

## Women of the Civil War

This is not a complete list, but a starting point when learning about the contributions of women in the Civil War.

**Louisa May Alcott** (1832-1888) - Author best known for writing *Little Women*

**Amelia Bloomer** (1818-1894) - Women's rights advocate

**Susan B. Anthony** (1820-1906) - Social reformer and women's rights activist who played a pivotal role in the women's suffrage movement

**Sojourner Truth** (1797-1883) - Abolitionist and women's rights activist who was born into slavery but escaped with her infant daughter to freedom

**Florence Nightingale** (1820-1910) - English social reformer and founder of modern nursing. She gave nursing a favorable reputation and became an icon of Victorian culture.

**Loreta Janeta Valazquez** (a.k.a. Lieutenant Harry T. Buford) (1842- 1923) - A woman who claimed to have masqueraded as a male Confederate soldier.

**Sarah Edmonds** (a.k.a. Frank Thompson) (1841-1898) - Canadian-born woman who served as a man with the Union Army. In 1992, she was inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame.

**Mary Surratt** (1823-1865) – Arrested for knowing the assassination plot of Lincoln and for helping John Wilkes Booth- became first woman ever hanged by government of the United States.

**Julia Ward Howe** (1819-1910) – Poet and author who wrote “Battle Hymn of the Republic” from “The John Brown Song” ditty.

**Harriet Beecher Stowe** (1811-1896) – Abolitionist and author who wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a best-selling novel that depicted the harsh conditions for enslaved African Americans.

**Mary Boykin Chesnut** (1823-1886) – Author noted for a book published as her Civil War diary - she described the war from within her upper-class circles of Southern plantation society.

**Mary Todd Lincoln** (1818-1882) – Wife of United States president Abraham Lincoln who was assassinated in 1865.

**Varina Howell Davis** (1826-1906) – Was the only First Lady of the Confederate States of America as the second wife of Confederate States president Jefferson Davis.

**Dorothea Dix** (“Dragon Dix”) (1802-1887) – An advocate on behalf of the poor mentally ill who, through a program of lobbying state legislatures and the US Congress, created the first generation of American mental asylums. She was also put in charge of Union female nurses during the war.

**Drs. Emily** (1826-1910) & **Elizabeth Blackwell** (1821-1910) – English sisters and doctors who helped organize the Women's Central Association of Relief, which selected and trained nurses for service in the war. Both played an important role in the development of the US Sanitary Commission.

**Phoebe Yates Pember** (1823-1913) – Was a member of a prominent Jewish family from Charleston, SC and a nurse and female administrator of Chimborazo Hospital at Richmond, VA during the war. She oversaw the care of over 15,000 patients.

**Dr. Mary Edwards Walker** (1832-1919) - Was an abolitionist, prohibitionist, prisoner of war, and a surgeon. She was captured by Confederate forces after crossing enemy lines to treat wounded civilians and was arrested as a spy.

**Clara Barton** (1821-1912) – Nurse who founded the American Red Cross. She was a hospital nurse during the war but since nursing education was not very formalized and she did not attend nursing school, she provided self-taught nursing care. She is remembered for doing humanitarian work and civil rights advocacy at a time before women had the right to vote.

**Mary Ann Bickerdyke** (1817-1901) – Also known as Mother Bickerdyke, was a hospital administrator for Union soldiers and a lifelong advocate for veterans. She was responsible for establishing 300 field hospitals during the war. She would clean campsites, cook for soldiers and cared for the wounded on nearly 19 battlefields. General Grant said, “Mother Bickerdyke outranks everybody, even Lincoln.” She directed soldiers to tear down a log breastwork to feed fires and was arrested for destroying a government fortification. “All right, I’m arrested. Now don’t bother me. I have work to do.”

**Belle Boyd** (1844-1900) – Was a Confederate spy who operated from her father’s hotel in Front Royal, VA and provided valuable information to Confederate General Stonewall Jackson.

**Rose O’Neal Greenhow** (1813-1864) – Was a renowned Confederate spy during the war. In the period before the war, she moved in important political circles and cultivated friendships with presidents, generals, senators, and high-ranking military officers including John C. Calhoun and James Buchanan. She used her connections to pass along key military information to the Confederacy. In 1861 she was given control of a pro-Southern spy network in Washington, D.C. She was credited by the Confederate President Jefferson Davis with ensuring the South’s victory at the First Battle of Bull Run in July 1861.

**Pauline Cushman (born Harriet Wood)** (1833-1893) – She was an actress in Tennessee but took an oath with the North. She fraternized with Southern military commanders and smuggled information back to the Union Army. She was sentenced to hang but saved by Union troops when they invaded the area she was kept. She was made an honorary major by President Abraham Lincoln and became known as Miss Major Pauline Cushman.

**Harriet Tubman (born Araminta Ross)** (1822-1913) – She was born into slavery and escaped. Made about 13 missions to rescue approximately 70 enslaved people using the network of antislavery activists and safe houses known as the Underground Railroad. During the war she served as an armed scout and spy for the Union Army. Later in life she became an activist in the movement for women’s suffrage.

**Kady Brownell** (1842-1915) – Was born in South Africa but became a vivandiere (a name for woman attached to military regiments as sutlers or canteen keepers) when she joined her husband’s 5<sup>th</sup> Rhode Island Inf. Unit. She trained with soldiers and fought in battle. At the First Battle of Bull Run she carried the flag under heavy Confederate fire.

**Mary Custis Lee** (1807-1873) – Wife of Robert E. Lee, sewed nearly 400 socks for the Confederate army of Northern Virginia.