

Women In War



Camp followers care for wounded men, ca. 1865.

(Courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)

American Civil War

Hundreds of thousands of women during the Civil War were caught up in the nation's struggle between North and South, many assumed new responsibilities and roles during this conflict. By staying home to care for farms and families, nursing the wounded, cooking and cleaning for the Armies, spying for the North or South, or disguising themselves as men to fight,

women adapted to the vast social changes affecting the nation. Thousands of previously enslaved women were pressed into service as cooks and laundresses in support of the Union Army. Their ability and willingness to assume new roles reflected the American pioneer spirit that would be called on again in future conflicts.



Susie King Taylor, nurse for the 1st South Carolina Volunteers during the Civil War, ca. 1901.
(Courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)



Elvira Gibson Hobart, unofficial chaplain for the 1st Wisconsin Heavy Artillery during the Civil War.
(Courtesy of the National Archives)