bullet pouch and that's fine too. I'm just a big fan of stowing it if I'm not normally going to use it. Spare flints, steel and other items for fire-making will find suitable protection from water so long as the pack is properly wrapped in its water resistant cloth.



**A small medicine kit** has proven in the past to be quite useful. The bandages are especially good for wrapping chafed extremities to prevent further agitation. Common medicines to bring would be treatment against headache, cough or gastric complaint. It is also a good idea to have salves to repel mosquitoes and other pests. See my article on [Hunting Bag Medicine](#) to learn more about effective frontier medical treatments.



**The ditty bag** is centuries old and the best way to keep small items together if you insist on carrying small items in your blanket. You can roll up your extra gun tools, sewing kits, account books, or other loose odds and ends. I really recommend this. If not, you're almost certain to lose something just about every time you'll spread your blanket to make camp.



Here is the **full complement of a heavy roll pack**. Included is a full change of underwear, heavy work gloves, camp moccasins, a pound of powder and a pound of lead, along with a ditty bag holding all of the smaller effects. The first step is to fold lengthwise in thirds so that they meet and cover the items packed within. (See next picture).



This is the proper way to roll a blanket pack. The blanket is folded just like the 1876 illustration from an outdoor guidebook.

Once the lengthwise ends are folded over, fold the end up over the 'cargo' and start rolling into a pack. You can either leave out the painted cloth and carry it separately for rain, or you can roll it up on the outside of your blankets as shown in the illustration (corner-right) and it will keep the contents dry even in the heaviest of rains. Don't concern yourself with making the roll 'rounded'. This only matters when rolling up a blanket and strapping it to a knapsack. Flattening is better than rounding and it carries easier. If you roll up things with any significant bulk in your blanket, it won't be a rounded roll.



Blanket roll with painted cloth rolled seperately. Notice it is rolled inside out to prevent slippage on the shoulder.

Run a belt through the pack before cinching it with the blanket straps. Some mountaineers slung it low while others wore it high and snug. I find the latter to be the most comfortable and manageable. I rolled the painted blanket so that its untreated 'underside' will not slide on my shoulders. Although packed pretty heavy, the load is pretty manageable still.



Weighing your pack is a good idea as you build your endurance to bear a load on a long trail. This pack weighs in at 10 pounds and I don't recommend going higher on the weight for blanket rolls.

Get in the habit of weighing your pack. If you are unaccustomed to carrying a load for long distances, never carry anything more than 20 pounds in your pack and that goes double for a bedroll. According to the Steelyard scale that I am using here, the entire burden weighs about 10-lbs.

Steelyard scales (photo to right) date back to biblical times and have been extremely useful in 18th-19th century shops and homes. This is a 45lb. measure scale which is ideal for the homestead or a store dealing in smaller items such as a grocery or apothecary. These are not only useful in measuring a knapsack or blanket-roll, it is also useful in measuring stock of foodstuffs and other essentials either for the pantry or the pack saddle.



Metis using a Tumpline as shown by 19th Century artist David Krieghoff. Actual Tump-line on the right. (Leather tumplines were also used as the sole support for heavy portage.

### **Extra Leverage for Heavier Loads**

The **Tumpline** has been used by Native people, fur-traders, and mountaineers for generations. It is a strap that wraps round the forehead so that your head/spine can share the load with your shoulders. When carrying heavy items such as a portage, this strap is a must. The woven sash you see here is of wool and is very strong. I find it too elastic to be the only shoulder strap (a broad strip of leather hide is still best for that) but it is ideal for either girding a hunting frock or running through the pack to form a Tump-line.

## **What the Real Frontiersmen & Emigrants Said About Packing Blankets and Bedding**

For most people traveling the plains, there was typically a pack animal or wagon train to carry many of the necessary effects. For that reason, the blankets and bedding are more extensive. According to Ware's 1849 publication, the individual's bedding would cost about \$7,50 and weigh about 15 pounds. Here are some period accounts of the bedding.



## **Blanket Roll When Mounted**

*In the shape of bedding, a couple of blankets carried under the saddle, a ' buffalo robe' rolled up in a piece of stout hide, and tied behind the saddle cantle, ought to suffice for a week or two, if roughing it; but when provided with mules or other means of transport, then being provided with proper bedding will be found a great comfort; one mule ought to carry the ' full kit' or outfit of two persons.*

## **At Home in the Wilderness, John Keast Lord (1876)**

### **Bedding in Wagons for Emigrants and Travelers**

*Do not encumber yourselves with anything not absolutely essential to your comfort; take blankets, sheets, quilts, coverlets and pillows, (omit beds,) with oil cloth, or India rubber spread, to lay on the ground under you.*

## **The Emigrant's Guide to California, Joseph E. Ware (1849)**

*The bedding for each person should consist of two blankets, a comforter, and a pillow, and a gutta percha or painted canvas cloth to spread beneath the bed upon the ground, and to contain it when rolled up for transportation.*

## **The Prairie Traveler, Randolph Marcy (1859)**

### **Laying Down the Bedding for the Night**

With all the information on a traveler's bedding, here is a good study on how people made their sleeping arrangements. Sometimes people did break out the tents for a prolonged stop but more often (and contrary to common myth) emigrants did sometimes have space to sleep within the wagon. Here are some other accounts of how to properly sleep on the ground or under the wagon too.

### **Sleeping in the Wagon**

*Your provisions should be all packed in sacks, and filled to an equal height, that when arranged in the wagon, will present a tolerably even surface, on which to spread blankets for sleeping.*

## **The National Wagon Road Guide, Whitton, Towne & Co. (1858)**

### **Sleeping Under the Wagon**

*So, there were about thirty of us, divided into four messes, well provided with grub for the trip, also with tents, but we seldom bothered to use them. Having bought blankets for the trip only, as I supposed, but found that the average man was expected to furnish his own bed most anywhere on the Pacific coast, and that a hay mow or straw stack is considered*

*first-class lodging. I made my "bed" under my wagon, as it was raining, and turned in with my clothes and boots on, as though I had been used to camping all my life and liked it.*

**The struggles for life and home in the North-West, Geo. W. France (1890)**

**Sleeping on the Ground**



Note the miner's pack as he is facing down "Old Ephraim"

Charles T. Dunningham was born in 1842 and devoted much of his life to being a hunter and outdoorsman. When he was 43, he published an extensive book on hunting and fishing methods as well as life in the outdoors. This is a method that the author uses a lot.

*In selecting a Camping ground, the conditions to be desired are, plenty of wood, good water, with a convenient landing place, and a dry, level, sheltered spot for the tent. A bed of spruce boughs may be made as follows: Cut off all large butts; lay the boughs in tiers, commencing at the top of the bed, placing the butts toward the bottom, and over this spread a rubber sheet or a blanket. The blankets used at night should not be spread down in the daytime.*

**The Hunters handbook, Charles T. Dunningham (1885)**

## **Part 2:**

### **Blanket-Rolls During the War of Secession (1861-1865)**



Study of overcoat and blanket rolls on knapsacks and saddles as Shown on Hurlbut's Division at Corinth in 1862

The blanket roll of the American Civil War was simpler for a variety of reasons. If it is carried with a knapsack, the small items rode in the pack with spare clothing and other truck. This left the blanket roll to be merely a rolled-up blanket with shelter half and an oil cloth or India-

rubber 'gum-blanket' secured by blanket straps. Even if a soldier decides to shuck his knapsack to carry only a 'bedroll', the logistical support of Army wagons carrying his infantry company's baggage will ensure that the soldier's basic needs are still met. This is a far cry from a fur trapper or hunter operating out in the wild, many miles away from any help for days or weeks on end. Here is what was said by the actual people who carried blanket rolls during the American Civil War.

**The Army Blanket-** While the US army maintained a reasonable amount of consistency in their issue, the Confederate states relied more upon a multitude of regional depots that either made their own products or obtained the goods through cottage industry and foreign import. There are other articles that detail the origins, materials and manufacturing methods so for now, let's stick to just the basics and hear what the original sources said.

*\*Note for the living historians: These accounts are not the definitive answer to what you have to carry; it is more of a reference guideline. Always check your military unit's history and the campaign/scenario to determine what to have and what not to carry.*

## **US/CS Specifications for the Soldier's Blanket**

According to various US Army Quartermaster records and notations, the price of an army blanket was \$3,60. A rubber ground cloth measured about 84" x 48" and was \$2,55. A painted ground cloth of similar dimensions was just \$1,65. For mounted troops, a 'poncho' was issued. This had a reinforced slot through the center so that the wearer could stick his head through it in the same manner of a traditional piece of Spanish clothing that bears the same name. A painted poncho was \$2,10 while a rubber poncho cost \$2,90.



US Federal Issue Blanket (courtesy Rob Barnes)

**US Army Blanket Specs.**

*“Woolen, grey, with letters U. S. in black, four inches long, in the centre; to be seven feet long, and five and a half feet wide, and to weigh five pounds.”*

**-US Army Manual (1861)**

*\*This is a rough equivalent to between a 3 ½ and a 4 point blanket.*

**CS Army Blanket Specs.**

*“Each man should have one heavy " four-point" blanket, which will answer for two on a march.”*

**-Volunteers Camp and Field Book (Richmond), John P. Curry (1862)**

*\* Four-point blanket measures about 70 x 85 inches and weighs about 6 pounds.*

**Here is what the Veterans Said**



Federal Soldiers inspecting the wreckage of the Orange & Alexandria Railroad. Note the various rolled-packs used

John Billings of the 10th Massachusetts Volunteer Light Artillery wrote extensively about army life. In his memoirs he spoke of how soldiers were provided with a “woollen and a rubber blanket”. In regards to the poncho, he said the following.

*An army poncho, I may here say, is specified as made of unbleached muslin coated with vulcanized India-rubber, sixty inches wide and seventy-one inches long, having an opening in the centre lengthwise of the poncho, through which the head passes, with a lap three inches wide and sixteen inches long. This garment is derived from the woolen poncho worn by the Spanish-Americans, but is of different proportions, these being four feet by seven.*

When the weather turns, Billings explained from his own account on how a soldier donned his rubber blanket.

*The army on the march in a rain-storm presented some aspects not seen in fair weather. As soon as it began to rain, or just before, each man would remove his rubber blanket from his roll or knapsack, and put it over his shoulders, tying it in front.*

When a man on the march finally tires of the knapsack in favor of a lighter load, Billings described the following ritual one made in lightening the load.

*He tucks his little collection of photographs, which perhaps he has encased in rubber or leather, into an inside pocket, and disposes other small keepsakes about his person. If he*

*intends to take his effects in a knapsack, he will at the start have put by more to carry than if he simply takes his blankets (rubber and woollen) rolled and slung over his shoulder. Late in the war this latter was the most common plan, as the same weight could be borne with less fatigue in that manner than in a knapsack, slung on the back.*

### **Hardtack & Coffee, Billings (1887)**



Famous photo of the Three Confederate Prisoners at Gettysburg - Note the use of knapsacks with the rolled bedding carried separately.

**Carlton McCarthy of the Richmond Howitzers (CSA)** seemed to mirror Billings by giving an account of life in the Confederate States Army. There are many similar themes and yet, many differences as well

*On the outside of the knapsack, solidly folded, were two great blankets and a rubber or oil-cloth. This knapsack, etc., weighed from fifteen to twenty-five pounds, sometimes even more. All seemed to think it was impossible to have on too many or too heavy clothes, or to have too many conveniences, and each had an idea that to be a good soldier he must be provided against every possible emergency.*

In regards to the painted or India-rubber cloth, McCarthy talks of campaigning under more spartan conditions.



*Tents were rarely seen. All the poetry about the "tented field" died. Two men slept together, each having a blanket and an oil-cloth; one oil-cloth went next to the ground. The two laid on this, covered themselves with two blankets, protected from the rain with the second oil-cloth on top, and slept very comfortably through rain, snow or hail, as it might be.*

**Detailed Minutiae of Soldier Life in the Army of Northern Virginia, Carlton McCarthy (1882)**



## **How to Make a Soldier's Bedroll**

In his 1877 book, John Gould, a Maine infantry veteran of the American Civil War, wrote of how many old soldiers were not partial to the knapsack. Personally, I love the convenience of a knapsack but I also appreciate the practicality of doing it as the old soldiers did. Here are Gould's exact words on how to roll your blanket like a true campaigner.



Illustration from Gould's 1877 book

- **Lay out the blanket flat, and roll it as tightly as possible without folding it enclosing the other baggage as you roll; (*In general it is better to put the shelter-tent in the roll, and to keep out the rubber blanket, for you may need the last before you camp.*)**
- **Then, tie it in a number of places to prevent unrolling, and the shifting about of the things inside.**
- **And finally, tie or strap together the two ends.**
- **And throw the ring thus made over the shoulder, and wear it as you do the strap of a haversack - diagonally across the body.**

There are many benefits to this configuration. You can shift the roll to another shoulder if one grows tired; it's easy to adjust and remove in addition to saving 2 1/2 pounds weight by removing the Knapsack from the mix.

# Additional Blanket-Roll Packing Tips

## Special Tips for the Bedroll

- **Do not lay your blanket on the ground during the day – air it out so that it may be used at night. It gathers too much moisture from the earth during the day.**
- **A wool blanket can retain 80% heat even while wet** - bear in mind that while it may save you from freezing, it is still unhealthful. Spread it before the fire to dry.
- **(Bedding Health Tip) US Sanitary Commission Rules for Preserving the Health of Soldiers (1861)** Page 9. No. 20 – The men should never be allowed to sleep in wet clothing, or under a wet blanket, if it can be possibly avoided; and, after being wetted, all articles of clothing and blankets should be and thoroughly dried and sunned before being used.
- **Impractical CS advice** – According to the Volunteers Camp and Field Book (CSA), *“When required to come under close fire, the body may partially be protected in front from the chin to the thighs, by folding your blanket in five or six thicknesses, and fastening it under your cross-belts and waist-belts, leaving the end hanging over your stomach. If the blanket is wet, it affords more resistance.”* (\*Editor’s note: Please don’t try this one at home kids! Maybe this made sense in 1862 when the alternative was to see how well your military shell jacket can stop a bullet but a musket round can penetrate 18-inches of packed earth. So don’t blame me for your Darwin-award if you attempt to try this one. you’ve been warned.)
- **Proper way to carry the rubber-blanket** - Roll up the rubber blanket tightly around the bed-roll with the cloth side out, as the rubber side is too slippery.
- **The rubber blanket may be carried as its own roll** - You can also roll the rubber blanket separately, and link it to the large roll after the manner of two links of a chain. Either way



- **Flatten your load** - Avoid packing bulbous, pokes and pouches in your kit. If you want it to fit, lay it flat.
- **Magnify your blanket's heat capacity**- Take a sheet of cotton drill that is slightly smaller than your blanket and sew it onto your blanket but only stitch one side on the outer edge. The extra layer amplifies warmth. When your spare clothing is laid between the blanket and sheet to serve as a cushion against the cold ground and the other half with added sheet wraps around the top of you, it is quite warm and comfortable.

*In the pre-dawn light, William Johnston woke to the steady tap of a leaking roof. The rain was now falling softly and the desert washes would no longer be flooded. Tsali was already up brewing a fresh pot of coffee. He sat wearing a warm turban and frock enjoying his cup while wreathed in a soft curtain of pipe smoke. After breakfasting on bacon and old corn cakes, the horses were saddled and bedding rolled. The morning air carried that familiar scent of wet creosote and a washed earth. William turned to his cousin and asked "How far is it to Maricopa Wells, now?" Tsali shrugged, "I thought you'd never get up. Let's see if you can ride faster." Adjusting his oilcloth round his shoulders, William gave his horse a soft kick; "Let's start this day." Beyond the mountains, thunder continued to roll.*

**-DR**