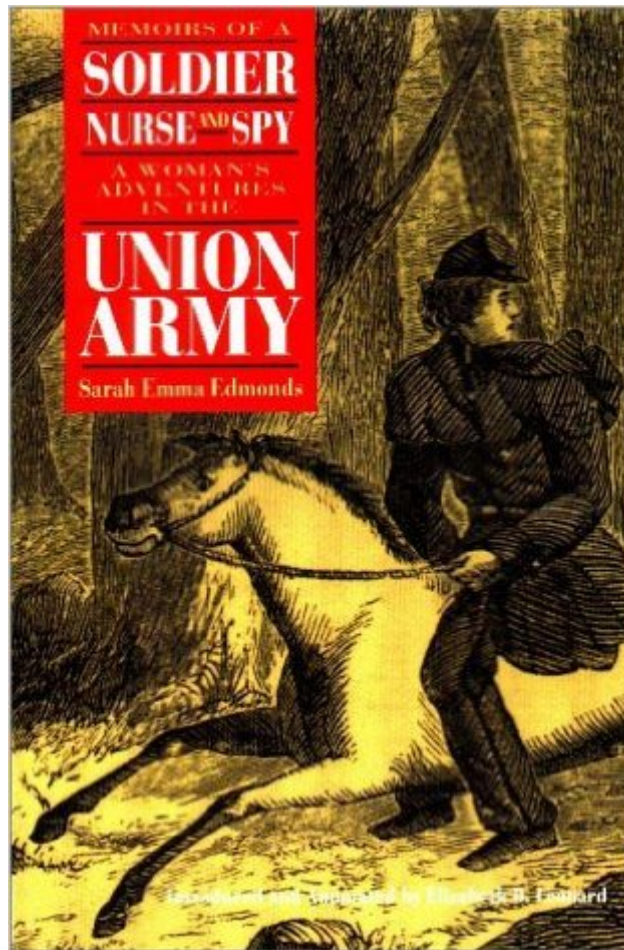


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# Memoirs Of A Soldier, Nurse, And Spy: A Woman's Adventures In The Union Army



## Synopsis

Among the hundreds of women who, in disguise, enlisted to serve as men during the Civil War, only Sarah Edmonds is known to have written a memoir recounting her experiences. As "Franklin Thompson," she joined the 2nd Michigan Infantry Regiment in 1861, then fought in some of the bloodiest struggles of the Civil War, from the first battle of Bull Run to the Kentucky Campaign of 1863. This daring woman embarked upon dangerous missions into Confederate territory to gather information and to survey enemy positions, sometimes in the guise of a slave or Irish washerwoman, sometimes in Confederate uniform. Through her experiences as a "male nurse" and Union soldier, Edmonds depicts the horrors of Civil War hospitals and the simple pastimes of camp life. Throughout her impassioned account, first published in 1865, this enthralling storyteller reveals her courage, dedication to the Union, and resourcefulness in concealing her identity. Three years after her death, Edmonds's body was reinterred with military honors by her comrades, who recognized in her a "strong, healthy, and robust soldier, ever willing and ready for duty." The introduction and annotations by Elizabeth D. Leonard, a leading authority on Civil War women, support and amplify Edmonds's account. Challenging established views of the Civil War soldier, *Memoirs of a Soldier, Nurse, and Spy* is compelling reading, especially for those interested in the Civil War, women's history, American studies, and military history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I found the first two thirds of this book exciting and very interesting, the author certainly was a brave

lady who played a significant part in the Civil War (masquerading as a man). Just how significant is open to debate as some historians say her claims are embroidered. Anyway, I started to lose interest towards the end of the book as it got a bit weighed down with factual information such as letters from Generals etc about the Civil War, which I am inclined to think the author added to add weight to her elaborated claims about her involvement as a spy! Regardless it is an exciting read, and a good historical account of battles during the Civil War.

Emma Edmonds is a truly fascinating historical figure. Her biography has been in the public domain for a long time. The writing style is dense and unpolished. This version of the book adds footnotes and appendices that help to bring important historical details to the reader. There are many novelizations of Emma's story that are largely fiction with just the barest relationship to Emma's story as she relates it. This book provides a clearer picture of Emma's real adventures and helps to separate them from some of the embellishments that Emma herself added.

A beautifully written and heartbreaking account of Emma Edmonds' experiences during the first two years of the Civil War. It's been said that some aspects have been exaggerated or blown out of proportion, but I went into reading this with the expectation that she would have had a slant towards making herself look good and making those she didn't like look bad. I was surprised. She refrains from name calling her enemies, and even when she complains about someone's behavior, she does so delicately and diplomatically. She relates stories about other people, and I have chocked up during some of them, like when she talks about a nurse who refused to leave his patients even if it meant he would be captured by the Confederate Army. She reminds us that even the Confederates are humans and expresses her wish that the war would end so people can stop suffering and hurting each other, even as she faces the opposite side's army with pistols drawn. I bought the book to help me in researching Civil War era women spies, and her details and explanations helped me understand what went into spying before James Bond was created. In between thrilling stories about her adventures as a spy, and emotion churning stories about those she watched suffer the effects of the war, she finds optimistic stories to share to remind us to see the good in life.

This is an original source for Civil War History, and it's been meticulously documented with endnotes that set the text in context of what else was happening at the time. Amazing job on the part of the 20th century editor, and fascinating reading for the history buff or researcher alike.

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