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Cracking the Spheres of Domesticity: How Female Roles as Nurses and Spies in the  
American Civil War Gave Women the Tools for Future Activism

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## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Historiography</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Pre-Civil War Spheres of Domesticity</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Gender Roles of the Civil War</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Home and Public Sphere</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Nurses of the War</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Spies of the War</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>26</b>

## Abstract

This capstone takes a look at what hopes to prove is the beginning of a break from customary gender roles within the American family. The paper takes an in depth look at the work that women do during the Civil War. It looks at the growth of their role within the home. It also looks at the necessary growth of their role outside of the home since the men are off fighting the war. Most importantly this paper looks at the work that women do both as field nurses and spies for both sides of the war. The culmination of the growth in female gender roles gives women the experience, and the tools for future activism.

## Introduction:

Hillary Clinton who in the coming year could potentially become the first female president of the United States, Indra Nooyi who has been the CEO of one of the largest companies in the world, and Oprah Winfrey who can be argued as one of the most influential women in the world today. What do these three women all have in common? All three of these women have taken advantage of the opportunities given to them through the efforts, stubbornness, and suffering of women decades, and centuries before them.

Before discussing and analyzing why we should focus on the Civil War for the a period of growth in women's gender roles we must first look at what historians consider the first Women's Rights Convention, The Seneca Falls Convention of 1848.<sup>1</sup> The Convention was the first of its kind in which women came together to discuss what they wanted/needed and pronouncing their equality with men. Up to this point in history women were contained to be subordinate by possibly the most trusted work in the world, The Bible. Nearly all interpretations of the bible highlight women to be responsible for the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, and because of this women have always been believed to be lesser than their male

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Myette Coughlin and Charles Edward Coughlin, "CONVENTION IN PETTICOATS: THE SENECA FALLS DECLARATION OF WOMAN'S RIGHTS," *Today's Speech* 21 no. 4 (Fall 1973): 17.

counterparts.<sup>2</sup> The Seneca Falls Convention was not a meeting that was simply thrown together out of the blue by a group of women. The two leaders of the convention, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, were two women who were bringing to this meeting with them a wealth of knowledge regarding political activism as well as connections to get the word of the Convention out to the nation. Even having the convention in Seneca Falls was planned out. Seneca Falls was located in a county with seven reform churches. The town was also sympathetic to the anti-slavery movement in helping freed slaves escape to Canada. Having the convention in an area with this kind of support for reform ensured that the immediate message of the convention would fall on sympathetic ears.<sup>3</sup>

The biggest emergence out of the Seneca Falls Convention, besides the fact that women organized and had the convention at all, was the list of sentiments that were laid out at the meeting. One of the best aspects of the list of sentiments was how the women went about stating their hope for change. The women placed their sentiments within a document which used much of the same language as the Declaration of Independence.<sup>4</sup> By using rhetoric from the Declaration within their list of sentiments women of the meeting attempted to create a connection with the men that gained their equality through the Declaration. As it is known in the

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 18.

history of the United States the demands made by the Convention were not met and were even attacked. The counter rhetoric that men used at the time was so strong in swaying public discourse that many of the original signees of the demands withdrew their names from the document.<sup>5</sup> With rhetoric of that level suppressing women out of activism, the next opportunity for women to gain roles and prove equality did not come until the Civil War of the 1860's.

In the coming pages this capstone will look at the work and changes that women endured in their, apparently never-ending fight for equality. We will be analyzing the early steps towards equality focusing on the Civil War. There will be an initial background highlighting the strict spheres of domesticity that hovered over nearly every family and women in the United States before the American Civil War. After this we shall analyze the expansion of gender roles of women during the Civil War. During the Civil War, with most of the men off fighting the war, women gained ground with their roles within the home and the public sphere. Women filled two different roles during the war that very few expected to be filled by women, and filled so effectively. Women became some of the strongest field nurses that either side of the war had, shocking men with their ability to

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 22.

work in conditions that most men thought was impossible for a woman.<sup>6</sup> Women also filled a role within the war that came to arguably be the most pivotal role within the war, and this was being a spy. At the end of this paper we will understand that during the Civil War women showed an unimaginable ability to succeed across numerous different roles that their male counterparts thought they were incapable of.

### Historiography:

We as human beings have always lived in an oppressive world/nation/state. From the beginning of time we as human beings have made the presumption that somebody is better than somebody else by some sort of divine right gifted upon those people. We look at the origins of the United States. Columbus has come across the Atlantic and claims a land for a nation that has just landed, meanwhile there had been Native American inhabitants for years on the same land. This intervention was okay though because of the fact that the white population that was taking over the land was doing so to help humanize the savage natives of the land. The white European Americans of the inception of our nation and throughout most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century believed that they were of a divine right to enslave the

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<sup>6</sup> Rhonda Goodman Lesniak. "Expanding the Role of Women as Nurses During the American Civil War," *Advances in Nursing Science* 32, No. 1 (2009): 33-35.

African population to work plantations. Both of these examples of inequality among people has been looking at those with an ethnic ideal of who is better than who, but perhaps the most egregious of inequalities among people has been the inequalities between men and women.

The history of the United States is a very new history as we move into the Civil War of the 1860's. The United States has not yet been its own country for even 100 years to this point, however in this small amount of time a tremendous wedge has been thrust between the two nations. This wedge that became one of a few different reasons for the outbreak of the American Civil War was the idea of equality among men, especially those of slaves. The equality of men is an idea that has been fought on many fronts, in many nations, across numerous periods of time, but what of the fight for the equality of women to men?

One of the most prominent ways that the dominance of men over women has been described by historians is through the ideas of what is now called the Spheres of Domesticity. The Sphere of Domesticity is the idea that women throughout history have been given power by men to control what happens within the home.<sup>7</sup> This practice of giving women power within this singular sphere and

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<sup>7</sup> Deborah L. Rotman, "Separate Spheres? Beyond the Dichotomies of Domesticity," *Current Anthropology* 47, no. 4 (August 2006): 666.

nothing in the rest of life was a practice that for the majority of women who embraced their roles as the head of in the home business left them continually dependent upon their husbands for anything outside the home.<sup>8</sup> Some women took this ability to be a figurehead of the household as a golden ticket, in that they held a power over something. Little did many women of the time realize that by taking on this opportunity of power in the home they would later set women back in their pursuit of influence outside of the home.<sup>9</sup> Because women put so much focus on owning the domestic/home sphere of influence in the family, when women went about gaining power outside the home they had little to no knowledge of how to go about business and other operations outside of the home.

Many historians have highlighted the separation of women and men in their own specific roles one historian goes to the point to say that the ideal family of the time was, "the ideal of the male provider/female housekeeper marriage."<sup>10</sup> This ideal working function of the family of the time did more than one thing for both women and men of the time. Nutting states that because of this very strict division of roles narrowed a males role to that of just a, "provider", and it is within

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<sup>8</sup> P. Bradley Nutting, "Absent Husbands, Single Wives: Success, Domesticity and Seminuclear Families in the Nineteenth-Century Great Lakes World," *Journal of Family History* 35, No. 4 (2010): 342-345.

<sup>9</sup> Rotman, *Separate Spheres*, 667-668.

<sup>10</sup> Nutting, *Absent Husbands*, 330.

this context that some women were viewed as a single wife despite being married.<sup>11</sup> Nutting argues through both of these statements made early on in his article that women were in fact gaining strength within the family during this time through the absence of their husbands. Nutting's article does not look directly at families and the separation that took place with families during the war, but rather at family separation prior to the war. This aspect of women gaining power however small that power might have been is a step forward for all women. By Nutting showing that women were gaining inches of power when their husbands were away it is not that large of a step to assume that women indeed gained power during and after the war when the vast majority of men were away fighting the war.

Marc Egnal who through his own work has stated that the roles of women were expanding, if ever so slightly, was evident following the Civil War and can be seen as soon as the year the war ended in 1865.<sup>12</sup> Egnal points to the mid 1860's as the point where there began to be an important baby step forward in how women dealt with domesticity. This movement began to come within the women's literacy of the time pushing the hot button issues that were faced by women immediately following the war such as political activism, working, and education. Egnal points to

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<sup>11</sup> Nutting, *Absent Husbands*, 330.

<sup>12</sup> Marc Egnal "Historicizing Domesticity: The Impact of the Woman's Rights Movement," *Canadian Review Of American Studies* 45 no. 2 (May 2015): 238-240.

numerous examples of women authors expanding through their literary works, post-Civil War, that women were expanding their roles and becoming leading characters in their lives unlike the work done prior to the 1860's.

Rhonda Goodman Lesniak is yet another historian that points to the time of the Civil War and the years surrounding as a period of time in which women's roles expanded due to the necessity of expansion due to the war.<sup>13</sup> Lesniak takes an in depth look at women's expansion into roles both domestically as well as the army, specifically that of nurses. Prior to the Civil War trained nurses in general was not a thing that was known or done for most of the nation. Prior to the war anybody who was sick was frequently tended for by the women of the house who themselves only had a training of the craft which was passed down to them from the mothers, and mothers before that. If a male doctor was in fact available he worked alone, came to the house, did the full work-up, and caretaking.<sup>14</sup> Up to this particular point in time the term nurse was even a clouded mess that seemed to encompass an immense mass of potential people,

"In all, prior to the 1870s, the term nurse lacked a clear definition. It was a broad term that included matrons, unpaid volunteers, convalescing soldiers, religious sisters,

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<sup>13</sup> Rhonda Goodman Lesniak, "Expanding the Role of Women as Nurses During the American Civil War," *Advances in Nursing Science* 32 no. 1 (2009): 38-41.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

hospital visitors, and members of voluntary organizations."<sup>15</sup>

With this statement it is clear that whatever event took place preceding the 1870's, the Civil War, brought about a drastic change for a profession that continues to grow today. Today women as nurses is not an idea that anybody bats an eyelash at, there is nothing backwards nor intriguing about the idea, this was not the case during the Civil War. One of the foremost arguments against female nurses during war came from the thought that women should not be permitted to carry out that service on somebody who was not a relative.<sup>16</sup> This idea was coming from the Victorian times of America prior to the Civil War in which most women were not to be out in the city without a man to accompany her such as a sibling, father, or suitor. With these ideas being enforced for the so long the push against broad field female nurses working with men continued to grow until it became apparent that without female nurses an insurmountable amount of lives would be lost to the war. Another reason that eventually swayed the military's of the time to accept women into the military camps as nurses came from the idea of surrogacy by these women. It was thought that women would be able to serve the male soldiers of the war as surrogate mothers, daughters, and wives. These relations

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 35.

would give the men an outlet away from the rigors and brutality of war within the camps.<sup>17</sup>

Lesniak also points to roles filled by women not just in the war but within spheres they were previously shut out of because the men were home. With the men now forced from their homes to fight and protect their families in the war women filled customary gender roles left behind. Women filled the roles of teachers in schools, they learned to run and sustain farms, women took on an active role in politics and campaigned for abolition, and even going beyond just a nurse some women posed as men to enlist in the military.<sup>18</sup> Women proved through their ability to absorb these vast amounts of roles during a time of turmoil that they were indeed capable to be the leaders of families, communities, and themselves like never before.

With the onset of the Civil War upon the nation both the North and the South were scrambling to construct a military force that would be able to defeat the other. What is necessary to construct a military? Soldiers! Men! With the war enthralling both the North and the South the women of either side were thrown into for many brand new aspects of life in which they would need to learn, and learn to succeed quickly. With the men away fighting in the war women took on

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 35.

even more of the load of leading the family within the home but also took on roles in the public spheres that were vacated by the men.<sup>19</sup> Women were now the only voice of the household besides letters written from husbands off fighting, this left women usually going months at a time without getting word from their husbands. In order to understand the immense expansion that woman's roles took on during the Civil War we must first look at the strict spheres of domesticity prior to the war.

### **Pre-Civil War Spheres of Domesticity:**

Prior to the expansion of female gender roles during and after the Civil War women had very few roles to fill. Among these limited gender roles were even fewer opportunities for growth into the public sphere outside of the home. The spheres of domesticity for those who are unaware comes from the idea that there was a public sphere, which was dominated by men, as well as a domestic sphere, which was the woman's domain. The domestic sphere made up the prototype woman's roles of the time, these were the homemakers and the child raisers who did not question, nor have input to give their husbands for anything outside of the

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<sup>19</sup> Clara Juncker, "Women at War: The Civil War Diaries of Floride Clemson and Cornelia Peake McDonald," *Southern Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (2004): 95-100.

home.<sup>20</sup> However limited women were prior to the Civil War in regards to the breadth of the roles that they filled, the roles they did have they excelled at. Female roles under the strict spheres of domesticity prior to the war can be largely narrowed down to two roles, that of the keeper of the home and the child raiser.<sup>21</sup> Women's roles were diluted down at this point in American history to an idea surrounding one entity, and that was the home. Women were if we put a single word to describe it, the nurturers of families. When men fell ill and money was unavailable to spend to get a certified doctor it was the women of the household who did the work to, nurse, the men back to health.<sup>22</sup>

Historians of have analyzed at how strict that the spheres of domesticity were for women prior to the Civil War and have shown that the strict close off of gender roles of the time may have hurt men's control over the family.<sup>23</sup> The belief is that men themselves by shutting themselves out of the domestic sphere of influence reduced themselves from a previous level of Patriarchy to in some cases that of a simple provider.<sup>24</sup> With this shut down of the males influence women flourish in their roles within the home. Up until the point of the outbreak of the Civil War nearly every role that women gain they excel at which sets women up for

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<sup>20</sup> Nutting, *Absent Husbands*, 333-336.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 329-331.

<sup>22</sup> Lesniak, *Expanding Role*, 34-36.

<sup>23</sup> Nutting, *Absent Husbands*, 330.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 330-334.

further expansion upon gender roles with the inevitable exit of men during the Civil War.

### **Female Gender Roles of the Civil War:**

As we move into the meat of the Civil War the men are fighting for their respective sides of the war, the home-front is being run by those left behind, women. With the women back home their involvement and voices are being heard beyond just the home but in the public sphere.

### **Home and Public Sphere Expansion:**

With the onset of the Civil War women take on new roles with the exodus of men to serve in the military. Not only do women during the time of war gain gender roles, but for those of the upper class their ease to move throughout the public sphere was much easier. The traditional gender roles of being the proper upper class women who does not need to bother with the work of the lesser begins to get challenged and investigated during the 1860's.<sup>25</sup> Another aspect that only grew for women during the Civil War was the finding of a capable suitor to marry daughters and finding a capable man to maintain the Victorian prose of needing a man to

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<sup>25</sup> Clara Juncker, "Women at War: The Civil War Diaries of Floride Clemson and Cornelia Peake McDonald," *Southern Quarterly* 42 no. 4 (2004): 93.

support the women.<sup>26</sup> With most fathers off fighting the war women now felt less pressure to be pushed into a relationship. The courtship of women never slowed down by the young men left behind by the war but the frequency of moving from courtship into marriage was another story due to the absence of the father.<sup>27</sup> This allowed women to be much more selective about who it is that they would see and who had the chance to be with them. This physical and mental choice of a suitor was something that had little clout over the minds of the wives that the men left behind.

Women who were left at home were also left with not only the physical burden of being at home but also the mental challenges of running the household while the men were at war. Many women when left at home fought some of the biggest battles of the war, and in these battles no blood was shed. Women left at home were left with their endless thoughts and worries of their loved ones. Women fought their personal ideas and sides depending on their support of the war. As well as the fight of what being a women left at home in times of war entailed.<sup>28</sup> This statement by Kaufman is an idea that is often been overlooked when looking at the Civil War. The mental and emotional toll that is placed on those

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<sup>26</sup> Juncker, *Women at War*, 94-96.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>28</sup> Will Kaufman, "No Non-combatants Here: Women and Civilians in the American Civil War," *Women's History Review* 13 no. 4 (2004): 673.

left behind is something that cannot be quantified with casualties, injuries, or the loss of land.

Another large role was filling the role of being the only parental figure for the children of the families. In letters sent from a soldier to a daughter during the Civil War there are numerous statements made by the husband which shows his struggle to give input into his family's life as he is apart from it. The soldier writes to his daughter speaking of how frequently he feels the need to write home to his family in order to stay connected. Edgeworth Bird even makes the point of sending numerous letters in a single day in an effort to catch up on days in which he missed sending a letter.<sup>29</sup> In this very same letter Edgeworth gives some very fatherly sentiments in which he asks his daughter to act, treat, and react to others.

"...then try and perform all your duties honestly and faithfully. Be truthful, never attempt deceit in anything or anybody. Never neglect to say your prayers, and study your lessons well that you may never fret Mama, who makes so many sacrifices for you both."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Edgeworth Bird to Sallie Bird, Camp Walker, August 19, 1861, in *The Granite Farm Letters: The Civil War Correspondence of Edgeworth and Sallie Bird, 1861-1864*, ed. John Rozier (Athens: University of Georgia Press), 1988.

<sup>30</sup> Edgeworth Bird to Sallie Bird, Camp Walker, August 19, 1861, in *The Granite Farm Letters: The Civil War Correspondence of Edgeworth and Sallie Bird, 1861-1864*, ed. John Rozier (Athens: University of Georgia Press), 1988.

Edgeworth comments on both the efficiency of his wife in raising the children in his absence as well as her uncanny ability to teach her children to love education.<sup>31</sup> In a final letter that was examined Edgeworth once again finds the chance to give his wife praise for her ability to fill the roles he left behind by fighting in the war.

"She has many trials and burdens at home; the care of a plantation is a new onus and not properly belonging to her department, but under necessity she assumes it bravely, and right ably and skillfully does she direct."<sup>32</sup>

Edgeworth is constantly pointing to the immaculate role that his wife does at filling roles that he wishes he could fill.

Throughout the correspondence between the Bird's there a couple of ideas that are difficult to miss when examining the statements made. Edgeworth is obviously a man that puts a lot of desire on his children to be well educated, and through this he makes the statement that his wife is the best possible teacher for his children to learn from. By saying this Edgeworth is making a statement that his wife is better suited to educate than the teachers of the area. This idea points to a fact that Mrs. Bird is a very capable woman to be in charge of such a prestigious

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<sup>31</sup> Edgeworth Bird to Sallie Bird, Camp Georgia, January 12, 1862, in *The Granite Farm Letters: The Civil War Correspondence of Edgeworth and Sallie Bird, 1861-1864*, ed. John Rozier (Athens: University of Georgia Press), 1988.

<sup>32</sup> Edgeworth Bird to Sallie Bird, Near Richmond, August 10, 1864, in *The Granite Farm Letters: The Civil War Correspondence of Edgeworth and Sallie Bird, 1861-1864*, ed. John Rozier (Athens: University of Georgia Press), 1988.

task. Edgeworth also makes a point in a letter to spend half a page discussing with his daughter how Mrs. Bird was forced to step into roles that were previously never expected of her. He makes the point that stepping into such roles is no easy task and that any lesser woman would not have been able to step in and succeed with such grace and ease.

An overarching theme that appears in all the letters examined is Edgeworth passing on his sentiments to his daughter on how he believes she should act and live her life. Edgeworth was obviously having a tough time not being with his family and wanted to convey to his daughter how he would raise her if he were there to do so, however since Edgeworth was only present for his family through his letters it fell to Mrs. Bird to be the head of the family. During the period when Edgeworth Bird was away at war Mrs. Bird took on the running of the family plantation and the work needed to support the family financially. Mrs. Bird did not however have the luxury of taking on these roles and leaving behind previous roles. Throughout the majority of the correspondence the children continue to be home schooled by their mother. During the period that Edgeworth Bird was away at war Mrs. Bird took on gender roles that were never previously presented to her and she excelled to the point of praise from her husband. With the struggle and the growth of female gender roles throughout the Civil War, women proved that during this time of

turmoil they had the ability to step up, lead, and succeed within the public sphere like they never needed to before.

### Women as Nurses of the War:

Women not only showed their excellence through how they handled their expansion of roles into the public sphere but also helping with the war effort through nursing. Nursing is argued to be one of the most woman like roles to be filled because it's a job in which women have always filled, the nurturer.<sup>33</sup> Men expected the women of the time to fill this void of war time nurses, but women changed how nursing came to be defined with how well they filled this role.

Before the war nursing was never thought to be a profession of any real value. Nurses were not used by male doctors. The doctors would customarily perform and do all the deeds necessary for the patient with little to no help from anybody else. Even at the inception of the Civil War the value of true nurses had yet to take hold, nurses at the onset of the war were anything from men who were not fit to fight to volunteers, to visitors at the hospital.<sup>34</sup>

During the war there was another host of issues that men created as reasons that the women should not be treating the men of war. The first came from the idea that having women so close to the men fighting the war that the

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<sup>33</sup> Lesniak, Expanding Roles, 33-34.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 34.

women would sexually allure the men fighting which would stray their focus away from the war in front of them.<sup>35</sup> Another argument against the women being there was the fact that the women would be taking care of men that they do not have familial ties to. The call for nurses would eventually grow to be too much for either side of the war to not employ women nurses, and in the end both sides were already too late to save the thousands of lives lost to disease and battle. By the end of the war the Union army had lost 110,000 soldiers to combat or mortal battle wounds, meanwhile another 224,586 soldiers died of disease. Of the lucky soldiers who did not pass away during the war there were still 246,712 soldiers that showed up on a list of wounded soldiers, and of those soldiers there were nearly 30,000 soldiers listed as amputees.<sup>36</sup> Besides the draw to serve their land and attempting to save lives there was another group of women who stepped in as nurses, these nurses were drawn in through what they believed to be religious orders from god.<sup>37</sup>

The life lived by nurses on the battlefields was that of a constant struggle. The struggle to save lives, the struggle to fit in, the struggle to prove yourself, and the struggle to survive weighed heavy on women working at the front of the war. Women serving as nurses at the front for the war every single day was a battle stretching from when they wake up to trying to save the life of the man who

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 36

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 37

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 39-40.

was bleeding out on the table. The fight with doctors was a constant struggle, until the point comes when a woman saves a soldier's life. This turning point is enough to change the game for any woman during the war and this is exactly the turning point that Hannah Ropes and other nurses of the Civil War were in search of during their time spent serving in the war effort.<sup>38</sup>

There were numerous reasons for women to fill the role of nursing during the war, but nobody expected women to create nursing into what it became. The women of the civil war gave nursing a face, a prowess, and a profession. Prior to Women stepping into the nursing field during the Civil War nursing was a cluster of random passer byes who would lend a helping hand to the doctors performing the work. After the Civil War nursing became a thing and it is because of the incredible job that women did with little to no training during the war that created a profession that is still just as prestigious and empowering today as it was then.

### **Women as Spies of the War:**

Women played a pivotal role within the war efforts not only as nurses, but as spies for both sides of the war. It is commonly known that women served in the war in various ways. Women were nurses, posed as male soldiers, filled gender roles left behind by their male counterparts away at war, but even more curious is the

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<sup>38</sup> Civil War Nurse: The Diary and Letters of Hannah Ropes, ed. John R. Brumgardt (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1980), 50-55.

fact that historians have estimated that over a thousand women in the North and the South served as spies.<sup>39</sup>

One spy in particular, Rose Greenhow, is known for her work done for the Confederacy with her espionage efforts against the North. Greenhow became a target for Confederate spy rings to gain because of her ease of access to high ranking officials of the North. Greenhow's late husband worked for the State Department for some twenty years prior to his death and the Greenhow was said to have known nine presidents on a personal level.<sup>40</sup> Any individual that had that type of connection to high ranking officials of the Union would by most be expected to be loyal to the North, however this was not the case. Greenhow believed strongly that the South had their right to secede from the North and start their own government and with that dissent towards the North's stance against the South gave them the chance they needed.

Greenhow worked as a spy for the Confederacy throughout the war until her death in 1864. The letters in the collection give detailed insight into the movements of Greenhow relative to battles between the North and South as well as news that she gathers through her connections to officials of the Union.

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<sup>39</sup> Judith E. Harper, "I SPY WOMEN UNDERCOVER," *Cobblestone* 26 no. 2 (February 2005): 33.

<sup>40</sup> N. B. Samuelson, Employment of female spies in the American Civil War, *Minerva II* (3), (1989): 57.

Greenhow passes on information to be passed to Confederate military officials regarding the location of Union troops.<sup>41</sup> In the next letter in the collection Greenhow outlines details of battles that she witnessed in Charleston, as well as giving details of the battle Greenhow compliments the Confederate General Beauregard for the work that he did leading men.<sup>42</sup>

The first letter mentioned was a letter that was direct correspondence between Greenhow and Jefferson Davis. Jefferson Davis served during this period of time as the President of the Confederate States of America. The fact that Greenhow was trusted by the Confederacy to the point that she had direct correspondence with the most important man of the South shows to the power, trust, and clout that Greenhow carried. Up until this point in time the word of a woman in cases outside of the home would have been pressed aside. During this time of war it is clear that an expansion of roles as well as an expansion of influence has been bestowed upon the women of the time. Like Greenhow, Harriet Tubman takes full advantage of this expansion of gender roles during this time.

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<sup>41</sup> Rose Greenhow to Jefferson Davis, Wilmington, North Carolina, July 16, 1863, in Rose O'Neal Greenhow Papers, 1863-1864. (Special Collections Library, Duke University).

<sup>42</sup> Rose Greenhow to Alexander Boteler, Charleston, South Carolina, July 20, 1863, in Rose O'Neal Greenhow Papers, 1863-1864. (Special Collections Library, Duke University).

Arguably one of the most inspirational women in American history Harriet Tubman is often known for her courageous work in freeing slaves through the underground railroad, but during the Civil War Tubman turned her focus in supporting the Union. In 1861 Tubman was assigned to assist a Union military unit, serving as a cook, nurse, and a spy.<sup>43</sup> Tubman's work as a spy led her to being the first woman to ever lead a group of U.S. soldiers into combat. During Tubman's lead of soldiers on June 2, 1863 several of South Carolina's largest plantations were burned to ash and 750 slaves of the South were freed.<sup>44</sup> This act by Tubman is one of the truest signs of the relaxation of gender roles during the Civil War. Tubman was not only a woman, but she was an African woman. The fact that any leader of any regiment of any group of men would allow an African American Woman lead men into battle shows a willingness of men during the time to allow women to lead, succeed, and grow.

### **Conclusion:**

The fight for equality has always been a raging fight among all the people of the world, equality of races, equality of religion, equality of sexual orientation, and the equality between genders. The fight for equality between women and men is

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<sup>43</sup> Kahlil Chism, "Harriet Tubman: Spy, Veteran, and Widow," *OAH Magazine of History* 19 no. 2 (March 2005): 47.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

one that has ravaged across the United States since the inception of our nation. Our nation however has had periods of time in its history in which women move out from being subordinate to their male counterparts. During the American Civil War of the 1860's Women take on roles and excel in these roles while the male population was fighting the war. Women expanded their roles within the public sphere filling roles of husbands in providing for the family and living in the public sphere. Women prove their capabilities during the war in assisting the war effort in numerous ways. Through the work of nursing during the Civil War women in effect created the profession of nursing and continue to excel in this field to this day. If nursing was a passive role that women played in the war, spying was definitely an active role that was played and filled better than ever expected. Through all the roles that women filled for men during the Civil War women proved that they were capable of incredible things and widened the eyes of the men of the time to the potential of women. As brief of a period that the Civil War was for women to show their equality the fight for equality between the women and men of this nation still rages on, will there ever be equality for all?

## Bibliography

### Secondary Sources

Chism, Kahlil. "Harriet Tubman: Spy, Veteran, and Widow." *OAH Magazine of History* 19, no. 2 (March 2005): 47-51.

-This article will be vital in building my case for the advancement of women's rights and growing gender roles. The article discusses Tubman's work as a spy for the Union during the Civil War as well as a moment in which Tubman organized and led troops into battle to free slaves from a southern plantation

Coughlin, Elizabeth Myette, and Charles Edward Coughlin. "CONVENTION IN PETTICOATS: THE SENECA FALLS DECLARATION OF WOMAN'S RIGHTS." *Today's Speech* 21, no. 4 (Fall 1973): 17-23.

-The Coughlin article will be very useful for me in building a strong introduction into my paper. The article focuses on the events as well as the rhetoric used at the convention, which preceded the events of the Civil War.

Egnal, Marc. "Historicizing Domesticity: The Impact of the Woman's Rights Movement." *Canadian Review Of American Studies* 45, no. 2 (May 2015): 238-258.

-The Egnal article will be extremely useful as I will have a secondary source that also believes that the spheres of domesticity were becoming less strict post 1865. Having a secondary source that will affirm my analysis of post-Civil War primary sources will be useful in backing up the analysis I make in my capstone.

Harper, Judith E. "I SPY WOMEN UNDERCOVER." *Cobblestone* 26, no. 2 (February 2005): 33-37.

-The Harper article will give me an article to be able to draw support, as well as find primary sources used to draw conclusions regarding women as both spies during the Civil War and as nurses. The article names specific women who spent the Civil War spying on the other side.

JOHNS-PUTRA, A. "Satire and Domesticity in Late Eighteenth-Century Women's Poetry: Minding the Gap." *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 33 (2010): 67-87.

-I originally believed that this article would give me background showing the work that women were doing prior to the American Civil War, unfortunately the information never came to fruition of what I was looking for. The information ran from the 1790's-1800's which was too far in the past for me to feel it was useful in the context that I am analyzing.

Juncker, Clara. "Women at War: The Civil War Diaries of Floride Clemson and Cornelia Peake McDonald." *Southern Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (2004): 90-106.

-Juncker's article will be very beneficial giving me a secondary source analyzing the lives of women during the Civil War while their husbands are away at war. Having this secondary source looking at primary sources similar to the primary sources I will be using will give me the ability to back up my analysis with that from other historians.

Kaufman, Will. "No Non-combatants Here: Women and Civilians in the American Civil War." *Women's History Review* 13, No. 4 (2004): 671-678.

-Kaufman's article will be useful in showing that other historians have found primary sources that prove that women during the American Civil War were not standing idle at home but were playing an active role. This article will be essential in helping me show the active role women played during the Civil War behind another historians analysis of secondary sources.

Lesniak, Rhonda Goodman. "Expanding the Role of Women as Nurses During the American Civil War." *Advances in Nursing Science* 32, No. 1 (2009): 33-42.

-Lesniak's article is going to be a very important secondary source for me with regards to building my argument and drawing conclusions from primary sources towards the growth of gender roles during the Civil War. The article highlights the work of women as field nurses for the military during the Civil War. This article gives a look at how women were able to withstand gruesome conditions that previously were thought to be only dealt with by men.

Nutting, P. Bradley. "Absent Husbands, Single Wives: Success, Domesticity and Seminuclear Families in the Nineteenth-Century Great Lakes World." *Journal of Family History* 35, No. 4 (2010): 329-345.

-This article examines extreme cases in which husbands would leave their families for months and even years at a time. During this time of separation women's sphere

of control over the household grew to lengths never to be seen. This gave women tremendous power in the home, but remained to have little power outside of child-rearing and running the home. This article will be useful with the construction of my historiography and pre-Civil War gender roles.

Rotman, Deborah L. "Separate Spheres? Beyond the Dichotomies of Domesticity." *Current Anthropology* 47, no. 4 (August 2006): 666-673. *Science Reference Center, EBSCOhost*.

-The Rotman article will be effective in helping me show within my historiography how the spheres of domesticity were built up prior to the Civil War, and how the roles of women during the Civil War began to crack those spheres.

Samuelson, N. B. Employment of female spies in the American Civil War. *Minerva, II* (3), (1989): 57.

-This source will be useful as it is a secondary source which refers directly to an individual female spy during the Civil War. The female referred to is also an individual in which I have her correspondence papers as a primary source in my analysis.

### Primary Sources

Bird, Edgeworth. *The Granite Farm Letters: The Civil War Correspondence of Edgeworth and Sallie Bird, 1861-1864*, edited by John Rozier. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988.

-The Correspondence between father and daughter in these papers will be beneficial to my building a foundation of how difficult it was for men to keep an active role in their children's lives while away at war. By showing how difficult it was for men to maintain this it will allow me to show how women were able to step further into roles previously filled by men in the family.

Greenhow, Rose. Jefferson Davis Papers, 1863-1864. Jefferson Davis Papers, Special Collections Library, Duke University.

-Using the Jefferson Papers that I have found to be easily accessible through Duke University library will be useful because there is correspondence between Davis and a known female spy during the American Civil War. Looking at the letters between the two will give an in depth look at the work that female spies did during the war.

Greenhow, Rose. *Rose O'Neal Greenhow Papers, 1863-1864*. Rose O'Neal Greenhow Papers, Special Collections Library, Duke University.

-This collection will be useful as it gives more input for the work that Rose Greenhow did as a spy during the Civil War. The letters go to numerous different recipients over the course of two years which will show more than just one side of Rose.

Ropes, Hannah. *Civil War Nurse: The Diary and Letters of Hannah Ropes*. Edited by John R. Brumgardt. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1980.

-This sources will be useful in connecting the readers to the lives of the women who served as nurses during the war.