

## Document J Rose O'Neal Greenhow

### News Clipping (source unknown) of Greenhow's Obituary October 1, 1864

Source: Special Collections Library, Duke University

<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/greenhow/1864-10-01-b/1864-10-01-b.html>

#### Excerpt:

"It was a solemn and imposing spectacle. The profusion [excess] of wax lights round the corpse, the quality of choice flowers, in crosses, garlands, and bouquets, scattered over it, the silent mourners, sable-robed at the head and foot; the tide of visitors, women and children, with streaming eyes, and soldiers, with bent heads and hushed steps, standing by, paying the last tribute of respect to the departed heroine. On the bier [table], draped with a magnificent Confederate flag, lay the body, so unchanged as to look like a calm sleeper, while above all rose the tall ebony crucifix -- emblem of the faith she embraced in happier hours, and which we humbly trust, was her consolation in passing through the dark waters of the river of death. . . ."

**Background information:** Rose O'Neal Greenhow was born in Montgomery County, Maryland in 1817. "Wild Rose", as she was called from a young age, was a leader in Washington society, a passionate secessionist, and one of the most renowned spies in the Civil War. Among her accomplishments was the ten-word secret message sent to General Pierre G.T. Beauregard which ultimately caused him to win the battle of Bull Run. She spied so successfully for the Confederacy that Jefferson Davis credited her with winning the battle of Manassas.



She was imprisoned for her efforts first in her own home and then in the Old Capital Prison. Despite her confinement, Greenhow continued getting messages to the Confederacy by means of cryptic notes which traveled in unlikely places such as the inside of a woman's bun of hair. After her second prison term, she was exiled to the Confederate states where she was received warmly by President Jefferson Davis.

Her next mission was to tour Britain and France as a propagandist for the Confederate cause. Two months after her arrival in London, her memoirs were published and enjoyed a wide sale throughout the British Isles. In Europe, Greenhow found a strong sympathy for the South, especially among the ruling classes. During the course of her travels she hobnobbed with many members of the nobility. In Paris, she was received into the court of Napoleon III and was granted an audience with the Emperor at the Tuileries. Rose's diary (August 5, 1863 - August 10, 1864) held in the North Carolina State Archives in Raleigh, NC, describes her mission in great detail.

In 1864, after a year abroad, she boarded the Condor, a British blockade-runner which was to take her home. Just before reaching her destination, the vessel ran aground at the mouth of the Cape Fear River near Wilmington, North Carolina. In order to avoid the Union gunboat that pursued her ship, Rose fled in rowboat, but never made it to shore. Her little boat capsized and she was dragged down by the weight of the gold she received in royalties for her book.

THE FUNERAL OF MRS. ROSE GREENHOW.—The death, by drowning, of Mrs. Rose Greenhow, near Wilmington, North Carolina, last week, has been already noticed. She leaves one child, an interesting little daughter, who is in a convent school at Paris, where her mother left her upon her return to this country. Hundreds of ladies lined the wharf at Wilmington upon the approach of the steamer bearing Mrs. Greenhow's remains. The Soldiers' Aid Society took charge of the funeral, which took place from the chapel of Hospital No. 4. A letter to the *Sentinel*, describing it, says: "It was a solemn and imposing spectacle. The profusion of wax lights round the corpse; the quantity of choice flowers, in crosses, garlands and bouquets, scattered over it; the silent mourners, sable-robed, at the head and foot; the tide of visitors, women and children, with streaming eyes, and soldiers, with bent heads and hushed steps, standing by, paying the last tribute of respect to the departed heroine. On the bier, draped with a magnificent Confederate flag, lay the body, so unchanged as to look like a calm sleeper, while above all rose the tall ebony crucifix—emblem of the faith she embraced in happier hours, and which, we humbly trust, was her consolation in passing through the dark waters of the river of death. She lay there until two o'clock of Sunday afternoon, when the body was removed to the Catholic Church of St. Thomas. Here the funeral oration was delivered by the Rev. Dr. Corcoran, which was a touching tribute to the heroism and patriotic devotion of the deceased, as well as a solemn warning on the uncertainty of all human projects and ambition, even though of the most laudable character. "The coffin, which was as richly decorated as the resources of the town admitted, and still covered with the Confederate flag, was borne to Oakdale Cemetery, followed by an immense funeral cortege. A beautiful spot on a grassy slope, overshadowed by waving trees, and in sight of a tranquil lake, was chosen for her resting place. Rain fell in torrents during the day; but as the coffin was being lowered into the grave, the sun burst forth in the brightest majesty, and a rainbow of the most vivid color spanned the horizon. Let us accept the omen, not only for her, the quiet sleeper, who, after many storms and a tumultuous and checkered life, came to peace and rest at last, but also for our beloved country, over which we trust the rainbow of hope will ere long shine with brightest dyes. "The pall-bearers were Colonel Tansill, chief of staff to General Whiting; Major Vanderhorst, J. M. Seixas, Esq., Dr. de Prossett, Dr. Micks and Dr. Medway. General Whiting and Captain C. B. Poindexter, representing the two services, were prevented from acting as pall-bearers, the former by reason of absence, the latter in consequence of illness."