



Secret Soldiers:

Women Who Fought in the Civil War

STUDY GUIDE

TheatreEspresso

WAKE UP TO HISTORY!

The *Secret Soldiers: Women Who Fought in the Civil War* study guide is written by Bethany Dunakin, Katina Fontes and Wendy Lement. Edited by Wendy Lement. The study guide is based on the play of the same name, written by Wendy Lement. A special thank you to our historical advisors: Barbara Berenson, Deanne Blanton, and Susan Zeiger.

Secret Soldiers tours to schools, courthouses and museums, and is in residence at the John Adams Courthouse in Boston.

For information about our other plays or teacher development and student workshops:
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This program is supported by Boston Cultural Council, Cabot Family Charitable Trust, Foley Hoag Foundation, Massachusetts Cultural Council, and Mass Humanities.



About Theatre Espresso: We create, produce, and perform interactive dramas that bring history to life for students, in order to foster a generation of critical thinkers and true citizens. Since 1992, Theatre Espresso has toured its educational dramas to schools, museums, libraries, and courthouses throughout New England. Inspired by the highly successful Theatre-in-Education teams of Great Britain and by the belief that drama is a potent teaching tool, Theatre Espresso's work challenges students to make critical judgments, explore social relationships, reflect on the role of law and human rights in our society, and question accepted truths about the history of America. These plays confront students with complex situations—based on actual historical events—that provoke a variety of opinions and solutions. By asking students to consider themselves participants in the drama—residents of Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957, jurors in pre-Revolutionary War Boston, or Supreme Court Justices—the company engages students in examining contradictory events and testimony in order to reach their decision. For more information about Theatre Espresso, visit our website at: www.TheatreEspresso.org

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Learning Goals

- Students will examine the reasons women enlisted as soldiers in the Civil War.
- Students will understand the vastly different ways women discovered in uniform were treated in the press, depending on their social status and motivations for enlisting.
- Students will utilize a historical context to facilitate modern-day discussions about who should serve in the military and in what role.

About the Play

The U.S. military recorded over 250 cases of women who fought in the Union Army disguised as men. The actual number of women who fought in the Civil War was likely much higher. At least three African American women are known to have fought in “colored” regiments. A few cases of Confederate women who fought in disguise are also documented. As our country continues to struggle with gender issues in the military, this play provides a valuable perspective. The play examines a variety of complex issues such as: the many reasons why women chose to enlist; how the culture and mores of the era helped women hide their identities; and the vastly different treatment that women who were discovered received in the press, depending on their motivation for enlisting. Related topics, such as the formation of the Massachusetts 54th Regiment—the first African American regiment in U.S. history—are woven in, as they provide a historical context for current discussions about who should serve in the military and in what role. Women with Boston connections, such as Ellen Craft and Harriet Tubman, are included.

"Secret Soldiers is an engaging and historically sensitive portrayal of the women soldiers of the Civil War." Deanne Blanton, Senior Military Archivist, National Archives & co-author of *They Fought Like Demons: Women Soldiers in the Civil War*, New York: Random House (2002)

Connections to State Curriculum Frameworks

Social Studies Frameworks

Concepts and Skills, Grades 8-12
<p>Students should be able to:</p> <p><u>History and Geography</u></p> <p>2. Interpret and construct timelines that show how events and eras in various parts of the world are related to one another. (H)</p> <p>4. Interpret and construct charts and graphs that show quantitative information. (H, C, G, E)</p> <p>7. Show connections, causal and otherwise, between particular historical events and ideas and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments. (H, G, C, E)</p> <p>8. Interpret the past within its own historical context, rather than in terms of present-day norms and values. (H, E, C)</p> <p>9. Distinguish intended from unintended consequences. (H, E, C)</p> <p>10. Distinguish historical fact from opinion. (H, E, C)</p>

U.S. History I Learning Standards

Social, Political, and Religious Change, 1800-1860

USI.33 Analyze the goals and effect of the antebellum women's suffrage movement. (H)

- A. the 1848 Seneca Falls convention
- B. Susan B. Anthony
- C. Margaret Fuller
- D. Lucretia Mott
- E. Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Seminal Primary Documents to Read: the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions (1848)

English/Language Arts Frameworks

Common Core Anchor Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy CCRA.R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy CCRA.R.6: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.10: Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant, sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Historical Background

American Civil War

The result of growing tension between slave states in the South and free states in the North, the American Civil War was fought between 1861 and 1865. Differing views existed on the issue of slavery and state's rights. In 1860 Abraham Lincoln ran for president on a platform of keeping slavery out of future territories. This was unpopular among the southern states and soon after his election seven states seceded from the union of the United States, creating the Confederate States of America. Lincoln refused to recognize the legitimacy of secession, and tensions grew. The war began at Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina on April 12, 1861 during an insurrection in which the Confederacy took over the fort. Soon four more states joined the Confederacy and the war expanded. On September 27, 1862, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. This granted freedom to the slaves if the Confederate states did not return to the Union. The war continued until the surrender of the Confederate Army by General Robert E. Lee on April 9, 1865 at the Appomattox Court House in Virginia. In the end, over 10,000 conflicts and battles were fought across 23 states, and more than 620,000 lives were lost.

Women Soldiers

Although they were not allowed to enlist as soldiers, women also fought in the Civil War; they fought in secret. Since the end of the war many stories have surfaced about women disguised as men in an effort to serve in the Union and Confederate armies. Because of the secretive nature of their participation, the numbers are not clear. Numbers range between 250 and 400 and may even be higher. Much like the men who fought, many of these women risked their lives and even died as a result of their service. The reasons they were willing to risk not only their lives, but also the consequences of discovery, were numerous. Some women wanted, like their male counterparts, to serve a cause and/or pursue adventure. Loreta Janeta Velazquez and Sarah Emma Edmonds both fought for what they viewed as an important cause, albeit on opposing sides, and for the adventures of war. Other women followed loved ones into war. And others simply saw service as a way to make a living. In the mid-19th Century job opportunities for women were scarce. Sarah Rosetta Wakeman discovered this reality prior to the war and had "passed" as a man before for the purposes of making a decent wage. She kept this illusion going into the war and in the process not only provided for herself and her family, but also gave her life for her country.

"Colored" Regiments

The overwhelming majority of 3.2 the million soldiers who fought in the Civil War were white men. But African-American men also fought in the war. On May 22, 1863, the War Department officially passed an order allowing for the enlistment of "colored" (African-American) men in the Union army through United States Colored Troops (USCT). Over the course of the war almost 200,000 African American men served in the Union forces. The first officially organized colored regiment was the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. Mustered into service on March 13, 1863, the 54th Regiment fought bravely at the attack on Fort Wagner on July 18, 1863. Of the 600 soldiers who fought, 272 were killed, wounded, or captured. By the end of the war, more than two-thirds of the officers and half the soldiers lost their lives. Some of the more notable figures from the 54th were William H. Carney, the first African-American to win the Congressional Medal of Honor, James Henry Gooding, a correspondent for the New Bedford

Mercury, and Charles and Lewis Douglass, the sons of Frederick Douglass. The regiment was not without controversy. Although the African-American soldiers were supposed to be paid the same salary as white soldiers, they were not initially granted equal pay (eventually pay was made equal). Additionally, although the soldiers were African-American, all of the officers were white, including Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, the regiment leader killed in Fort Wagner. Additional colored regiments included: the 29th Connecticut Infantry, in which an unknown African-American woman, disguised as a man, fought; the 1st South Carolina Infantry, (later renamed the 33rd USCT Regiment), composed of escaped slaves; the 14th Rhode Island Heavy Artillery; and the 55th Regiment Massachusetts Infantry, organized on May 28, 1863 after the 54th departed for South Carolina.

Historical Timeline

July 19-20 1848- The first Women's Rights convention in the Western world is held in Seneca Falls, New York. The Declaration of Sentiments written at the convention will be seen as a founding document in the campaign for women's rights.

September 18, 1850 –Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 is passed. This law forced federal authorities to participate in the retrieval of slaves in all states, eliminated the need for a court appearance when slaves were captured, and led to the enslavement of many free blacks.

November 6, 1860 – Abraham Lincoln is elected President.

December 20, 1860 – South Carolina is the first state to secede from the union.

February, 1861 – Delegates from six seceded states form a government and create the Confederate States of America.

March 4, 1861 – Abraham Lincoln is inaugurated as the sixteenth President of the United States.

April 12–13, 1861 – Fort Sumter is attacked by Confederate soldiers.

May 25, 1861 – Franklin Thompson a.k.a. Sarah Emma Edmonds is mustered into service with the 2nd Michigan Infantry.

July 21, 1861 – Confederate victory at the First Battle of Manassas.

February 16, 1862 —Surrender of Fort Donelson, Tennessee to Union Army.

April 6–7, 1862 – Union Army wins at the Battle of Shiloh, Tennessee.

April 25, 1862 – Capture of New Orleans by the Union Army.

August 30, 1862 – Lyons Wakeman a.k.a. Sarah Rosetta Wakeman enlists with the 153rd New York Infantry.

January 1, 1863 – Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation, which declares that slaves in the seceded states are now free.

March 13, 1863 – 54th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, the first official unit of African-American Union officers, is organized.

July 1–3, 1863 – Union victory at the Battle of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

July 18, 1863 – Confederate victory at the Second Battle of Fort Wagner, Charleston, S.C.

November 19, 1863 – Lincoln delivers the Gettysburg Address.

June 19, 1864 – Sarah Rosetta Wakeman dies from chronic diarrhea contracted while fighting as a soldier.

June 28, 1864 – Lincoln signs a bill repealing the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.

July 19, 1864 – James Henry Gooding dies in a Confederate Prisoner of War Camp.

November 8, 1864 – Lincoln is reelected President.

January 31, 1865 – Congress passes the Thirteenth Amendment, abolishing slavery throughout the United States.

April 9, 1865 – Robert E. Lee surrenders the Army of Northern Virginia to Grant at Appomattox.

April 14, 1865 – John Wilkes Booth shoots President Lincoln at Ford's Theater.

April 15, 1865 – Lincoln dies. Andrew Johnson is inaugurated as President.

1865 – *Nurse and Spy in the Union Army* is published.

June 30, 1886 – Sarah Emma Edmonds Seeley has desertion charges dropped and receives a \$12/month pension

September 5, 1898 – S. Emma (Edmonds) Seelye dies

May 23, 1900 —William H. Carney is awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

1991 – *On the Altar of Freedom: A Black Soldier's Civil War Letters from the Front* is published.

1994 – *An Uncommon Soldier: The Civil War Letters of Sarah Rosetta Wakeman, alias Pvt. Lyons Wakeman, 153rd Regiment, New York State Volunteers, 1862-1864* is published.

1999 – *Memoirs of a Soldier, Nurse, and Spy: A Woman's Adventures in the Union Army* is republished.

Vocabulary

Abolitionist: Someone who is opposed to slavery.

Antebellum: A term often used to describe the United States before the Civil War.

Border States: The states of Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, and Missouri.

Casualty: A soldier who was wounded, killed, or missing in action.

Cavalry: A branch of the military mounted on horseback.

Confederacy: The states that seceded from the United States of America to form their own nation, the Confederates States of America.

Courier: A soldier who served the officers of his regiment by carrying mail or messages.

Deserter: Someone who abandons their military duty without permission.

Emancipation: Freedom from slavery.

Federal: Someone loyal to the government of the United States.

Free states: The states in which slavery was not legal before the Civil War.

Furlough: A leave from duty, granted by a superior officer.

Infantry: A branch of the military in which soldiers traveled and fought on foot.

Muster: To formally enroll in the army or to call roll.

North: The part of the country that stayed within the union of the United States during the Civil War.

Pension: Money paid regularly to a retired soldier

Private: The lowest rank in the army.

Rebel: Loyal to the Confederate States.

Secession: Withdrawal from the union of the United States of America.

Slave states: The states in which slavery was legal before the Civil War.

Slavery: Being bound in servitude. A state of bondage in which African Americans (and some Native Americans) were owned by other people, usually white, and forced to labor on their behalf.

South: The states that seceded from the United States of America to form their own nation.

States Rights: This doctrine holds that the powers of the individual states are greater than the powers of the Federal government.

Territory: Land within the boundaries of the United States that had not yet become a state by 1861.

Union: The portion of the country that remained loyal to the Federal government during the Civil War.

U.S.C.T.: United States Colored Troops. Federal Army regiments composed of African-American soldiers. The U.S.C.T.'s were established by General Order Number 143, issued May 22, 1863.

Volunteer: Someone who does something because they want to and are not because of a forced requirement.

Yankee: A Northerner; someone loyal to the union of the United State of America.

Key Players

Sarah Rosetta Wakeman (aka Pvt. Lyons Wakeman): Born on January 16, 1843, Sarah Wakeman enlisted with the 153rd New York Infantry under the name of Lyons Wakeman and claiming to be 21 years of age on August 30, 1862. Pvt. Lyons worked protecting the perimeter of the nation's capital and as a guard in Carroll Prison in Washington D.C. Eventually Wakeman and the 153rd were assigned to active field duty and she died on June 19, 1864 after contracting chronic diarrhea while fighting in battle in Pleasant Hill, Louisiana. A large number of the letters Sarah Wakeman sent home survived and were published in 1995 under the title of *An Uncommon Soldier: The Civil War Letters of Sarah Rosetta Wakeman, Alias Private Lyons Wakeman, 153rd Regiment, New York State Volunteers*.

Sarah Emma Edmonds (aka Franklin Thompson): Sarah Emma Edmonds, later known as Emma Seelye was born in December of 1841. She enlisted with 2nd Michigan Infantry under the name of Franklin Flint Thompson on May 25, 1861. Frank Thompson participated in First and Second Battles of Bull Run, Antietam, the Peninsula Campaigns, First Manassas and Vicksburg. Eventually she contracted malaria and, rather than be discovered, left her regiment to recover. During this time Frank Thompson was listed as a deserter and Edmonds decided to return to her life as a woman. A talented writer, she wrote her memoirs, which were published under the title of *The Female Spy in the Union Army* in 1864 and *Nurse and Spy in the Union Army* in 1865. In 1999 the book was republished under the title *Memoirs of a Soldier, Nurse, and Spy: A Woman's*

Adventures in the Union Army. Edmonds filed a pension in 1884, but would first have to have her desertion charges dropped. The charges were dropped and she received a government pension in 1886. She later fought for an increased pension due to chronic pain and illness she suffered as a result of her service. She died before a final decision was made on September 5, 1898.

Loreta Janeta Velazquez (a.k.a. Henry T. Buford): Loreta Velazquez was born on June 26, 1842 in Cuba. According to her memoirs, disguised as a man named Henry T. Buford she recruited 236 men to fight for the Confederacy, fought in the First Battle of Bull Run, the Siege of Fort Donelson and the Battle of Shiloh. Her gender was discovered on at least one occasion and she was arrested on two. Velazquez eventually gave up her disguise and returned to her life as a woman. She published her memoirs *The Woman in Battle: A Narrative of the Exploits, Adventures, and travels of Madame Loreta Janeta Velázquez, Otherwise Known as Lieutenant Harry T Buford, Confederate States Army* in 1876.

Maria Lewis/other African American women: African-American women also disguised themselves as men to fight in the American Civil War. At least two such women are known to have fought in this capacity. Maria Lewis fought as a white man in the 8th New York Cavalry. An unidentified African-American woman fought as a man with the 29th Connecticut Infantry (colored). According to Joseph O. Cross, also of 29th Connecticut Infantry, she gave birth and was sent to the hospital.

Joseph O. Cross: Joseph O. Cross joined the 29th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry, which fought bravely in numerous in a number Civil War battles and was the first Union regiment to occupy Richmond. During the Civil War he wrote letters to his wife Abby. Several of his letters are housed at the Connecticut Historical Society (and can be found online). He survived the war, but suffered disabling injuries. In the play, the fictional character of Joseph Cassell is loosely based on Cross. Dramatic license was taken, as there is no evidence that Cross escaped from slavery.

Two Soldiers of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment (which is mentioned in the play):

William H. Carney: Sgt. William H. Carney was born a slave in Norfolk, Virginia on February 29, 1840. He escaped through the Underground Railroad. He joined the 54th Massachusetts Regiment in 1863. In 1900, Sgt. Carney won the Medal of Honor for his actions at Fort Wagner, 37 years after the battle. He is best known for saving the company flag and saying, “Boys, the old flag never touched the ground,” for which a song was written.

James Henry Gooding: Cpl. James Henry Gooding was born in Troy, NY in 1837. He joined the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry in 1863 and served as a correspondent for the New Bedford Mercury. In 1992, Gooding’s letters were published in the book *On the Altar of Freedom: A Black Soldier’s Civil War Letters from the Front*. Cpl. Gooding died on July 19, 1864, while being held as a prisoner of war by the Confederates.

Pre-Performance Activities

Pre-Activity #1: Reasons Why Women Volunteered

Objectives:

1. Students will utilize critical thinking skills to analyze historical background information.
2. Students will engage in group discussion and share interpretation of text.
3. Students will discuss cause and effect relationships.
4. Students will practice the questioning skills that they will need when participating in the upcoming performance.

Activities:

1. Students read the description of women soldiers in the Civil War handout (p #20 of study guide). Teachers can also use the background information included on the National Archives website: <<http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1993/spring/women-in-the-civil-war-2.html>>
2. As they read, students will note the reasons why women may have decided to become soldiers.
3. Students will then read brief summaries of the “Key Players.”
4. In groups, students will discuss each woman’s possible reasons for joining, and the impact that the war had on their lives.
5. Assign each group one woman from their chart to present to the class.

Optional Hot-seating Activity

1. If students are comfortable with a more creative presentation, ask them to choose one person in the group to portray the character they were assigned.
2. Ask the rest of the class to think about questions they would want to ask this character.
3. Each character takes a turn being “hot-seated,” or interviewed by the class.

Pre-Activity #2: KWL Chart

Objectives:

1. Students will utilize critical thinking skills to create questions about what they have read.
2. Students will use group discussion skills to share and listen to the ideas of others.
3. Students will use non-fiction and internet resources to answer their own questions.

Activities:

1. Students receive a brief overview of the play they are going to see. Teachers can read the “About the Play” section of this study guide to students, or copy it for them to read independently.
2. Students complete the first two columns of the KWL chart on page 24 of the study guide, making note of what they already know about the topic, and what questions they have about it.
3. Students read the background information provided in the handout on page 22 of the study guide and complete the last column of the KWL chart, noting what they have learned from the reading.
4. In groups, students will share their charts with one another, answering the following questions:
 - Do they still have unanswered questions in the “Want to Know” column?
 - Do they have any “Know” or “Want to Know” responses in common?
5. Groups will choose one “Know” and one “Want to Know” to share with the class as the teacher records each response on chart paper. The teacher will separate questions into two categories: “Clarifying Questions,” such as historical background information, and “Philosophical Questions.” Save the chart paper for follow-up discussion after the performance.

Optional Final Step:

Each group will choose one question and conduct research, using nonfiction sources and/or reliable internet sources (both are listed in the Additional Resources section of this study guide). Students can share this information with the entire class in a presentation.

Follow-up:

1. As a discussion starter after the play, the teacher will post the chart paper used in the earlier activity.
2. Students complete the “Learned” column of their KWL charts with anything new they learned from the play.
3. In small groups, students share their responses and choose at least one “Learned” item to share with the class.

Pre-Activity #3: Abolitionism and Feminism

Objectives:

1. Students will conduct independent research on an assigned topic.
2. Students will use group discussion skills to share and listen to the ideas of others.
3. Students will consider purpose and point of view when analyzing the arguments of others.

Activities:

1. Students independently research the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 and read the resolutions made by those present.
2. Students independently research the key players of the pre-Civil War abolitionist movement.
3. Each student is assigned a role as one of the key players in the early women's rights movement, and researches his or her historical figure.
4. In role, students imagine that it is the start of the Civil War and they must decide if the women's right movement needs to be put on hold for the abolitionist cause. Based on what they know about their assigned role, each student must decide if he or she is in favor of putting the women's rights agenda aside for the time being.
5. Students divide into smaller groups based on their point of view. Each group prepares arguments for their side of the debate, in order to engage in a whole class discussion. Each group takes a turn stating their side and countering the other side's argument.

Follow-up:

1. Each student writes a reflection about his or her point of view, in the form of a persuasive essay.

Post-Performance Activities

Post-Activity #1: Chalk Talk

Objectives:

1. Students will utilize critical thinking skills to pose questions about the drama.
2. Students will use group discussion skills to share and listen to the ideas of others.

Activities:

1. Using chart paper, post four different statements on different walls of the classroom:
 - If I could speak to Nurse Bartlett, I would say...
 - If I could speak to Sarah Wakeman, I would say...
 - One good thing about the decision our group made was...
 - I disagree with the decision we made as a group because...
2. In groups, students rotate around the room to add their responses to each prompt. Responses are done only in writing, with no talking.
3. Students may respond to one another's comments in writing. This is particularly helpful for the agree/disagree questions. For example, when responding to the last statement, a student who agrees with the group's decision can write a comment about someone's reason for disagreeing with it.

Follow-up:

1. Students choose one comment from one of the charts and write a reflection about it. They can choose their own comments or something written by another student.

Post-Activity #2: Modern Day Connections

Objectives:

1. Students will read and synthesize pertinent historical information from primary sources.
2. Students will determine reasons for differing press accounts and portrayals of women Civil War soldiers.
3. Students will make connections between past and present attitudes toward women in the military.
4. Students will use group communication skills to share and listen to one another's ideas.

Materials/Resources:

- *They Fought Like Demons: Women Soldiers in the Civil War* by DeAnne Blanton and Lauren Cook
- Post-Activity #2 Handout: *Response Sheet*

Activities:

1. Students independently read Chapter 8, "Romantic Young Ladies: Female Soldiers in the Public Consciousness." The length of the reading assignment can be modified by the teacher depending on the students' reading level.
2. As they read, students are asked to pay close attention to the attitudes of different publications toward women soldiers. How did their motives for joining affect the way they were viewed by the public? Students record their responses on the handout found on page 25 of this study guide.
3. After reading, students participate in a teacher-guided discussion about the reading, sharing their interpretations of the text.

Follow-up:

1. Students find current articles about today's women in the military and bring them in to share with the class.
2. Students write a brief reflection that compares historical attitudes toward women soldiers with those of today. What similarities and differences did they discover?

Note:

If the above mentioned book is not available, The National Archives website also has useful background information about public opinions of women soldiers in the Civil War:

<<http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1993/spring/women-in-the-civil-war-2.html>>

Additional Resources

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Name: _____

Date: _____

*Secret Soldiers Pre-Activity #1**Handout #1*

Read the following explanation of **Women Soldiers** in the Civil War as well as the answer the questions that follow.

Women Soldiers

Although they were not allowed to enlist as soldiers, women also fought in the Civil War; they fought in secret. Since the end of the war many stories have surfaced about women disguised as men in an effort to serve in the Union and Confederate armies. Because of the secretive nature of their participation, the numbers are not clear. Numbers range between 250 and 400 and may even be higher. Much like the men who fought, many of these women risked their lives and even died as a result of their service. The reasons they were willing to risk not only their lives, but also the consequences of discovery, were numerous. Some women wanted, like their male counterparts, to serve a cause and/or pursue adventure. Loreta Janeta Velazquez and Sarah Emma Edmonds both fought for what they viewed as an important cause, albeit on opposing sides, and for the adventures of war. Other women followed loved ones into war. And others simply saw service as a way to make a living. In the mid-19th Century job opportunities for women were scarce. Sarah Rosetta Wakeman discovered this reality prior to the war and had “passed” as a man before for the purposes of making a decent wage. She kept this illusion going into the war and in the process not only provided for herself and her family, but also gave her life for her country.

1. Why is the number of women soldiers in the Civil War unclear?

2. List the reasons why women chose to enlist as soldiers.

Name: _____

Date: _____

*Secret Soldiers Pre-Activity #1**Handout #2*

Read the following descriptions of the **key players** in the story. Then, in small groups, **discuss** what reasons each woman may have had for joining, and the impact the war may have had on their lives, both positive and negative. Record your thoughts on the chart that follows, and be prepared to share with the class.

Key Players:

Sarah Rosetta Wakeman (aka Pvt. Lyons Wakeman): Born on January 16, 1843, Sarah Wakeman enlisted with the 153rd New York Infantry under the name of Lyons Wakeman and claiming to be 21 years of age on August 30, 1862. Pvt. Lyons worked protecting the perimeter of the nation's capital and as a guard in Carroll Prison in Washington D.C. Eventually Wakeman and the 153rd were assigned to active field duty and she died on June 19, 1864 after contracting chronic diarrhea while fighting in battle in Pleasant Hill, Louisiana. A large number of the letters Sarah Wakeman sent home survived and were published in 1995 under the title of *An Uncommon Soldier: The Civil War Letters of Sarah Rosetta Wakeman, Alias Private Lyons Wakeman, 153rd Regiment, New York State Volunteers*.

Sarah Emma Edmonds (aka Franklin Thompson): Sarah Emma Edmonds, later known as Emma Seelye was born in December of 1841. She enlisted with 2nd Michigan Infantry under the name of Franklin Flint Thompson on May 25, 1861. Frank Thompson participated in First and Second Battles of Bull Run, Antietam, the Peninsula Campaigns, First Manassas and Vicksburg. Eventually she contracted malaria and, rather than be discovered, left her regiment to recover. During this time Frank Thompson was listed as a deserter and Edmonds decided to return to her life as a woman. A talented writer, she wrote her memoirs, which were published under the title of *The Female Spy in the Union Army* in 1864 and *Nurse and Spy in the Union Army* in 1865. In 1999 the book was republished under the title *Memoirs of a Soldier, Nurse, and Spy: A Woman's Adventures in the Union Army*. Edmonds filed a pension in 1884, but would first have to have her desertion charges dropped. The charges were dropped and she received a government pension in 1886. She later fought for an increased pension due to chronic pain and illness she suffered as a result of her service. She died before a final decision was made on September 5, 1898.

Loreta Janeta Velazquez (a.k.a. Henry T. Buford): Loreta Velazquez was born on June 26, 1842 in Cuba. According to her memoirs, disguised as a man named Henry T. Buford she recruited 236 men to fight for the Confederacy, fought in the First Battle of Bull Run, the Siege of Fort Donelson and the Battle of Shiloh. Her gender was discovered on at least one occasion and she was arrested on two. Velazquez eventually gave up her disguise and returned to her life as a woman. She published her memoirs *The Woman in Battle: A Narrative of the Exploits, Adventures, and travels of Madame Loreta Janeta Velázquez, Otherwise Known as Lieutenant Harry T Buford, Confederate States Army* in 1876.

Maria Lewis/other African American women: African-American women also disguised themselves as men to fight in the American Civil War. At least two such women are known to have fought in this capacity. Maria Lewis fought as a white man in the 8th New York Cavalry. An unidentified African-American woman fought as a man with the 29th Connecticut Infantry (colored). According to Joseph O. Cross, also of 29th Connecticut Infantry, she gave birth and was sent to the hospital.

Women Soldiers

Name	Possible reason(s) for joining	Results of joining
Sarah Rosetta Wakeman		
Sarah Emma Edmonds		
Loreta Janeta Velazquez		
Maria Lewis		

Name: _____

Date: _____

*Secret Soldiers Pre-Activity #2**Handout #1: Background Information***Historical Background****American Civil War**

The result of growing tension between slave states in the South and free states in the North, the American Civil War was fought between 1861 and 1865. Differing views existed on the issue of slavery and state's rights. In 1860 Abraham Lincoln ran for president on a platform of keeping slavery out of future territories. This was unpopular among the southern states and soon after his election seven states seceded from the union of the United States, creating the Confederate States of America. Lincoln refused to recognize the legitimacy of secession, and tensions grew. The war began at Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina on April 12, 1861 during an insurrection in which the Confederacy took over the fort. Soon four more states joined the Confederacy and the war expanded. On September 27, 1862, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. This granted freedom to the slaves if the Confederate states did not return to the Union. The war continued until the surrender of the Confederate Army by General Robert E. Lee on April 9, 1865 at the Appomattox Court House in Virginia. In the end, over 10,000 conflicts and battles were fought across 23 states, and more than 620,000 lives were lost.

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"Colored" Regiments

The overwhelming majority of 3.2 the million soldiers who fought in the Civil War were white men. But African-American men also fought in the war. On May 22, 1863, the War Department officially passed an order allowing for the enlistment of "colored" (African-American) men in the Union army through United States Colored Troops (USCT). Over the course of the war almost 200,000 African American men served in the Union forces. The first officially organized colored regiment was the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. Mustered into service on March 13, 1863, the 54th Regiment fought bravely at the attack on Fort Wagner on July 18, 1863.

Of the 600 soldiers who fought, 272 were killed, wounded, or captured. By the end of the war, more than two-thirds of the officers and half the soldiers lost their lives. Some of the more notable figures from the 54th were William H. Carney, the first African-American to win the Congressional Medal of Honor, James Henry Gooding, a correspondent for the New Bedford *Mercury*, and Charles and Lewis Douglass, the sons of Frederick Douglass. The regiment was not without controversy. Although the African-American soldiers were supposed to be paid the same salary as white soldiers, they were not initially granted equal pay (eventually pay was made equal). Additionally, although the soldiers were African-American, all of the officers were white, including Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, the regiment leader killed in Fort Wagner. Additional colored regiments included: the 29th Connecticut Infantry, in which an unknown African-American woman, disguised as a man, fought; the 1st South Carolina Infantry, (later renamed the 33rd USCT Regiment), composed of escaped slaves; the 14th Rhode Island Heavy Artillery; and the 55th Regiment Massachusetts Infantry, organized on May 28, 1863 after the 54th departed for South Carolina.

Name: _____

Date: _____

*Secret Soldiers Pre-Activity #2**Handout #2: KWL Chart*

After reading the historical background information, complete the first two columns of the chart below.

What I know	What I want to know	What I learned

Name: _____

Date: _____

*Secret Soldiers Post-Activity #2**Handout: Response Sheet***Resource Used** (URL and name of website, or name of publication):

Describe any similarities and differences you discovered between historical and modern-day attitudes toward women soldiers:

Similarities:

Differences:
