

## RS#11.1

### Teacher Guide to the Resources

#### Document J: Rose O'Neal Greenhow

##### Background Information:

- The War Between the States was also a war between brothers, cousins, friends and neighbors - and some of them were women. We know from certain military records, journals, publications, and letters that women served as nurses, as Union and Confederate soldiers, and some were even spies.
- Rose O'Neal Greenhow was selected for this activity because she is from Montgomery County, Maryland.

##### Guided Questions/Teaching Suggestions:

Ask students:

- Where and when was Greenhow born?
- What did Greenhow do that was unique for women in the mid-1800s?
- What caused Greenhow's death?
- How was her death commemorated?
- Based on Greenhow's exploits, is Maryland more Northern, more Southern, or represents the middle ground?

Before answering the guided questions, students could practice their summarizing skills. Students could read and highlight the key words/concepts in the *Background Information* section. Have students create a twenty word or less summary using the highlighted information.

The following is a list of notable women that could be used for an extended lesson on the role of women in the Civil War:

**Emmeline Piggott** became North Carolina's most famous spy and smuggler. She is said to have carried dispatches in the large pockets located under her full skirts. She avoided capture many times but was finally caught, arrested and imprisoned. She was eventually released and sent home.

**Elizabeth C. Howland**, trained in medicine by her father, was also highly successful as a Confederate spy. She often sent her young son and daughter to carry dispatches. Appearing innocent, the children were allowed to pass through enemy lines undisturbed.

**Belle Boyd** was the South's most colorful and famous female spy. She was twice imprisoned and arrested six times. Boyd defied Union authorities by carrying important letters and papers across enemy lines. Ironically, before the war ended, Belle Boyd married a Captain Harding, a Union naval officer.

**Nancy Hart** served as a Confederate scout, guide and spy, carrying messages between the Southern Armies. She hung around isolated Federal outposts, acting as a peddler, to report their strength, population and vulnerability to General Jackson. Hart was twenty years old when she was captured by the Yankees and jailed in a dilapidated house with guards constantly

patrolling the building. She gained the trust of one of her guards, got his weapon from him, shot him and escaped.

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**Elizabeth Van Lew** asked to be allowed to visit Union prisoners held by the Confederates in Richmond and began taking them food and medicines. She realized that many of the prisoners had been marched through Confederate lines on their way to Richmond and were full of useful information about Confederate movements. She became a Union Spy for the next four years, setting up a network of couriers, and devising a code.

**Antonia Ford**, a Fairfax, Virginia, resident impressed soldiers from the North and South with her beauty, charm and conversation. Impressed with her ability to recall those conversations, Jeb Stuart awarded her a written commission as "my honorary aide de-camp." Based on information provided by Ford - on March 9, 1863, Confederate Colonel John S. Mosby and 29 men entered the Union encampment and captured Union General Stoughton, while he slept in the Gunnell House. In addition, Mosby captured two captains, 30 privates, and 58 horses. Following Mosby's raid, Union officials searched Ford's house and found the commission. Union Maj. Joseph C. Willard arrested and escorted "the spy" to the Old Capitol Prison. Along the way, Ford stole his heart, and seven months later Willard secured her release and they were married.

**Dr. Mary Walker**, a surgeon in the Civil War, was awarded our nation's highest honor by President Andrew Johnson. The citation reads, in part: "Whereas it appears from official reports that Dr. Mary E. Walker, a graduate of medicine, has rendered valuable service to the government, and her efforts have been earnest and untiring in a variety of ways, and that she was assigned to duty and served as an assistant surgeon in charge of female prisoners at Louisville, KY., under the recommendation of Major-Generals Sherman and Thomas, and faithfully served as contract surgeon in the service of the United States, and has devoted herself with much patriotic zeal to the sick and wounded soldiers, both in the field and hospitals, to the detriment of her own health, and has endured hardships as a prisoner of war four months in a southern prison while acting as contract surgeon...."

Some historical records verify the fact that over sixty women were either wounded or killed at various battles during the Civil War. It is estimated that over 400 women served in the Civil War on both sides, not counting the thousands who served as nurses. Perhaps one of the most poignant stories about women in the Civil War is told in *Women in War: Their Heroism and Self-Sacrifice*, by Frank Moore. In 1866, Moore writes:

*"In 1863, at age 19, a woman known only as Emily, ran away from home and joined the drum corps of a Michigan Regiment. The regiment was sent to Tennessee and during the struggle for Chattanooga a minie ball pierced the side of the young soldier. Her wound was fatal and her sex was disclosed. At first she refused to disclose her real name but as she lay dying she consented to dictate a telegram to her father in Brooklyn. Forgive your dying daughter. I have but a few moments to live. My native soil drinks my blood. I expected to deliver my country but the fates would not have it so. I am content to die. Pray forgive me . . . Emily."*

Many stories have been written about unique Civil War women, including Sarah Emma Edmonds, alias Franklin Thompson. In *Nurse and Spy in the Union Army*, 1865, which is subtitled *The Adventures and Experiences of a Woman in Hospitals, Camps, and Battle-Fields*, the author chronicles her adventures and escapades as she gathers information and nurses the

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wounded. Historians have verified that Emma Edmonds, as Franklin Thompson, did serve in the units she mentioned at the times she said.