

WOMEN IN WAR
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Lockdown Special



**Rose O'Neal Greenhow, originally Maria Rosetta O'Neale -
Civil War Spy and Courier (Source: Wikimedia Commons)**

In this issue, the first of two lockdown newsletters, we include a fascinating article by Dr T.A. Heathcote on a remarkable lady who was dedicated to the Confederate Cause in the US Civil War. “*1066 and All That*” beautifully summarised the English Civil War as a conflict between those who were “right but repulsive” versus those who were “wrong but romantic” and these elegant little phrases could also be used to describe some of those who participated in the American Civil War.

Newsletter edited by Paul Strong and Celia Lee

ROSE O'NEAL GREENHOW

(Maria Rosetta O'Neale)

MISTRESS OF ESPIONAGE

By Dr T.A. Heathcote

There was once a land of cavaliers and cotton, whose people took up arms against what they saw as oppression and tyranny. Among the thousands ready to sacrifice life and liberty for their cause was a widowed Washington socialite, but for whose intelligence work the first battle of Bull Run might have had a different outcome, and the War between the States have ended almost as soon as it began.

Rose O'Neal Greenhow, originally Maria Rosetta O'Neale, was born in Maryland, probably in 1814. Her father, a plantation owner with a fondness for strong drink, died in 1817, allegedly murdered by one of his own slaves. Her mother, left with five daughters but no sons, managed the plantation on her own until 1827, when she had to sell it to pay her debts. Her family did what it could to help, and her second and third daughters, Ellen and Rose, were taken in by their maternal aunt, Mrs Maria Ann Hill, who was about to open a boarding house in Washington, catering mostly for politicians and lawyers.

As Roman Catholics of Irish descent, the O'Neal sisters were not natural-born members of the dominant WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) elite. Nevertheless, hostesses needing to balance their parties were (and still are) generally glad to find unattached and well-brought-up young women, especially two who, by all accounts, had grown into accredited beauties. The eldest O'Neal daughter, Susannah, had entered Washington society in 1830, when she made a brilliant marriage into one of the capital's wealthiest families and, through her, Rose and Ellen were invited to balls, receptions, dinner parties, and similar social events. They attracted their share of admirers, one of whom was James Madison Cutts, a favourite nephew of Mrs Dolley Madison, wife of the fourth President of the United States. For decades the doyenne of Washington Society, she smiled upon James Cutts's courtship of Ellen O'Neal and the couple were married in December 1833. The Madison connection gave Rose O'Neal another set of influential contacts in Washington where, at the age of about 21, she found a suitable match for herself in a well-born Virginian, the 35-year-old Dr Robert Greenhow, whom she married in May 1835.

Disenchanted with his medical profession and bookish by temperament, Greenhow had come to Washington in 1831 on being nominated to the well-paid post of librarian and translator at the State Department. His new wife, extrovert and self-confident, enthusiastically entered the network of social engagements that formed an important part of Washington life, and lost no opportunity of promoting his career. A year after her marriage, she presented him with a pledge of her affection in the form of a baby daughter, whom they named Florence. In 1836, Robert Greenhow was sent by President Martin Van Buren as a personal emissary to the Mexican President, Anastasio Bustamante. Ostensibly, this was to discuss claims against the Mexican government by American citizens arising from the recent Texan War of Independence. In practice, like most diplomatic missions, it was a cover for intelligence-gathering and Greenhow returned to Washington in 1837 with detailed accounts of his observations. He was

subsequently tasked to investigate the history of Spanish, French, Russian and British activities in the Pacific coastal regions of north-west America, from which he concluded that Oregon should belong to the United States. His findings were welcomed by Senator James Buchanan of Pennsylvania, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who ordered their immediate distribution as a government paper. This was published in book form in 1844 as *The History of Oregon and California* and became recognised as the definitive work on the subject.

Greenhow's position as the leading expert on these regions was undermined by the exploits of John C. Fremont, known to his admirers as "The Pathfinder of the North-West". An officer in the US Army's Topographical Corps, and a contemporary of Rose Greenhow, he had first come to notice through his exploration and mapping of areas between the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. From this, he was invited to Washington by Senator Thomas H. Benton of Missouri, a leading advocate of Western expansion. The Senator, disappointed in his hopes of a son, had devoted himself to his second daughter, Jessie, and raised her to play a part in public affairs. In 1841, as headstrong as she was good-looking, and still only 17, she scandalised her family by running away with Fremont, who had no income beyond his pay. Her parents eventually became reconciled to her marriage and Benton obtained Congressional funds for his son-in-law to make several explorations of the Far West between 1842 and 1845. At the end of each expedition Fremont returned to Washington, where he wrote up his reports and recounted his experiences, some of which he had shared with the famous frontier scout Kit Carson, to enthralled audiences.

As rival society hostesses, Jessie Benton Fremont and Rose O'Neal Greenhow found each other intolerable and as time went on, relations between them became, in the words of Ann Blackman, Rose Greenhow's most recent biographer, "downright bitchy".(1) Rose saw her own husband, whose expertise derived from his study of archives and documents, being eclipsed by the more charismatic Fremont, who had actually travelled through the areas in question, often in dangerous conditions. Jessie Fremont, whose talents included a gift for writing, turned her husband's adventures into thrilling stories that she sold to the popular press, promoting his image and later giving her a useful personal income. On the increasingly controversial issue of slavery, Jessie Fremont was an outspoken abolitionist. Rose Greenhow saw the slavery of African-Americans as a perfectly natural, even laudable, arrangement. She came from a slave-owning family, and as a teenager, had been greatly influenced by Senator John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, one of the most eminent residents in her aunt's boarding house, who became something of a father figure to her. Calhoun strongly defended slavery, arguing that moves for its abolition would tear the United States apart, and promoted the principle of States' Rights, by which each individual State had the right to make its own laws on domestic issues.

In 1846 long-standing disputes between the United States and the United Kingdom over the possession of Oregon led to a threat of actual hostilities. Neither government, however, really wanted to fight. Texas, after ten years as an independent republic, had joined the USA in 1845, and President Polk was about to go to war with Mexico on the consequent border issues. The British had problems with unrest in Quebec and few outside the Hudson's Bay Company thought the remote North-West worth fighting over. In the end, the question was referred to arbitration. Jessie Fremont alleged that, during the crisis, Rose leaked information from Greenhow's office in the State Department to the British Embassy, and that confidential documents had to be worked on at home by her own husband, the rival expert on Oregon, to ensure Greenhow did not see them.

Rose Greenhow, however, had domestic afflictions to contend with. Her second daughter, Gertrude, had been born in 1838, followed in subsequent years by six other children. In the unhealthy climate of Washington, in an age when infant mortality was a scourge to all classes, four of them, including both her young sons, died in infancy. Senator Calhoun, a friend and patron, died in March 1850, being nursed by Rose in his final hours. Greenhow himself, suffering from stress-related migraines and frustrated by his lack of prospects in the State Department, resigned from his post there a month later.

President Zachary Taylor, the victor of the Mexican War, then appointed Greenhow as a special representative to investigate land claims in the former Mexican provinces of California and New Mexico (territories now including much of Arizona, Nevada and the neighbouring states) which had been ceded to the USA on the conclusion of peace in February 1848. Rose left her three surviving children in the care of her sister, Ellen Cutts, and accompanied Greenhow to Mexico City, where she played an active part in the usual social activities undertaken by members of the diplomatic community. The Mexican authorities, smarting under a humiliating defeat and resentful at the loss of so much of their country, failed to produce the information Greenhow needed, so in October 1850 he abandoned his mission and went with Rose to begin a new career in San Francisco, an area that his investigations had shown him was full of opportunities. The steamer they boarded at Acapulco, on Mexico's west coast, was crowded with men joining the rush to the goldfields discovered in California the previous year. It also carried John Fremont who, in the Mexican War, had converted his latest expedition into a military unit, and helped defeat The Bear Flag Revolt, an attempt to establish an independent Californian Republic. Recalled to Washington to face charges of military insubordination, he had been cashiered, but later pardoned and re-instated by President Polk. Now, with his wife Jessie, he was on his way to take office as the junior senator for California, which had just become the 31st State of the Union.

Slavery had been abolished in Mexico in 1830, nine years after the achievement of independence from Spain. The Texans, however, had retained it, and settlers from the Southern states now urged its restoration in California. Free farmers and miners, on the other hand, objected strongly to competition from slave labour, and John Fremont, like his wife a keen abolitionist, did much to implement the new State's free-soil constitution. The Southerners in San Francisco society were led by California's senior Senator, William Gwin, a Tennessean, and formed their own social circle in which Rose (ignored by Jessie Fremont) played her part.

After seven months in Mexico and five in California, Rose Greenhow decided it was time to return to her children. There was no good way to travel. Overland, there were 3,000 miles of mountains, deserts and plains to cross, over a variety of roadless wagon trails (some only recently opened by Fremont's expeditions), with all the risk of accidents, disease, exposure, and attack by robbers or hostile Indians along the way. The long sea journey round Cape Horn was almost as hazardous, and Rose always suffered badly from seasickness. The quickest way was by steamer to Panama, then by canoe and mule-train across the jungle-clad isthmus to board another steamer for points north. Rose Greenhow, in the company of Senator and Mrs Gwin, took to this route to bring her back to Washington in October 1851. There she re-opened contacts with old friends, including James Buchanan, who had been a friend since Robert Greenhow's first reports on Oregon. She now sought Buchanan's help in appointing her husband to the new California Land Commission, formed to examine the claims by Hispanic Californians to lands being occupied by incoming Americans. Buchanan replied that the three

Commissioners (none of whom spoke Spanish) had already been selected and he did not feel able to re-open the question with the newly elected President Pierce. Greenhow was therefore given the less prestigious post of assistant law agent to the Commission but was paid well enough to visit his wife and daughters in Washington and, in April 1853, became the father of another daughter, whom her family called Little Rose. Back in San Francisco, in February 1854, he fell from an elevated section of the sidewalk, sustaining injuries from which he died six weeks later.

Rose Greenhow obtained \$10,000 in damages from the City of San Francisco for his death and a further \$42,000 from Congress for his work with the California Land Commission, which monies were sufficient for her to live on in a smart quarter of Washington not far from the White House. Not yet aged 40, she remained active as a socialite and continued her correspondence with Buchanan, who (in a letter sent via another old friend, Jefferson Davies, then Secretary of the US War Department) she encouraged to run for the 1856 Democrat Presidential nomination. Her rival, Jessie Fremont, had her own plans for the White House, with John Fremont having emerged as the Republican party's candidate.

Early in 1856, Rose Greenhow, accompanied by Little Rose, returned to California to settle her late husband's estate. The newly completed Panama Railroad (the first transcontinental railway in the Americas) allowed them to cross the isthmus in four hours, and the whole journey, including steamer passages, now took barely three weeks. By the end of September, she landed back in New York and immediately wrote to Buchanan telling him that California was deeply divided on the slavery question and he should support the idea of a trans-continental railroad to counter Fremont's popularity there. Buchanan won the Presidential election of November 1856. An elderly bachelor, he entrusted the role of First Lady to his niece Harriet Lane, but Rose Greenhow was frequently invited to social events in the White House and was widely believed to have the President's ear.

While in Mexico City, the Greenhows had become friends with a Breton speculator and arms dealer, Joseph Limantour. With Robert Greenhow's advice, Limantour had put forward claims to extensive land grants in California that would have made him one of the richest men in the new state, with the Greenhows likely to benefit from his friendship. The California Lands Commission had accepted most of his claims but, its ruling was challenged by the federal authorities and in December 1857 he was arrested for fraud. He fled to Mexico, but Rose Greenhow, who seems to have fallen under his spell, continued to support him. From Buchanan's attorney general, Jeremiah S. Black, she discovered that the government's case was that the Mexican State Seal that Limantour had on his documents was a clever forgery and warned him to produce some explanation. Late in 1857 she was called back to San Francisco to give evidence for him in a civil suit brought to recover the lands in question.

The transcripts reveal her to be an archetypal Steel Magnolia. When asked to state her date of birth, she replied that she was of full lawful age. The court did not press her for further details. When the government's counsel suggested that Limantour had paid her to give evidence, she answered, "I do not know anyone living who would dare to make me such a proposition".(2) Asked why she had come all the way to California, she said she had felt morally bound to do so, and added (thereby letting the court know she had friends in high places) that she had consulted Mr Black, who had told her she must obey a subpoena. After an hour on the stand, she was discharged, her evidence unshaken and her interrogators baffled. She returned to Washington, where she lobbied Senator Gwin, Attorney-General Black and finally President

Buchanan himself, but on this occasion her powers of influence failed. Limantour's claims were eventually dismissed as completely fraudulent and he wisely decided to remain in Mexico, where he prospered.

While in San Francisco, Rose visited her daughter Florence, who in 1855, then aged 19, married Tredwell Moore, an Ohio-born captain in the US Infantry. By this time, he had been posted to the Presidio, once a Spanish colonial fort, but by this time a US Army base, as it still remains. Their young son went back with Rose to Washington, which seemed safer than the uncivilised western frontier, only to become ill and die there the following year. Tragedy struck again when Rose's seventeen-year-old daughter, Gertrude, who had inherited her mother's good looks, died of typhoid fever in March 1861.

In the autumn of 1860, the Republican candidate, Abraham Lincoln, was elected President with the overwhelming support of the Northern states. Earlier, using the words of St. Matthew's Gospel, he had declared that a house divided against itself could not stand and that the country must eventually become all slave or all free. In the South, his election was taken to mean that abolition would inevitably follow. Rather than see the end of an institution on which their very society was based, between December 1860 and May 1861 the seven southernmost states declared their secession from the USA, on the principle that they had the right to withdraw from a Union that they had freely entered. Together, they formed a new nation, the Confederate States of America, with Rose Greenhow's old friend Jefferson Davis as its President. President Lincoln, in his inaugural address, March 4, 1861, declared that he had no intention of interfering with slavery, but that the Union must be preserved and no state could be allowed to secede from it. On 12 April, Confederate batteries under Brigadier General P.G.T. Beauregard fired upon Fort Sumter, in the harbour of Charleston, South Carolina. With the small US Regular Army mostly deployed on the Eastern seaboard or in the Far West, Lincoln called on all the States of the Union to raise volunteer forces for the suppression of rebellion. The Northern states complied, but the Southern states of Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina and Tennessee took the opposite course. Between April and June 1861, they too seceded from the Union and became the Confederacy's northern tier. Of all the slave-holding states, only Rose Greenhow's native Maryland stayed with the Union, and that, in her opinion, was simply because it was occupied by federal troops.

As the crisis deepened, Captain Moore, now stationed at the newly-built Fort Churchill in remote Nevada, wrote to his mother-in-law about a rumour that the new Lincoln administration would include John Fremont as Secretary for War which, in view of her feud with Jessie Fremont, would destroy any influence she might have in that Department. He asked her to approach Treasury Secretary Salmon P. Chase, a former Governor of Ohio, who knew his family. "I do think, dear mama, that the present crisis opens an opportunity for us young men that should not be neglected". (3) Putting family before politics, Rose wrote to Chase saying that Moore was a strong supporter of the Union and seeking a command for him in one of the new regiments of Ohio Volunteers. Chase, despite his political differences, promised his support. She also wrote to William H. Seward, Lincoln's Secretary of State, who had several times been one of her dinner guests, asking for Moore to be posted back to the Presidio, recommending him as "a strong Union man" and concluding "My good friend, I have this very much at heart and will hold myself greatly in your debt if it is accomplished". (4)

In May 1861 Florence Moore wrote to her mother to say that with so many Union troops gathering in Washington, "Poor Moore is almost beside himself at having to remain here inactive while so many are earning laurels. But I thank God for it. Of course, he will fight for the Union. And although of course, dear mama, all my earnest feelings are enlisted for the Southerners rather than the Yankees, still I do think that the Union should come before all mere State feelings and do think the Secessionists a little like traitors." (5) As a graduate of the USMA West Point and an experienced campaigner, Moore was well-qualified for a command, but he would spend most of the war in Nevada. This was due not to Mrs Fremont's vindictiveness but because Lincoln's policy was to rely on the State-raised Volunteers, leaving most of the regulars in their previous stations. Fremont himself was not appointed to the War Department and served briefly as major general of Volunteers in command of the Department of the West.

Rose Greenhow recruited as an intelligence agent

The South, with its martial traditions, provided a disproportionately high number of officers for the US Army. In the Spring of 1861, when Southern-born officers had to decide where their loyalties lay, most of them placed their swords at the disposal of their native States. Among those serving in Washington was Captain Thomas Jordan, a 41-year-old Virginian and veteran of the Seminole and Mexican Wars. Before going south to join the adjutant-general's staff of the new Confederate Army, in which he later became a brigadier-general, he recruited Rose Greenhow as an intelligence agent. The three attributes usually sought in an agent are suitability, motivation and access, and he may have thought her suitable as former diplomatic wife, who would have known about intelligence-gathering. He might even have heard of Jessie Fremont's suspicion that she had once been a British spy. Certainly, she had motivation and had never disguised her political sympathies, and she had also access to politicians and officials from her social contacts, enhanced during Buchanan's recent presidency.

Rose Greenhow readily agreed to Jordan's request and formed a team from the many Southern sympathisers in Washington. Her sources included the uncensored newspapers; what is now termed "humint", the intelligence gathered by her team's sharp eyes and ears; and loose-tongued guests from whom she cajoled official secrets. Despite her many pregnancies she had kept her figure and was said to look ten years younger than her actual age (which she never disclosed). Enemies such as Jessie Fremont thought that she used her Southern charms as a honey-trap and picked up pillow-talk from lonely senior officers and statesmen.

Using a substitution code left with her by Jordan, she sent valuable intelligence to his new headquarters at Manassas Junction, Virginia, a mere twenty-six miles away. There, the outnumbered Confederate commanders needed to know when the Union forces, massing at Washington under Brigadier-General Irvin McDowell, would move against them. On 9 July 1861, Bettie Duvall, the sixteen-year-old daughter of a wealthy Southern family, wearing a frayed grey dress and pretending to be an ordinary farm girl, drove herself out of Washington in a cart. She stopped overnight at the home of old family friends, borrowed a more fashionable riding habit and a side-saddle, and rode on to Manassas and the headquarters of Confederate Brigadier General Milledge L. Bonham. There, she tied her horse to a tree and asked for General Beauregard, who had recently arrived to take command. Bonham suspected she was a Union spy but, on being told that she insisted on delivering her message to Beauregard in person and that, moreover, she was very pretty, agreed to see her. He then recognised her as one of the Southern ladies whom he had seen seven months previously in the gallery of Congress, when he had been a Representative for South Carolina. She then unpinned

her hair and shook out a small black silk bag into which Rose Greenhow had stitched a slip of paper reading, when decrypted, “McDowell has certainly been ordered to advance on the sixteenth. ROG”. (6)

A week later, at first light, a courier brought another message from Jordan to Rose. Decrypted, this simply read “Trust Bearer”, (7) with a verbal request for confirmation of the intelligence delivered by Bettie Duvall. With the encrypted answer hidden in the heel of his boot, the courier then made his way by buggy and saddlehorse down the Potomac river and crossed into Virginia, where he reached a Confederate cavalry post. From there, relays of fast despatch-riders carried the message on to reach Beauregard’s headquarters at 8p.m. The information, based on one of Rose’s sources who had seen a copy of McDowell’s orders, was that the Union forces would begin to march on Manassas that night, 55,000 strong, moving via Fairfax Court House and Centreville. Jordan sent an immediate reply which reached her at noon the next day, “Let them come, we are ready for them. We rely on you for precise information”. (8) With reinforcements rushed up by rail in response to Rose’s information, Beauregard was thus fully prepared when McDowell, expecting an easy victory, reached the Confederate positions. Initially driven back across the Bull Run stream, the Southerners held firm, with Brigadier General Thomas Jackson earning his soubriquet “Stonewall”. McDowell ordered a retreat that soon became a panic, with some of the raw Union troops not stopping until they reached Washington.

At the time, Rose Greenhow was in New York, putting her 23-year-old daughter Leila on a steamer for the first leg of the long journey to stay with her married sister in the West. Possibly this was to remove Leila from any involvement with her spy ring, but Rose may in any case have thought her safer there than in the war zone that Washington had become. Florence herself had long been urging Rose to leave Washington and earlier had written to her “They say some ladies have been taken up as spies. I so dread to hear of some of my friends. Dear mama, please keep clear of secessionists if you possibly can.” Captain Moore, still hoping for a transfer, had added a post-script, “Keep a bright look-out for my interests and do not, even should your inclinations be for the South, do anything which would for an instant compromise you.” (9) Despite Florence’s pleas, Rose returned to Washington where, as she afterwards wrote, the streets were filled with armed and unarmed ruffians, women were afraid to go out alone “and no one would have been surprised at any hour by a general massacre of the peaceful inhabitants.” (10) Some officers urged her to leave and offered to provide an escort but she resolved to remain, “conscious of the great service I could render my country, my position giving me remarkable facilities for obtaining information.” (11)

She therefore continued to send Jordan useful intelligence, including details of troop numbers and locations, and mentioning her group’s plans to sabotage telegraph wires and artillery parks. Her social contacts including her old acquaintance, William Seward, who assured her that the rebellion would still be over in sixty days and received a spirited reply. A more amenable contact was Senator Henry D. Wilson of Massachusetts, Chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, who was tipped to join the staff of the new Union Commander, Major-General George B. McClellan. Passionate love letters signed “HW” were later found in Rose’s papers, giving support to gossip that Wilson, a married man, was involved in an affair with her, though it is possible that these came from one of his clerks, Horace White, whose hand-writing was very similar. However, they contained nothing of military value and Wilson himself continued in his political career, later to become Vice-President of the USA under Ulysses S. Grant.

Rather than keeping a low profile, Rose continued to attend the public gallery of the Senate and comment openly on its proceedings. Lincoln, she declared, should be impeached for breaking his oath to uphold the Constitution by admitting two Senators from West Virginia, which had broken away from Virginia when the latter seceded from the Union. When an officer of Volunteers told her she was speaking treason, she replied that her remarks were addressed to her companions and not to him, adding, “if I did not discover by your language that you must be ignorant of all the laws of good breeding, I should take the number of your company and report you to your commanding officer.” (12) A doorkeeper said “Ma’am, if he insults you, I will put him out” and several others took her part. A sympathetic Republican Senator came into the gallery to talk to her, only to be advised to return to the floor and move for a revival of the Aliens and Sedition laws, as armed ruffians were being allowed into the gallery to overawe the people.

McClellan, though a professional soldier, had also been vice-president and chief engineer of the Illinois Central Railroad, with Abraham Lincoln as a company lawyer. Both of them had been impressed by the work of Chicago-based private detective Allan Pinkerton in penetrating gangs of train robbers. Now, suspecting Confederate spies everywhere, and blaming them for the debacle at Bull Run (which was not too far from the truth), Seward and McClellan decided to use the Pinkerton Agency for counter espionage.

Rose Greenhow arrested

Rose Greenhow, with her open sympathies for the Confederacy and visitors coming to her house at all hours, was an easy target. On 23 August 1861, she was arrested by Pinkerton himself, though not before she swallowed a small note she was carrying. Ignoring her demands to see a warrant, he entered her house with a dozen men and commenced a search. Little Rose raised the alarm by running into the back yard, climbed a tree that hung over the garden wall, and called out to the neighbours “Mother has been arrested.” (13) Rose pretended that she needed to change her dress, the day having become intensely hot and humid, as it does in midsummer Washington, and was allowed to go to her bedroom, where she began destroying as many papers as she could. One of the detectives, perhaps suspicious that she was taking so long, rapped on her door and walked in. Finding her half-dressed, he withdrew, but subsequently a female detective arrived, to whom Rose was required to hand over her clothes to be searched “until I stood in my linen” (14) before being allowed to dress again.

For the rest of the day, no-one who called was permitted to leave. Among them was a young friend, Lily Mackall, and her sister, and later their mother, who had come to look for her daughters. During the afternoon, when Pinkerton went out, his men freely helped themselves to Rose’s rum and brandy and, after telling each other, in her hearing, of the “nice times” they intended to have with their female prisoners, fell into a drunken stupor. (15) This allowed her to creep into her library, collect more of her secret papers, hide them in the folds of her dress and return to her room. At a loss as to what to do with them, she decided to burn the house down, but then recalled that the morning’s search had not gone as far as her stockings and ankle boots. Lily Mackall agreed to conceal the papers in her own stockings, with the understanding that if she was about to be searched, she would pretend to be distressed at leaving Rose, go back to her, and help set the house on fire. She and the other visitors were allowed to go home the next morning, though in most cases with a Pinkerton agent following them. For the next week, Rose herself was kept under close surveillance so that “if I desired to change my dress, it was obliged to be done with open doors, and a man peering at me.” (16)



Left, an early picture of Rose O'Neal Greenhow - a slightly less austere image than the pictures taken while a prisoner

(Source: Wikimedia Commons)

Below, a picture of Rose with her daughter, Rose Junior, while a prisoner in Washington

(Source: Wikimedia Commons)



Lily Mackall returned voluntarily to share Rose's imprisonment, though she was allowed to come and go freely until Pinkerton appreciated that she was acting as messenger and ordered her exclusion. His men made repeated searches of the house, examining everything and, Rose suspected, stealing several items of value. The bedroom where her daughter Gertrude had died only a few months before was searched, with the dead girl's combs and trinkets swept off the dressing table.

Despite hiding her secret papers, Rose seems to have been remarkably careless with her tradecraft. Lily Mackall had to snatch up a sheet of blotting paper with a mirror image of a despatch Rose had sent to Beauregard. Pinkerton's men discovered not only collections of open source material but drafts and fragments of encoded messages which had been torn up but not burned (though, on a hot day, lighting a stove would itself have been suspicious). Pinkerton himself described her as a wicked woman who used her superior education, extensive acquaintance, and powers of seduction to obtain Government secrets. He turned her house into a detention centre for other women Confederate sympathisers and, believing that she was using her window blinds as a means of communication, had her transferred to a room from which she could not see the street.

Nevertheless, sometimes using veiled speech, sometimes by a colour code in wool tapestries, she still managed to send out information overheard from her guards or gleaned from sympathetic visitors. One such was the former U.S. Attorney General Edwin M. Stanton, one of Rose's friends in Buchanan's circle, who had come to arrange the exile to the South on parole of one of her fellow detainees. Rose asked him to file a writ of habeas corpus on her behalf, as she was being kept under arrest without being brought before a judge. Stanton, soon to become Lincoln's Secretary for War, politely declined, but said he would do what he could for her, a response she scornfully dismissed. She had by this time become the city's most famous, or notorious, prisoner, and her house, named Fort Greenhow by the Press, an object of public interest.

On 16 November 1861, Rose Greenhow had a rare visit from her sister Ellen, whose husband James Madison Cutts was then a senior treasury official, and Ellen's newly widowed daughter, Adie Cutts Douglas. Permission for the meeting was granted on condition that a military officer was present throughout the fifteen minutes allowed. The escort, Lieutenant Colonel Rufus Ingolls, a 41-year-old veteran of the Mexican War and the Western frontier, was sympathetic and offered to help if she would make some kind of graceful submission to the authorities. She thanked him, but declined, considering such a course as "Inconsistent with my own feelings and derogatory to my honour." (17) Instead, the next day she wrote to Seward, complaining at her illegal arrest, at being placed "with my little child for seven days at the mercy of men without character or responsibility", at the search of her property and private letters, at being expected to share the company of a Chicago woman of known bad character (one of Pinkerton's agents), at poor food, at the conversion of her house into a prison with the misuse of its valuable furniture, and at her own continued detention without being informed what charges there were against her. (18)

Possibly in response to this, she was visited on 20 December by Colonel Thomas M. Key, an Ohio politician and lawyer, whom McClellan had appointed his Judge-Advocate. He had visited previously to look into her case and, affecting deafness, had sat very close to her and tried to hold her hand. This time he told her that the Government did not know what to do with her and asked what terms she would accept. She said that she wanted an unconditional

release, and the return of her papers and property but he could only promise to seek her personal freedom and warned that things might get worse for her.

Before sending Seward her letter, she smuggled a copy to Manassas, from where it was published by the *Richmond Whig* newspaper as an example of cowardly Yankee brutality towards a Southern lady. It was reprinted by the more hostile *New York Herald*, with the gloss that if such a noted secessionist were granted all the rights she claimed, the government might as well disband its armies and hand the country over to criminals. She was placed under increased surveillance. Catholic priests who asked to see her were turned away and when she, with her maid and Little Rose, went to church, she was not permitted to speak to anyone. The faithful Lily Mackall appealed to Lincoln himself for permission to visit but was refused with the message that Rose Greenhow had done more damage to his Government than the rest of the rebels put together. Lily Mackall shortly afterwards developed a fatal illness and died, with Rose's request for permission to go to her sickbed being denied.

On 29 December 1861, Rose Greenhow wrote another long letter to Seward, saying that she was not surprised he had not answered the letter she had sent him five weeks earlier, since as all laws were being disregarded, she could not expect the rules of good breeding to be followed. She then gave him a brief history of the events that drove the South into secession, of the progress of the war thus far, of the misery this had brought upon the North, and of the determination of the Southern people either to achieve their independence or leave their land a howling wilderness. This time she had gone too far. When she wrote to Key on 6 January 1862 to say she was prepared to talk further, he came at once, "with a courtesy very remarkable in an employee of the Abolition Government", as she waspishly remarked (19), but he had to tell her that the publication of her first letter to Seward meant he could no longer help. Her release, he said, had been judged inexpedient on account of the dangerous knowledge she possessed. For this she blamed McClellan, who was reported as saying that she knew more of his plans than did Lincoln or his Cabinet and that she had four times caused him to alter them.

On 18 January she and Little Rose were put into a carriage and taken to the Old Capitol Military Prison, converted from the boarding house that had once been her teenage home. There they remained in varying degrees of discomfort while Rose continued her resistance. Some of the officers treated her with as much chivalry as their orders allowed. Others regarded her with hostility, including the Provost Marshal who ordered bars to be nailed across her window, restricting air and sunlight, and who, when the prison commandant, Lieutenant William P. Wood, wondered if they were really needed, told him "Oh, Wood, she will fool you out of your eyes." (20) Wood himself, another veteran of the Mexican War, went on to have a distinguished post-war career as the first Director of the US Secret Service, and was one of the few Union officers about whom Rose had anything good to say. At the time, she protested to him about the inadequate prison rations, the vermin that infested her room, the brutality of the camp guards (especially those of German immigrant origin in the 91st Pennsylvania Infantry), the presence of African-Americans and the theft of her clothes in the laundry. She disliked the prison's medical officer, Brigade Surgeon Stewart, complained about his disrespectful conduct towards her, doubted his professional competence, and refused to let him near Little Rose when the eight-year-old child became sick.

By the beginning of 1862, the Federal military authorities had detained thousands of US citizens accused of aiding rebellion. Their numbers alone made it impossible to bring them all before the courts and so Lincoln set up a two-man Commission to examine their cases, release those willing to swear allegiance to the Union, or send South those who gave their parole to

take no further part in the war. One of the commissioners was Edwards Pierrepont, a 45-year-old New Englander, a Superior Judge of the New York Supreme Court and (although a Democrat), one of Lincoln's trusted political advisers. His colleague was another New Englander, the 62-year old John Adams Dix, whose career had begun as a teenage cadet in the War of 1812, followed by fifteen years' service as a regular officer in the US Army before becoming a lawyer and politician in New York State, which he also represented in the US Senate. In the 1850s he was President of the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad. Early in 1861 he had become Secretary of the Treasury in Buchanan's administration. He was also a leading figure in the New York State Militia, and on the outbreak of war was appointed a major-general of Volunteers. No-one could doubt his loyalty to the Union. At the Treasury he had ordered the officers of his revenue cutter at New Orleans to shoot anyone attempting to haul down the US flag. As a general, he had arrested six members of the Maryland Legislature, thereby preventing that state from joining the Confederacy (the Confederates nevertheless claimed it, and it became the thirteenth star on their battle flag). An experienced negotiator, he now used his skills to persuade as many of the detainees as he could to come to terms with the Government.

Thus, on 17 March 1862 he, together with Judge Pierrepont, whom Rose Greenhow, writing later, misremembered as "Governor Fairfield" (actually the name of a Maine governor and noted abolitionist who had died some years previously) went to see her in the Old Capital Prison. He told her that he had come as a mediator and would be happy to serve her as an old friend (she and Dix had both been members of Buchanan's circle). Rose answered that she had always regarded him highly, but as he was now the minister of a tyrant, the only service he could do her was simple justice. After this unpromising start, Dix said he was sorry to find her so embittered against the government whose flag both of them had honoured in former days. Rose responded that the government had kept her prisoner for eight months in contravention of her civil rights and she had not decided whether she would agree to appear before his Commission. As for the flag she had once seen as the proudest emblem of human freedom on earth, it now covered more infamy, in her eyes, than that of any pirate on the sea. At this point Dix, a father himself, noticed Little Rose lying flushed and listless on her straw mattress, and, putting hand on her forehead, said "Why, she has fever." Rose told him she had sent for a physician, at which Dix said "There is one here" referring to Surgeon Stewart, who had joined the group. Rose said she had declined that gentleman's services and the commissioners left. As soon as they did so, Stewart, who had previously been reprovved after one of Rose's complaints, began berating her, at which she appealed to General Dix, saying "Sir, I claim your protection against this indignity. I believed you were ignorant of the conduct of this man, else you would never have allowed him to attach himself to your suite and enter my room, from which I was forced to call upon the officer of the guard to expel him, for conduct unworthy of a man, on a former occasion." (21) The commissioners then asked Stewart to leave, giving Rose her one triumph of the day.

A week later she was conducted by Lieutenant Wood to the Commission's headquarters, in a run-down mansion where her friends the Gwins had once hosted grand events. It was a snowy day, she later recalled, with the sun "obscured by clouds as dark as Yankee deeds." After being left under armed guard while officers came to stare at her, she was taken before the Commissioners. As they were standing up, she asked them to resume their seats, saying it was a mistake of their Government to have selected gentlemen for their task, though it would have been more courteous of them not to have kept her waiting in the cold for nearly an hour. They

apologised and said they had not been told she was there, after which the proceedings got under way. When a note-taker asked “if you will please to speak louder, ma’am” she told the court that if it was the intention to make a spectacle of her for the newspapers she would refuse to stay. (22)

Judge Pierrepont told her she did not have to answer any questions she did not want to and could make any reply that she chose. Her replies thereafter alternated between denial and defiance. If anyone was acting treasonably, she said, it was Mr Lincoln, and the commissioner was abetting him by presiding over an unlawful trial; she was being held merely because of opinions she had expressed; although as an American citizen she had the right of free speech and of writing as she pleased, her private correspondence had been torn open to be laughed over. The charge of corresponding with the enemy was met with a demand for proof. When Pierrepont handed her a copy of her first letter to Seward and demanded to know how it got into the Richmond newspapers she expressed outrage that Seward had allowed a private letter to leave his office. She herself had no idea (she said) of how it had found its way to Richmond. “I have no doubt you will charge me with counselling Mr Davis on how to lead his armies.” Pierrepont repeated the charge that she had sent military information to the rebels, particularly before the battle of Bull Run. “I am not aware of that”, she replied, adding that no-one would give her any information, but if she had possessed any, she would indeed have sent it. “I should consider that I was performing a holy duty to my friends.”

Pierrepont appealed to her sense of family, asking, “You have a son-in-law in the Union Army?”. Yes, she said, and a nephew (referring to her sister Ellen’s son, James Madison Cutts Jr, a war-time officer in the 11th US Infantry) “and a great many other relatives benighted on the same subject.” These would have included her namesake and favourite niece, Ellen’s daughter Adie (properly Rose Adele), whose husband, Senator Stephen A. Douglas, had died of typhoid fever while campaigning to keep Illinois in the Union.

General Dix asked her about a cypher key found in her house. She said she had never had the opportunity to use it. He asked about letters found in her house containing details of McClellan’s troop dispositions. She denied any recollection of writing them. Pierrepont told her that the charge was not that she wrote them but that they were to be forwarded through her agency. She denied being anyone’s agent and said that if the letters had been there at all, they must have been written by one of her guests, for whom she could not be held accountable. Dix, who had done his best for her, then told her, “You know, Mrs Greenhow, that in a context like this, when the very existence of the Government is in danger, the communication of such information as this, which tends to subvert the interests of the Government, should certainly be considered a very serious offence.” In further exchanges, Rose said that she had not gone into society since the death of her daughter Gertrude, so she only knew what her visitors had told her. “If Mr Lincoln’s friends will pour into my ear such important information, am I to be held responsible?” Any secrets she was supposed to know could, she said, only have come from sources within the Government.

Pierrepont tried another tack. “I suppose it is hardly worthwhile to ask you to take the oath of allegiance or give your parole of honour.” She answered that she would blush to swear an oath she could not keep. Would she like to be released and sent to her friends in the South? After five months in house arrest and three in prison, she said, she had no taste for captivity and if the Government was determined to exile her from her home, she would have no alternative but to accept. Finally, General Dix turned to his colleague and said “Judge, I don’t know as we

wish to ask Mrs Greenhow any more questions.” The official record then states, “Further consideration of the case was postponed and the prisoner remanded.” Rose’s more highly coloured version is that both commissioners shook her hand and expressed the hope she would soon be set free.

It was, in fact, another two months before this happened, during which she remained in prison where she aided an unsuccessful attempt at escape by two Confederate officers by giving one of them her pistol, which she had somehow kept. On 31st May 1862, after being allowed to say goodbye to her fellow prisoners, she was taken to a waiting coach, along with Little Rose and two other female Confederate detainees. Suspecting a trap, she obliged the escort commander to give her his word of honour, not as an officer of the tyrant Lincoln, but as a gentleman, that he was not taking them to a Northern prison. When he re-assured her and showed her his orders, she got into the coach and was driven to the railroad station and thence by train to Baltimore, where they were put on a boat for Fort Monroe, Virginia. This fortification, guarding the approaches to Hampton Roads and Chesapeake Bay, had remained in Federal hands and was now the base for McClellan’s Peninsular campaign. Command was about to be transferred to Rose’s sometime friend General Dix, who joined them on board and exchanged civil words with her. After reaching the fortress, some two hundred miles down the coast, the women signed their parole not to return north of the Potomac while the war lasted. No food had been provided for them, but the boat’s captain produced a lunch, including iced champagne, at his own expense. Dix having gone ashore, Rose proposed the health of President Davis, her escort commander pretending not to hear. The next day a boat put them ashore under flag of truce. Now with a Confederate escort, they reached Richmond by train on 4 June.

Rose found a comfortable hotel ready for her. The garrison commander paid a call the same evening and the next day her old friend Jefferson Davis visited and told her “But for you there would have been no Bull Run.” (23) He was, however, shocked by the change in her appearance, and wrote to his wife Varina, that she looked much shaken by her experiences. During the months that followed, she gradually recovered her health and looks, and wrote up her memoirs. It is known she speculated in cotton and tobacco so, although she had lost her home and its contents, she still had access at least to credit. She does not seem to have been universally popular with the aristocratic Richmond ladies, who looked down even on Varina Davis for her Mississippi origins and Creole-like complexion. Though unfailingly polite to Rose in public, there were some who cattily wondered exactly how she had obtained all that Yankee information. She continued in contact with Jefferson Davis, who made her a substantial grant in recognition of her previous services.

For all the courage of her soldiers and the skill of her generals, the war was not going well for the South. Schooled at West Point in Napoleonic principles, the commanders on both sides had been as prodigal with the lives of their young men as would be their counterparts on the Western Front half a century later. In a long war, the greater numbers and economic strength of the North would inevitably prevail, and the balance could only be redressed by foreign intervention. One-fifth of the British population depended on the cotton trade and four-fifths of the world’s cotton came from the Southern States. Confederate statesmen believed that this would force the British to break the blockade of Southern ports but, when the war began, the Prime Minister, Viscount Palmerston, and his Foreign Secretary, Lord John Russell (after July 1861, Earl Russell), declared neutrality and banned British subjects from aiding either side.

They almost became involved late in 1861, when a US warship fired on the Royal Mail paddle-steamer *Trent* and arrested the Confederate envoys, James M. Mason and John Slidell, but Seward, with an ill grace, released them and the crisis passed. Russell refused to accept Mason's credentials and the US minister in London, Charles F. Adams, countered Mason's every move. By June 1863, Jefferson Davis had decided that the best prospect of influencing British ruling circles was through an unofficial representative who could argue the Confederacy's case at private social gatherings.

Rose Greenhow was an inspired choice. European chancelleries were long accustomed to great ladies exerting influence over policy decisions. Her mission became the more vital after 4 July 1863, when Vicksburg, the Gibraltar of the Mississippi, surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee was defeated at Gettysburg. On 4 August 1863, she and Little Rose embarked at Wilmington, North Carolina, at the mouth of Cape Fear River, one of the few sea-ports left in Confederate hands. A fast paddle-steamer took them to Bermuda, where they waited three weeks for the steam brig *CSS Harriet Pinckney* and finally reached England on 13 September, landing at Falmouth to avoid United States warships in the Channel. Rose went first to Liverpool to sell the bales of cotton she had brought with her, and then hastened to London, carrying despatches to Mason. A week later he informed Russell that his President had decided there was no prospect of normal diplomatic relations and his mission would be terminated.

Rose thus became the Confederacy's voice in England. Armed with introductions to friends of the South, she was readily received in polite society where, with her assured manners and long experience of government circles, she was soon at home. Her arguments, however, were undermined by Lincoln's Edit of Emancipation declaring that, from 1 January 1863, all slaves in the seceding States would be considered free. This had not been universally popular with many of his own party, who were fighting to preserve the Union, not to abolish slavery. Abroad, however, it had been a game-changer. For all that the British Treasury had groaned under the cost of compensating the dispossessed slave-owners, and despite the once-valuable West Indian sugar islands having become economic backwaters, popular opinion derived much satisfaction from the ending of slavery in the British Empire thirty years previously. A million copies of the 1852 novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Mrs Harriet Becher Stowe (whom Rose loathed) had been sold in the United Kingdom in a single year, three times as many as in the United States. No British government, whatever the distress among Lancashire mill-owners and their operatives, could now actually fight for the South.

Rose still had cards to play. Parliament was dominated by the aristocracy and landed gentry. The Cabinet contained three dukes, the brother of a fourth (Russell), five other peers or their sons and only three men without titles. Many of them identified with their Southern counterparts, who lived in the same kind of gracious mansions, practised the same kind of lifestyle, and displayed the same courage in war or the hunting field. Indeed, the dreaded "rebel yell" was thought to have its origin in the cries of English foxhunters. Rich industrialists and shipping magnates deplored the disruption of trade and urged some kind of mediation. If persuaded of the South's determination to fight on in the face of injustice, they might put pressure on a divided Cabinet to do something to stop the war. To illustrate her own struggle for justice, Rose published her experiences under the title *My Imprisonment and the First Year of Abolition Rule at Washington*. It was widely read on both sides of the Atlantic and gained her much sympathy in Europe as a victim of uncouth Yankee brutality, though it was counter-productive in revealing how she really had been a Confederate agent.

In December 1863, Rose crossed to France to place Little Rose in a Catholic convent school. They were welcomed by the Confederate emigres in Paris, including her old friends the Gwins and Commissioner Mason, who joined his colleague Slidell. On 22 January 1864, she obtained an audience with Napoleon III, Emperor of the French, hoping to persuade him to recognise Southern Independence. He had a large army in Mexico, where he had intervened on the side of Emperor Maximilian, and at one point had hinted to Slidell he would like to help the Confederates. Believing he had inherited some of his uncle's military genius, he told Rose that Davis should have left Vicksburg to its fate and concentrated all his forces with Robert E. Lee. If Washington had fallen, England would have been forced to recognise the South, but without the English, he himself could not move. Rose, unfazed even by an emperor, said that it would have been politically impossible for her President to abandon an area larger than the whole of France. Napoleon III asked her opinion of Robert E. Lee. He was, she replied, worthy to be a marshal of France. The emperor took Rose's hand and assured her that the women of the South had excited the admiration of the world. The interview ended cordially, but not all Rose's charm could overcome political realities, and French policy remained one of neutrality.

Back in London in May 1864, she was approached by William Schaw Lindsay, a British MP who, beginning as a stoker, had become owner of the world's largest shipping firm. He had recently put forward a motion calling for recognition of the Confederacy but, after discussions with Russell, had replaced it with one proposing to end hostilities through mediation by the European Powers. In response, Palmerston had told him that he was willing to meet Mason, and Lindsay now asked Rose to persuade the Confederate envoy back to London. Rose welcomed the idea, as an armistice would have preserved the South (the reason why in March 1863 the US Congress had declared any attempt at mediation an unfriendly act). She persuaded Mason to return to London, though he declined to seek a meeting with the British Prime Minister, as he had no official invitation from him, nor instructions from his government to do so. Rose, who always worked through unofficial channels, had no time for such niceties and eventually, on 14 July, the two statesmen met, though nothing came of it.

On 19 June 1864 the commerce raider *CSS Alabama* was sunk off Cherbourg by the armoured sloop-of-war *USS Kearsage*. In two years, *Alabama* had destroyed 165 US-flagged vessels, including one warship, and Russell's fear of similar losses to British merchantmen by USN ships had made him more determined to keep out of the war. Captain Raphael Semmes and most of *Alabama*'s crew escaped in a British yacht but the third lieutenant, Joseph D. Wilson, was taken prisoner. Mason and Semmes subsequently asked Rose to negotiate his release. On 11 July, Charles Adams, whose wife Abigail had once been her guest in Washington, agreed to receive her. She put the case that Captain Semmes had always released his prisoners, Wilson was sick, and freeing him would bring credit to the United States Government. On this occasion her influence worked and Wilson was released four days later. A week earlier, she had been cheered by the arrival of her daughter Florence, whose husband had finally been promoted to brigadier-general of Volunteers and given command of a logistics base in West Virginia.

The summer social round continued. Among other eminent politicians she met William Gladstone, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Lord Granville, leader of the House of Lords. She visited the State Apartments of Windsor Castle, but contrary to some accounts, did not meet the Queen, still in deep mourning for the Prince Consort (whose last political act before his death on 14 December 1861 had been to soften a despatch that would have brought war over the *Trent* incident). She twice met Palmerston, who at the age of eighty still had an eye for a

good-looking woman. All said the same, that they sympathised with the Confederacy but the thing for which she was asking, recognition by the British, was impossible. It would only alienate the North without aiding the South. After a year with little achieved, she decided to go back to her people.

Carrying despatches from Mason, on 10 August 1864, she boarded the new schooner-rigged paddle-steamer *Condor* at Greenock. Specially built as a blockade runner, the ship was commanded by the 30-year-old “Captain Wright”, the future Vice-admiral Sir William Nathan Wright Hewitt, who had won the Victoria Cross in the siege of Sevastopol ten years earlier. At this time on half-pay while waiting for his next appointment, he was one of the numerous Royal Navy officers sailing under a false name to avoid infringing British neutrality laws. *Condor* made good time to Bermuda and thence Halifax, Nova Scotia, where she waited with other blockade runners for the dark of moon. The US Consul telegraphed news of her departure so that when she entered New Inlet, Wilmington, in the early hours of 1 October, the US Navy was waiting. The fully rigged, screw steamer *USS Niphon* spotted her and sent up a rocket. With all the leading lights having been removed, *Condor*’s river pilot turned into what he thought was a navigable channel, only to run hard aground on a shoal. Rose, fearing that she and her despatches would be captured, insisted on being taken ashore. Hewitt, hoping to float free on the next tide, did all he could to dissuade her, explaining that the heavy surf, together with the guns of nearby Fort Fisher, the Malakoff of the Confederacy, would keep the Yankee sailors away. Rose would not listen, so he agreed to lower a boat with the pilot to steer and two deckhands to row. Judge James P. Holcombe, a leading Confederate politician, and Lieutenant Wilson, late of the *CSS Alabama*, both of whom had boarded *Condor* at Halifax, decided to join her. Getting into a small boat always carries some hazard. Doing so in the dark with a strong swell running is positively dangerous. As soon as the boat cleared its davits, it was caught by a wave and overturned. The men were hauled back on board but, in the pounding surf, there was no sign of Rose Greenhow. Hopelessly hampered by her long skirts, and a heavy bag containing the despatches and four hundred gold sovereigns on a chain round her neck, she never stood a chance. At dawn, her body, with the bag nearby, was found on the beach below Fort Fisher.

She was buried with honours at Wilmington, where, in 1888 the North Carolina chapter of the Ladies Memorial Association put a marble cross over her grave inscribed “Mrs Rose Greenhow. A bearer of despatches to the Confederate Government.” (24) The Ladies Memorial Association, the women’s auxiliary to the Sons of Confederate Veterans, was responsible for the erection of numerous war memorials to Confederate soldiers and played an important part in idealising the values of the ante-bellum South. It was revived in Alabama in 1993 as The Order of the Confederate Rose, named after Rose Greenhow, and there are now OCR societies in several neighbouring states, acting as local history pressure groups.

It is probably through the medium of “made-for-TV Movies” that her name is best known to modern audiences, though she also gets a name-check in the 2011 historical novel *India Black and the Widow of Windsor* (one of Carol K. Carr’s enjoyable series “*India Black, Madam of Espionage*”, a feminist answer to George Macdonald Fraser’s *Flashman*). She appeared in “*The Rebellious Rose*” episode of the NBC series *The Americans* (1961) and as one of the two protagonists in the feature-length *The Rose and the Jackal* (1990). She also featured in Stephen Spielberg’s *Class of ’61* (1993), the film that inspired the Alabama ladies. Of all fictional characters, the nearest to Rose herself is probably Scarlett O’Hara in Margaret Mitchell’s prize-winning novel *Gone with The Wind* (1936) with its subsequent record-breaking film (1940).

In the early 1940s, the fictional Scarlett O'Hara became a role-model for many young British and American women left to cope alone when their men went to war. In the 1990s the historical Rose Greenhow became an icon for Southern women devoted to their heritage, demonstrating William Faulkner's aphorism that, in the South, the past isn't dead; it isn't even past.

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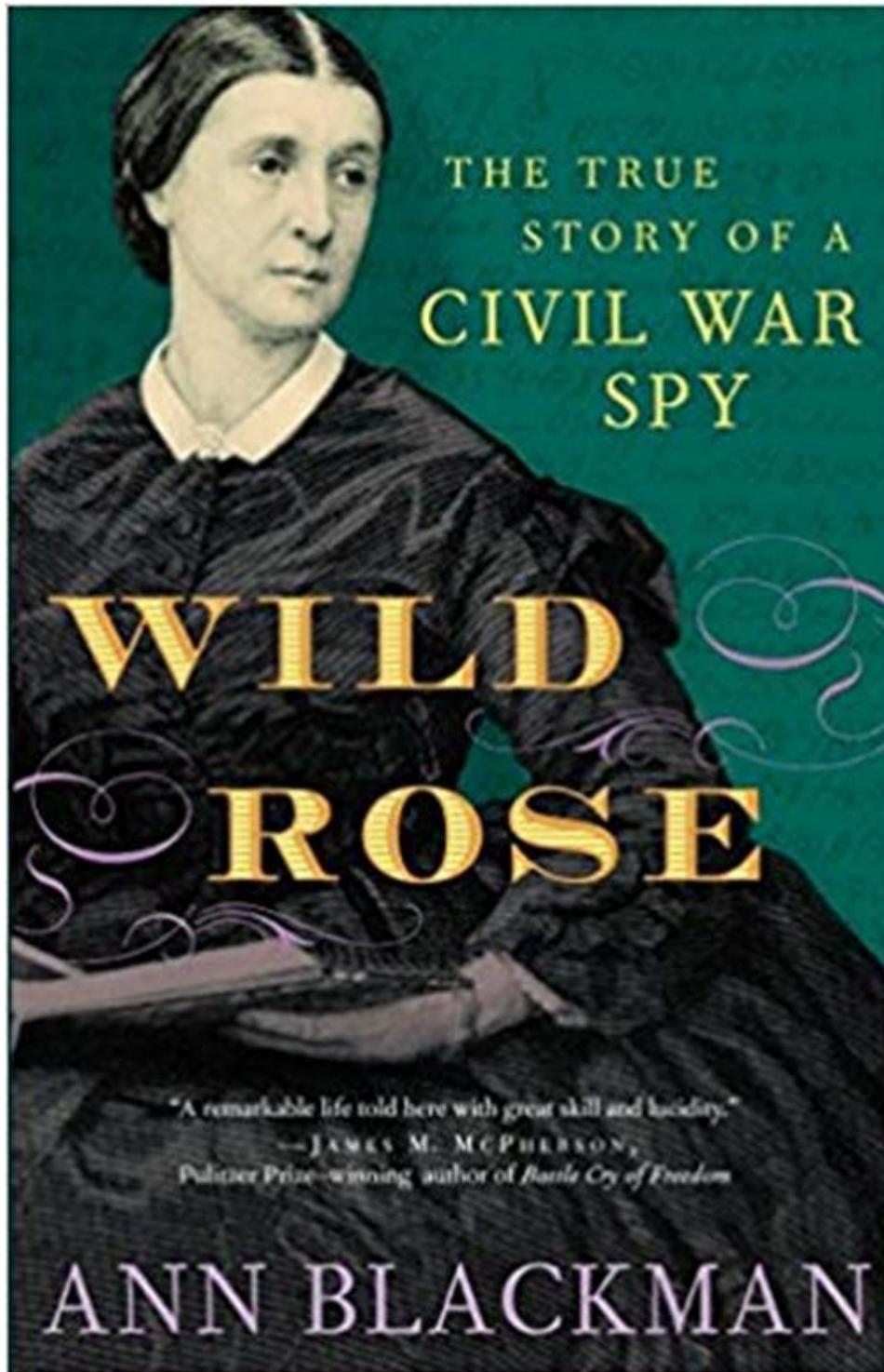
The main source for this article is *Wild Rose. The True Story of a Civil War Spy* by the former Washington journalist turned biographer, Ann Blackman, first published in the USA by Random House in 2005. Exhaustively-researched and meticulously referenced, it also contains an extensive bibliography and list of original documents. This succeeded two previous biographies, *Rebel Rose. Life of Rose O'Neal Greenhow, Confederate Spy* by Ishbel Ross (Mockingbird Books, Simon's Island, Georgia, 1954, republished 1992) and *Confederate Spy. Rose O'Neale Greenhow* by Nash K Burger (F.Watts, New York, 1967). The second source is Rose Greenhow's *My Imprisonment and the First Year of Abolitionist Rule in Washington* (Richard Bentley, London, 1863). The page numbers in the references below are those in the 2005 Amazon reprint edition.

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The *Official Rebel Rose Website* contains several photographs and other details, as does her page on the *Find A Grave Website*.

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20. Blackman, p.206
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22. For this and subsequent exchanges, see Greenhow, pp.139-142, and "Proceedings of the Commission Relating to State Prisoners", cit in Blackman, pp. 219-228
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Wild Rose. The True Story of a Civil War Spy by the former Washington journalist turned biographer, Ann Blackman, first published in the USA by Random House in 2005.