HEROISM OF A CONFEDERATE WOMAN SPY

. . . Another Remarkable Story of "Old . . Times in the South" . . . . . .

BY "AN ACQUAINTANCE OF ROSE GREENHOW" IN THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER, AUGUST 25.

HEROISM OF A CONFEDERATE WOMAN SPY

During the Buchanan administration Mrs. Rose O'Neal Greenhow was one of the leaders of Washington society. She was a Southerner by birth but had lived in Washington since girlhood, a widow, beautiful, accomplished, wealthy, and noted for her wit and forceful personality.

Her home was the rendezvous of those prominent in official life in the City of Washington. She was personally acquainted with all the influential men of the county, many of whom she had entertained in her home. She knew President Buchanan well, as well as William H. Steward, then a Senator from New York. Her niece, who was also a grand-daughter of Dolly Madison, was the wife of Stephen A. Douglas. It was in such company that my friend watched the War clouds grow and darken and finally break at Charleston, which was the beginning of the four years of war.

Among Rose's guests at the time war came was Col. Thomas Jordon, who before leaving Washington to accept the appointment of Adjutant General of the Confederate Army at Manassas, asked Rose if she would not help the Confederacy by being a secret correspondent about military operations, which she was well fitted to do as she could get more than any man could. So at a ticklish but the South counted her no less a patriot because she was a woman. Her letters to him were to help materially the Confederacy at Bull Run, and that held it here and caused the retreat from Manassas, which was the turning point in favor of the South in the war, and incidentally helped Lincoln to his second term.

News That Helped at Bull Run

This news leaked through at the first session of the court. Washington was surrounded with camps of newly formed regiments of men and making ready to take in the cry that was already heard over the city, "On to Richmond!" When would they strike? Where would they strike first? These were two questions that the Confederates were very anxious to have answered, for their plan of campaign would depend on those things. It was Rose Greenhow who found out and sent word to General Beauregard at Manassas, where he anxiously awaited tidings of the Federal advance. It was about July 10 that the first message from Rose was sent to him, saying that the intended advance of the enemy was across the Potomac and on to Manassas via Fairfax Court House and Centerville. It was brought into the Confederate lines by a young lady (Miss Duval) of Washington, who went as a market girl and carried the message to Fairfax Court House to a hotel occupied by the wife and daughter of an officer in the Federal Army, but who themselves were both Southerners and loyal to their native land. General Beauregard at once began his preparations and sent word to President Davis to call in all of the scattered forces. The Federal forces were again delayed and the exact date was as indefinite as ever. It was during these trying days of waiting that G. Donnellan, who, before joining the side of the South, had been a clerk in the Department of the Interior, said he was going back to Washington and find out something definite. He left armed with two words in Col. Jordon's cipher, "Trust bearer," and was told to report to Mrs. Rose Greenhow. She said he was sent in answer to her prayer, for she was in desperate need of a messenger. She hastily wrote her important note. "Orders issued for McDowell to move on Manassas tonight," and she gave it to Donnellan whom she sent in a buggy in relays of horses down the eastern shore of the Potomac to a ferry where he could cross. Cavalry couriers delivered the note to General Beauregard that night, July 16. The next day she had word, "Let them come; we are ready for them." The way she got her information was, she managed to get a copy of the order issued to McDowell.

When the War Department recovered from the effect of Bull Run, it at once began to locate where the steady and swift flowing stream of information to Richmond had its beginning. Suspicion at once fell on Rose. But she would not leave her post of duty, although she was obliged to have realized the danger. Day after day she waited to be arrested, but all the time she was at work sending all the news she could gather to her friends across the river. She told a friend that "it was very exciting, for I would go walking with one of the officials, either military or state, and we would pass a washerwoman carrying her basket of clean clothes or maybe a gaudy attired youth twirled his cane, that news had been received or was wanted. I would then open up my communications in some way."

She would get messages from so many different people and in so many strange ways.

The Arrest of Mrs. Greenhow

On the morning of August 23, Rose was returning from a walk with a member of the diplomatic corps. As she paused a moment at a neighbor's door, one of her humble agents chanced to be coming her way. Further down the street two men were watching her; she knew their mission. To her passing agent she called softly: "I think that I am about to be arrested. Watch from Corcoran's. I shall raise my handkerchief to my face if they arrest me. Give the information to my friends." She then crossed the street to her house. She had several important papers with her that morning and also a small note which she swallowed to destroy; the other let in cipher she had to trust to later chance to destroy, as she could not get it out of her pocket without being seen. As she went up her steps the two men who had followed her jumped up and followed her and forced them, waiting on them to stand. "Is this Mrs. Greenhow?" "Yes," she replied, and asked, "Who are you and what is your business?" "I have to arrest you." "Have you a warrant?" "We have the warrant," briefly enough, yet in the time it took to utter these few words she had mentally decided. The detectives had not seen her let fall the slip of paper from her hand, the signal.

They followed her into the house and shut the door. She said: "Wait a moment outside." In a moment before the house was filled with men, and they began to search everywhere. Men rushed into my bedroom and went into everything that I had. Even the little scraps of papers that my little girl and her friends had been writing on were seized and thought to be correspondence from the enemy."

It was a very hot day and she asked to be allowed to change her dress, which was grudgingly allowed, but almost by the time she had reached her room they flung open her door. She barely had time to destroy the cipher note in her pocket. Very shortly afterwards a woman detective arrived and examined all of her clothes. Her house was then a fort, and detectives waited behind the doors to arrest all who did not know about her arrest and might come there. Mrs. Greenhow sought means to warn them to stay away, but all of her servants were under guard. But there was one who was not under arrest, that was her little daughter, Rose, only eight years old, who climbed a tree and called to all that passed, "Mother has been arrested." Soone the detectives heard her and dragged her weeping from the tree. In spite of the agent on the corner and what Rose could do, the trap was sprung many times that day.

Mrs. Mackall and her sister, close friends of Rose Greenhow's, were seized as they entered the door and searched and detained. The mother, coming to find her daughters, became a prisoner also.

That night the men who were in charge became drunk, so Mrs. Greenhow urged them on to loud talking as a warning to her friends who might come. The noise died down too soon to save two gentlemen who called that evening and that call caused them several months imprisonment on the never proved charge of being engaged in contraband and treasonable correspondence with the Confederates. After midnight, there were a few minutes when the guard was asleep, an dthat was what Rose had been watching for. She eslipped into the dark library and got from the top shelf a book between whose leaves were the coveted dispatches; concealing them in the folds of her dress she slipped back into her room. In a few minutes the guard returned to his post at her door. She had been permitted the companionship of Mrs. Mackall, and now as they reclined on the bed which was in the shadow, they placed the dispatch in Mrs. Mackall's stocking in her shoe, so in that way the despatch was saved, for between 3 and 4 o'clock Saturday morning, the friends who had been detained were allowed to depart—and with Mrs. Mackall there went the priceless dispatch.

How a Ball of Yarn Carried a Message

The guards went through every book leaf by leaf, but too late, for the despatches were gone. Everything in the house was searched.

Rose told her of how she made a ball of yarn and in it hid her send a message across the prisoners. Her little sister Rose and daughter of Judge Phillips were permitted to come and see her and influence was used to get her freedom, though she was kept from being deported from Washington. They were released from prison and given the order to get ready to leave and go to the south side of the Potomac. On the day before their departure, you can imagine their surprise to see Mrs. Greenhow, closely guarded on both sides by Federal guards, coming up to their front window and toss a ball of pink wool in at the window, saying, "Here is your yarn that you left at my house," and then passed on laughing with the stupid guards. Mrs. Phillips knew she had left no yarn at her home, so she and her daughter carefully unwound the ball. Four days later, in spite of her having been searched at Fortress Monroe, Mrs. Phillips placed in the hands of Jefferson Davis the ball of pink yarn an dits contents—one of Rose Greenhow's dispatches in cipher. It was by such means she was able to outwit her many guards.

Soon Miss Mackall was ordered to her own home and these friends never met again on this earth. Rose was ordered not to buy any papers and was not allowed to know their contents. Edwin M. Stanton was an old friend of hers and she tried to get him to appear for her and try to obtain for her a writ of habes corpus, but he declined. When the judge advocated making an unofficial call, asked to what terms would she be willing to subscribe for her release, she replied with unbroken courage, "None, sir. I demand my unconditional release, indemnity for losses, and the restoration of my papers and effects."

The Tragic Death of Mrs. Greenhow

Later Rose Greenhow was sent to the old Capitol Prison. She was tried and sentenced to exile. At last, worn out, she consented to go south and not to return as long as war lasted, so she was sent to Fortress Monroe, where she told the provost that she wanted to be sent wherever President Davis was. He told her Davis was in Richmond, but it would be in Federal hands before she could reach there. To that she replied that she would take her chances, so on the next morning, June 4, she and little Rose arrived in Richmond, and that evening our President called on her, and his words of greeting were: "But for you there would have been no Battle of Bull Run." Those words repaid her, she said, for all she had endured.

Could I tell you the story of the 27 months of Rose Greenhow's life, much of the secret history of the Confederacy would be recealed. Everyone thinks that she went to England and France for the cause, but she only said she was going to place her little daughter in a convent. It was while she was over there that she wrote her book, "My Imprisonment, or the First Year of Abolution Rule in Washington."

She made friends everywhere she went and she had much influence over there.

It was in 1864 that she left England suddenly and sailed for Wilmington on the ship Condor. She had planned to return almost at once and be married and live in England, but the fact that she left her sweetheart and her little daughter and risked her life to run the blockade, seems strong evidence that her cause in the Confederate States was important indeed.

On the night of September 30, the Condor arrived opposite the mouth of the Cape Fear River the entrance for Wilmington, and in the darkness slipped swiftly by the blockade. She was almost at the mouth of the river and not 200 yards from shore when they sighted a vessel ahead and thought it was one of the Federal squadron, so the frightened pilot ran his ship on New Inlet bar. In truth the vessel they saw was the blockade runner Night Hawk, which had been run down the night before. Mrs. Greenhow was afraid of being caught so she, with Judge Holcombe and Lieutenant Wilson, who were Confederate agents, asked that they be put ashore. The boat was capsized and Rose Greenhow went to her death, for around her body was much gold that weighted her down.

The next day her body was washed ashore and she was buried with a Confederate flag wrapped around her coffin, and every Memorial Day her grave is decorated with the graves of the soldiers of 1861-1865.

It is also told that when her body was found that there were papers addressed to President Davis, and they were sent to him.

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LADY WAS IN A BAD FIX FROM NERVOUS INDIGESTION

Biloxi, Miss.—"I had, for a year or more, nervous indigestion, or some form of stomach trouble," says Mrs. Alonzo Ford, 1117 Clay Street, this city. "The water I drank at that time seemed to constipate me. I would suffer until I got so nervous I wanted to get down on the floor and roll. I felt like I could tear my clothes.

"Every night, and night after night, I had to take something for a laxative, and it had to be kept up nightly. My side would pain. I looked awful. My skin was sallow and seemed spotted. I would look at my hands and arms, and the flesh looked lifeless.

"I happened to get a Birthday Almanac, so I told my husband I would try the Black-Draught, which I did. I took a few big doses. I felt much better. My liver acted well. I made a good, warm tea and drank it that way. Soon I found that nervous, tight feeling was going, as was the pain in my side. I found I did not have to take it every night. Soon, after a few weeks, I could leave it off for a week or so, and I did not suffer with constipation. . . I gained flesh. I have a good color, and believe it was a stubborn liver, and that Black-Draught did the work.

"I went to my mother's (Mrs. Deeters) one day, and she wasn't well at all. . . I told her we'd try Black-Draught. We did, and now she keeps it to take after eating. It certainly helped her, and we neither will be without it in our homes. It is so simple, and the dose can be regulated as the case may be. We use small doses after meals for indigestion, and larger doses for headache or bad liver."

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