

## Expansion Resources and Teaching Ideas: Civil War Spies

### VOCABULARY

<b>Abolitionist:</b>	a person who wants to abolish the institution of slavery
<b>Mary Elizabeth Bowser:</b>	a freed slave who worked with Elizabeth Van Lew as a Union spy working in the White House of the Confederacy
<b>Civil War:</b>	The war fought in the United States between the Union and the Confederacy between 1861 and 1865
<b>Confederate States of America:</b>	The government formed by the 11 southern states that seceded from the United States in 1860-1861
<b>Espionage:</b>	the act of spying
<b>Spy:</b>	a secret agent or person hired by a state (or country) to gather information secretly about its enemies, especially regarding the military
<b>Union:</b>	The states that remained a part of the United States of America during the Civil War
<b>Elizabeth Van Lew:</b>	Also known as "Crazy Bet," the woman who spied for the Union in Richmond, Virginia

### *Remember the Ladies*

#### **Materials:**

Internet access and/or books on women who spied during the Civil War; Three-tab notebook foldable from Dinah Zike below; list of Civil War spies also below; bulletin board

#### **Procedure**

Have your students work in pairs or small groups to research the following women who acted as spies during the Civil War – Dr. Mary Walker, Pauline Cushman, Belle Boyd, Rose O’Neal Greenhow, Olivia Floyd, Mary Overall, Antonia Ford, Ginnie & Lotte Moon, Nancy Hart, Laura Ratcliffe, Betty Duvall, and Lily Mackall. Have them use the foldable to create an information sheet about their spy. As a class compare and contrast the spies’ background, sympathies, who they worked with, how they got their information and how they passed it along. As a class, discuss why these women were so successful as spies.



<b>Title:</b> Name of Spy <span style="float: right; font-size: small;">©2008 DMA: www.dinah.com</span>		
Which side did she spy for?	Where did she spy?	How did she get and pass along her information?

### Men and Women in disguise

During the Civil War nearly 750 women dressed as men and fought as soldiers with either the Union or Confederate armies. While these women were not spying, they did dress in disguise to hide their gender. In addition, male and female spies had to dress a different part to protect their identity. Look at photographs of Civil War photographs using one of the following websites and have students discuss clothing. How would you have changed your appearance if you were in disguise? What differences do you notice between soldiers' who fought for the south versus soldiers who fought for the north? How comfortable do you think it was to dress as soldier? Have students develop a list of adjectives that describes the types of clothing worn in war or as a disguise during the Civil War.

- <http://www.richmondhistorycenter.com/collections/research/online-database>
- <http://www.civilwar-pictures.com/g/civil-war-pictures>
- <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/brady-photos/#documents>

Take it further and have students research either a Civil War spy or a woman soldier and have them write a diary entry from the perspective of that historical figure. In the entry, have students utilize the list of adjectives developed in class. *Suggested list of historical figures below:*

Sarah Edmonds  
 Jennie Hodgers  
 Malinda Blalock  
 Frances Clalin Clayton  
 Thomas Jordan

Lafayette C. Baker  
 Hattie Lawton  
 John Scobell  
 Mary Touvestre  
 Robert Smalls



## WHO MAKES THE BEST SPY?

*Circle the word that fits best in each sentence. Use the underlined letter in each circled answer to fill in the blanks at the bottom of the page and discover who makes the best spy.*

1. Working as a \_\_\_\_\_ allowed a servant to overhear conversations at dinner.  
SERVINGMAID                      NURSE                      BLACKSMITH
2. If he or she could read, \_\_\_\_\_ was a duty that would allow a servant to learn a lot of information.  
DELIVERINGFOOD                      DELIVERINGMESSAGES                      POLISHINGSSILVER
3. A \_\_\_\_\_ was able to see which visitors were coming to the house because he greeted them at the door.  
COACHMAN                      BUTLER                      BARBER
4. During a party, a servant who was \_\_\_\_\_ might be able to overhear conversations between guests in the Drawing Room.  
SERVINGDRINKS                      PLAYINGMMUSIC                      WASHINGDISHES
5. The type of servant who was most likely to be around adults, would have moved from room to room, and overheard many conversations in the house was a \_\_\_\_\_.  
MAID                      NURSE                      LAUNDRESS
6. A maid who was \_\_\_\_\_ might be able to see important papers that were laying on a desk or a table in the office.  
IRONINGCCLOTHES                      SWEEPING THE WALK                      TENDING THE FIRE
7. It is said that Elizabeth Van Lew sometimes hid secret messages in loaves of bread. In order to pass on messages this way, it would be best to work in the \_\_\_\_\_.  
STABLES                      KITCHEN                      NURSERY

**THE ANSWER IS: A \_\_\_\_\_**

## Resources

### **Books**

- Bolotin, Norman, *The Civil War: A to Z*. Penguin Group, 2002.
- Caravantes, Peggy. *Petticoat Spies: Six Women Spies of the US Civil War*. Morgan Reynolds, 2002.
- Herbert, Janis. *Civil War for Kids: A History with 21 Activities*. Chicago Review Press, 1999.
- Hook, Sue Vander. *Civil War Spy: Elizabeth Van Lew*. Coughlan Publishing, 2009.
- Jakober, Marie. *Only Call Us Faithful: A Novel of the Union Underground*. Doherty, Tom Associates, LLC, 2006.
- Lyons, Mary E. *Dear Ellen Bee: A Civil War Scrapbook of Two Union Spies*. Simon & Schuster, 2000.
- O-Shei, Tim. *Civil War Spies*. Capstone, 2008.
- Sakany, Lois. *Women Civil War Spies of the Union*. Rosen Publishing Group, 2004.
- Varon, Elizabeth R. *Southern Lady, Yankee Spy: The True Story of Elizabeth Van Lew, A Union Agent in the Heart of the Confederacy*. Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Wyman, Donald Paul: *The Chosen Path: Based on the Life of Elizabeth Van Lew*. Universe, Incorporated, 2007.

### **Websites**

- Library of Congress - <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>
- National Archives - <http://www.archives.gov/>
- Civil War Photography - <http://www.civilwar.org/photos/3d-photography-special/photography-and-the-civil-war.html>
- Spying in the Civil War - <http://www.civilwarhome.com/spies.htm>
- The American Civil War Photo Gallery: <http://www.civilwar-pictures.com/>
- PBS Civil War - <http://www.pbs.org/civilwar/>



The Spy Museum - <http://www.spymuseum.org/programs/educate.php>

CIA-<https://www.cia.gov/kids-page/parents-teachers/teacher-resources/index.html>

Count On Codebreaking - <http://www.counton.org/explorer/codebreaking/pigpen-cipher.php>

Signal Corps Association - <http://www.civilwarsignals.org/>

Introduction to Cryptology - <http://www.krapp.org/hydra/courses/analysis/2a-Subst.pdf>

**VIRGINIA STANDARDS OF LEARNING SUPPORTED BY THIS PROGRAM:**

**History:** VS.1a-g, VS.7b-c

**English:** Oral Lang: 4–12, Reading Skills: 4.6, 5.7, 6.5, 7.6, 8.4, 9.4

**Visual Arts:** 4.14, 5.18, 5.19, 5.20, 5.23, 7.24, 7.26, 8.17, All.1



