

## **John Bachelder: How the Visionary Helped Preserve Gettysburg's History**

*John Bachelder's consummate skills as an artist, his profession during the war, are evident in this aerial map he crafted of the expansive Gettysburg-area landscape as it looked at the time of the battle.*

Scott Hartwig, HistoryNet, July 2021

John Bachelder worked tirelessly to commemorate the July 1863 battle Major General Henry Slocum, who commanded the Union 12th Corps at Gettysburg, called "Colonel" John Bachelder "a gentleman who knows more about this battle and battlefield...than any man living or than any man who ever did live. He can tell more of what I did there than I can tell myself." Slocum was not alone in that sentiment. Although Bachelder did not fight at Gettysburg or even in the war, and the "Colonel" title was purely honorary, countless veterans of the battle freely admitted he was perhaps the single most important person in preserving and shaping the battlefield as we know it today.

Bachelder was 37 years old in June 1863, a New Hampshire resident earning his living principally as an artist. With a keen interest in history, he had hoped to write a definitive account of the Battle of Bunker Hill until discovering how poorly documented that battle was. In the spring of 1862, he accompanied the Army of the Potomac on the Virginia Peninsula as a correspondent, hoping to document the army in art and be on hand to collect material for a history of what he anticipated would be the decisive struggle of the war. When the Peninsula Campaign proved a Union failure, he

returned to New Hampshire; however, he asked his army friends to "give me early intelligence of any important movements looking to a decisive engagement."

Learning of the fighting at Gettysburg, Bachelder hurried south and arrived on the field about July 5. He spent the next 84 days there, sketching the field and interviewing wounded from both armies. That fall he traveled to the Army of the Potomac's camp in Brandy Station, Va., and spent weeks interviewing officers and men from every regiment that had been in the battle. He also corresponded with officers from the 11th and 12th Corps, now fighting in Tennessee. Returning to New Hampshire armed with his extensive research, Bachelder completed a remarkable 3-D (aerial perspective) map of the three-day battle that was both a work of art and history. The position of every regiment and battery during the three days of battle were mapped with considerable accuracy. In those days, army officers could endorse commercial products, and Bachelder's map was published with the endorsement of every major officer of the Army of the Potomac, including its commander, Maj. Gen. George G. Meade.

In August 1869, Bachelder arranged a meeting of 123 former officers (120 Union, three Confederate) to mark positions of units on the battlefield. Brevet Maj. Gen. Alexander Webb, a Union brigade commander at the battle, was initially suspicious of Bachelder's motives but soon discovered a sincerity and purpose in Bachelder that caused his misgivings to vanish.

Throughout the next two decades, Bachelder regularly organized meetings of veterans

and continued to conduct extensive correspondence with many of them. Some former Confederates remained wary, however, convinced he sought their input only to further glorify the Federal victory. But as he had done in Webb's case, Bachelder wore them down with his sincerity of purpose. Major General James Kemper, for example, had refused to correspond with Bachelder in 1865 but, 20 years later, would write the *New Englander*, "I very cheerfully give you my personal recollections."

In 1879, a group of Union veterans took control of the local Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association, which had been formed in late 1863, and dramatically altered the organization's management philosophy, allowing Bachelder to assume an even greater role. More land was acquired and avenues were opened up along the Union line of battle to make the battlefield more accessible. Union veterans' groups were encouraged to erect monuments marking where they fought and what they had done.

Bachelder was named the GBMA's superintendent of monuments, tablets, and legends in 1883—tasked with determining a monument's location and approving its inscription and design, as well as the material with which it was made.

In his fourth year as superintendent, Bachelder approved the placement of the 15th, 19th, and 20th Massachusetts monuments near the now-famous Copse of Trees on Cemetery Ridge, but grew concerned that as other units erected their monuments, inevitable clustering at various locations would "have a tendency to mislead

the public in the future rather than illustrate the battle." He proposed the GBMA adopt a line of battle policy toward monument placement, meaning regimental monuments would go where the unit stood in the army's general line of battle for its principal part of the engagement. Advance position markers could then be erected at positions to which the unit had moved.

Although plenty of controversies and some placement errors resulted, in general Bachelder's policy worked as intended for battlefield visitors.

In 1873, Bachelder published the first guidebook encouraging tourism to the battlefield. In subsequent years, he produced detailed maps on each day of the battle and another series on the July 3 cavalry battle east of town. The government paid Bachelder \$50,000 to write an official history of the battle, but the 2,550-page volume he produced proved a major disappointment and was not published until the 1990s. Deciding against an interpretive history, Bachelder merely assembled a collection of both armies' after-action reports. Why he chose not to take advantage of the unpublished material he had collected is unknown. One possibility is he feared that by weighing in on Gettysburg's controversies he might alienate veterans he needed to complete his quest: a national park that included lines of battle the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia had held.

He lobbied veterans and Congress to build support for such a park, and also succeeded in 1892 in erecting the High Water Mark Monument on Cemetery Ridge, where Pickett's Charge had been repulsed—still

considered one of the battlefield's most iconic monuments.

Bachelder died in 1894, almost a year before his vision of a national park at Gettysburg became a reality. As the years passed, he became largely forgotten by all except the battle's most serious students. But his presence lingers throughout, for when you visit Gettysburg National Military Park you are gazing upon Bachelder's vision. No single individual did more to document the battle or shape how the field evolved and continues to be remembered.

Scott Hartwig writes from the crossroads of Gettysburg.

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### **General Lee's Pet Chicken**

Norman Dasinger, Jr., June 28, 2021  
[blueandgrayeducation.org](http://blueandgrayeducation.org)



*Perhaps a Nellie descendant? | courtesy of John Towner (Unsplash)*

In 1862, Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee's large army on a daily basis imported all kinds of foodstuffs. One day, a shipment of chickens arrived by rail designated for John Bell Hood's Texas Brigade. The birds arrived alive, but before each could be processed one smart black hen, knowing, perhaps, what awaited her, took refuge in a

tent where the flap had been left open.

Hiding under a cot, she laid an egg and sat on it. It was General Lee's tent!

Lee named her "Nellie." No doubt her presence was a stress reliever for the army commander, and since Lee had been a pet lover since he was a boy, she probably reminded him of home or happier days. Also, perhaps, she became a good luck charm that he could rely on during days of war. She had a regular nesting spot in one of the baggage wagons that followed the Army of Northern Virginia. Each day, if possible, she wandered the camp, but usually finished her trip back at Lee's tent and under his cot. After the battle of Gettysburg, Nellie was missing. A mad search was organized, and she was found sitting in an ambulance atop an egg.

Then on May 4, 1864, General Lee's butler planned for a gathering of officers and was preparing to serve pancakes and lemonade. At the last minute he decided to add some chicken to the menu. Lee questioned the cook about the presence of roasted chicken on the table. "Just where had such a plump little chicken come from? Surely not from foraging!" he remarked. William admitted to the discouraging act, and the general was sad but countered by asking, "What are we going to do for eggs?"

Today there is a national egg company from New Hampshire called "Nellie's Free Range." I wonder if they took the name as a tribute to Lee's bird companion?

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### **'What is Juneteenth?': The History of America's Newest Federal Holiday**



*An African American band plays at Juneteenth Day celebration in Austin, Texas, 1900. (University of North Texas Libraries)*

#### HistoryNet

On Thursday, June 17, President Joe Biden signed legislation officially establishing Juneteenth as a federal holiday commemorating the end of slavery. Dubbed Juneteenth, a combination of the words “June” and “nineteenth,” the day was originally celebrated by African Americans in Galveston, Texas, shortly after the Civil War.

Official news ordering the freeing of slaves had arrived late in the Lone Star state, just two months after the surrender of General Robert E. Lee and two years after President Abraham Lincoln enacted the Emancipation Proclamation into law on January 1, 1863. While the proclamation had already outlawed slavery, Texas continued its use of slaves and, due to its remoteness, was largely shielded from the presence Union troops stationed throughout the South who were tasked with enforcing the new mandate.

On June 19, 1865, Union army General Gordon Granger arrived in Texas with federal troops in tow to deliver the announcement titled General Order No. 3. The order stated that “The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free.” Those words would release approximately a quarter of a million Blacks living in the state.

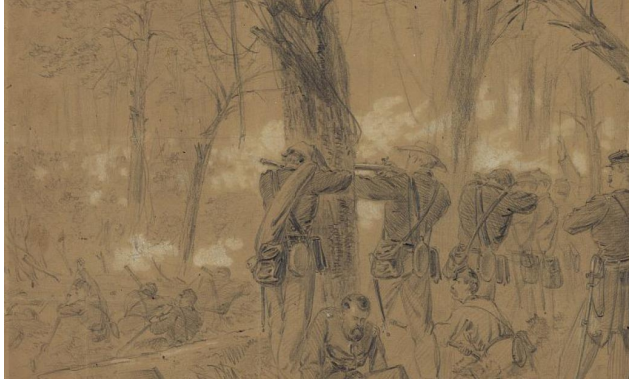
The following year, freedmen gathered to celebrate the anniversary of Granger’s announcement. Also known as Jubilee Day and Emancipation Day, the holiday continued to be celebrated largely in Texas by African Americans, eventually spreading as Blacks migrated to new areas. Many observed the day with joyful gatherings, cookouts, parties and other festivities. On January 1, 1980, Texas became the first state to make Juneteenth an official holiday, and a handful of other states would follow in later years.

Juneteenth marks the 11th federal holiday established by the U.S. government after Martin Luther King Jr. Day in 1983. On Thursday, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management announced that the holiday will be observed on Friday since Juneteenth falls on a Saturday this year.

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### **10 Facts: Glendale June 30, 1862**

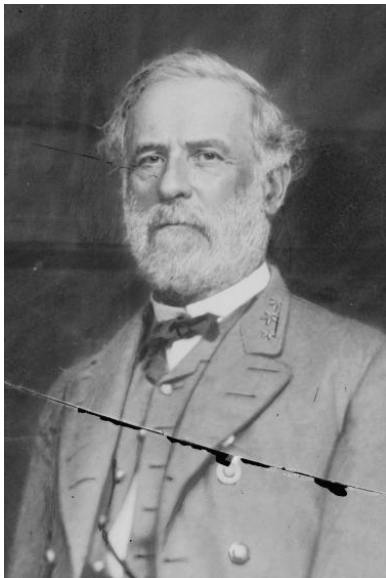
American Battlefield Trust



*Alfred Waud made this sketch of Kearny's sector of the confused and deadly battlefield. Library of Congress*

**The Battle of Glendale was marked by uncommon valor but marred by command mistakes that would have long-lasting repercussions. Please consider these 10 facts in order to expand your knowledge of this pivotal struggle on the Virginia Peninsula.**

Fact #1: The Battle of Glendale was the fifth battle of the Seven Days' Battles.



*Robert E. Lee Library of Congress*

On June 26, 1862, after an inexorable advance across the Virginia Peninsula, the Union Army of the Potomac was less than a day's march away from the Confederate capital of Richmond.

Then, for four days, the Confederates hurled themselves at successive Union positions in a series of deadly close-quarters battles in the swampy forests around Richmond. The June 27 battle of Gaines' Mill severed Union commander General George McClellan's line of communications with Washington, prompting him to order a full-scale retreat towards Harrison's Landing on the James River. On June 30, Robert E. Lee, newly placed in command of the Confederate army, launched his next major attack at Glendale.

Fact #2: Glendale was Robert E. Lee's best chance to seriously damage the Union army during the Seven Days.

To reach Harrison's Landing, two-thirds of the Union army, some 62,000 men, would have to pass through the crossroads hamlet of Glendale on June 30. Robert E. Lee was poised to strike at that crossroads with 71,000 Confederates. He planned to fight a battle in which portions of his army would pin down Union forces north and south of the crossroads while his main attack broke through the weakened center.

The Union units around Glendale were disorganized and demoralized. They fought on June 30 with more courage than cohesion. The breakdown of Lee's complex battle plan, as happened so often during the Seven Days, led to a violent struggle that severely bloodied the Federals but failed to prevent their retreat. Had Lee seized the crossroads, the Union army would have been split in half, exposed in tangled enemy country, and in danger of complete destruction. His failure left the Union escape largely assured.

Fact #3: Union General George B. McClellan spent the battle aboard the gunboat U.S.S. Galena.

George B. McClellan, or “Little Mac,” had come to the Virginia Peninsula hoping to fight an American Waterloo, a huge and war-ending battle in which he would be the hero. The immense casualties of the engagements so far, however, and the reversal of the campaign that had held such promise just days earlier, left him thoroughly demoralized. On June 30, the Union army was strung out on the narrow roads leading to Harrison’s Landing with each corps commander managing his own withdrawal and planning his own battle. Everyone in the clearing around the hamlet knew that “the whole woods were full of rebels.”

Where was McClellan? He had ridden ahead of the army to board the gunboat U.S.S. Galena on the James River. The Galena then steamed upriver while McClellan ate dinner and drank wine.

The Union army at Glendale suffered greatly from not having a central figure in command. Since McClellan failed to plan or supervise the army’s retreat, the units around Glendale were jumbled together from different commands without the necessary command presence to respond effectively to enemy movements. The Union men deployed in a jagged, disjointed line, the flank of one unit not joined smoothly to the flank of another, resulting in an area full of “bite-sized” portions of the army. When Lee’s men emerged from the woods, these isolated units would be dangerously exposed, demanding either a breakneck withdrawal or immediate support.

Fact #4: More than one-third of the Confederate army failed to reach the Glendale battlefield.



*The White Oak Swamp today.*

Lee’s plan for June 30 called for Stonewall Jackson, just returned from an exhausting but triumphant campaign in the Shenandoah Valley, to open the battle by moving his force against the Federal right flank, protected by men of General William B. Franklin’s Sixth Corps, across the White Oak Swamp. This attack was not designed to gain ground, but rather to keep men and attention fixed on that sector of the field while the main effort came against the Union center. Instead, finding the swamp largely impassable and covered by enemy artillery, Jackson chose not to advance his men. It became clear to his subordinates that the pious Virginian was all but insensible with fatigue. By failing to sufficiently threaten his objective, Union officers in the area were able to dispatch nearly 12,000 soldiers to reinforce the center. That night, Jackson fell asleep while chewing his dinner.

The timid General Benjamin Huger (pronounced "You-Jee") was slated to take the opening shot at the Union center but was stymied by a roadblock of felled trees along his avenue of approach. Huger elected to cut a new road through the trees rather than detail men to remove the roadblock. General Theophilus Holmes, moving against the extreme Union left at Malvern Hill, ended up on the losing end of an artillery duel and chose not to move his infantry forward. Though they were not a major factor in Lee's plan, General John B. Magruder's troops were blocked by Holmes immobile force and, thus, unable to participate in the battle.

These failures by Lee's generals left most of the Union force uncommitted and able to transfer reinforcements to threatened sectors. With considerable frustration, Lee sent General James Longstreet's division directly toward the Glendale crossroads shortly before 5:00 p.m. Although Lee had planned to bring more than 70,000 men to battle at Glendale, 25,000 were neutralized by failures amongst the Confederate leadership.

Fact #5: The Pennsylvania Reserves—exhausted from previous battles—found themselves at the center of the action.

Pennsylvania Reserves, a Union infantry division commanded by General George McCall, had received their first introduction to pitched combat at the June 26 Battle of Mechanicsville, where they were forced to withdraw. On June 27, at Gaines' Mill, they were dislodged by a grueling day of Confederate attacks and also suffered the capture of one of their best general officers, John Reynolds. Now, at Glendale, the weary Pennsylvanians were in the center of the Union battle line, staring into the dense woods to the west that concealed the Confederate army.



*Hand-to-hand fighting erupted as the Reserves rushed to reclaim captured cannons on the front line. Courtesy Don Troiani, Historical Art Prints*

Around 5:00 p.m., Longstreet's division swept out of the trees with a rebel yell. General James Kemper's Virginia brigade, drove in the left-most portion of the Pennsylvanian's skirmishers, captured Captain Otto Diederichs's battery, seized the Whitlock farmhouse, and turned the Pennsylvanians' left flank. Another Confederate brigade under General Micah Jenkins made a dash for the six cannons of Captain James Cooper's battery in the center of the Union line. Fighting spilled over to the Pennsylvanians' right flank, held by General George Meade's brigade, and Captain Alanson Randol's six-gun battery. The Pennsylvanians rushed to defend their guns, becoming embroiled in a close range firefight which one witness described as involving "more actual bayonet, & butt of gun, melee fighting than any other occasion I know of in the war."

Fierce hand-to-hand fighting swept back and forth across the field until both sides withdrew, bloodied and exhausted, into their respective wood lines. The guns were abandoned. Meade was shot twice. George McCall was captured. Both sides rushed reinforcements to the vortex at the center.

Fact #6: Seventeen-year-old Private Benjamin Levy of the 1st New York Infantry won the Medal of Honor at the Glendale crossroads.

Benjamin Levy, a native of New York City, had enlisted in the Union army at the age of sixteen. Still technically ineligible, though the rule was commonly ignored, Levy was assigned to the musician corps of the 1st New York Infantry as a drummer boy.

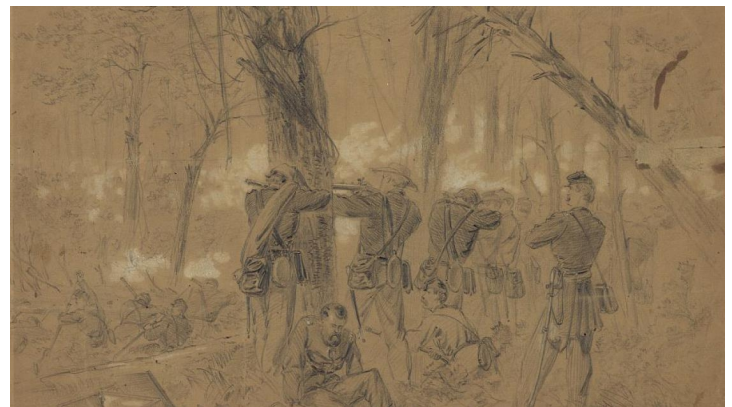
On June 30, 1862, he was in a tent just north and east of the Glendale crossroads. As the roar of musketry from the first line started to reach a crescendo, Levy chose to act. Leaving behind his drum and borrowing a sick comrade's musket, the young soldier rushed to join the regimental battle line as it moved into the twilight struggle at the Glendale crossroads. Confederate bullets quickly decimated the regiment's color guard, causing the New Yorkers to waver. Seeing the crisis unfold, Levy moved to the front of the formation and raised the battle flags once again. The line steadied around the former drummer boy and, with the help of reinforcements, the Confederates were eventually repulsed. Levy is the first person of documented Jewish faith to win the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Fact #7: Union general Phil Kearny was nearly shot or captured when he wandered into a Confederate skirmish line at Glendale.

Phil Kearny, a one-armed Army regular and one of the most capable generals in the Army of the Potomac, directed the Union fight north of the Glendale crossroads. The terrain in the sector was tangled and densely forested. During a lull in the battle, Kearny ventured too far while conducting reconnaissance in the Confederate tree line. This became evident when a young officer approached him, asking "What shall I do

next, sir?" Kearny recognized the officer as a Confederate, but the recognition was apparently not mutual. Looking around, Kearny saw that the woods were full of enemy skirmishers.

"Do, damn you, why do what you have always been told to do!" Kearny snapped back. The officer, mortified to have received such condemnation from a superior, did not question Kearny further as the quick-thinking New Jerseyan slipped back to his own lines.



*Alfred Waud made this sketch of Kearny's sector of the confused and deadly battlefield. Library of Congress*

After the Seven Days' Battles came to an end, Washington was abuzz with rumor that Kearny would be tapped to replace McClellan. The whisperers were silenced, however, on September 1, 1862, when Kearny was shot dead at the Battle of Chantilly when a similar reconnaissance encounter went awry.

Fact #8: Federal reinforcements saved the Army of Potomac from disaster.

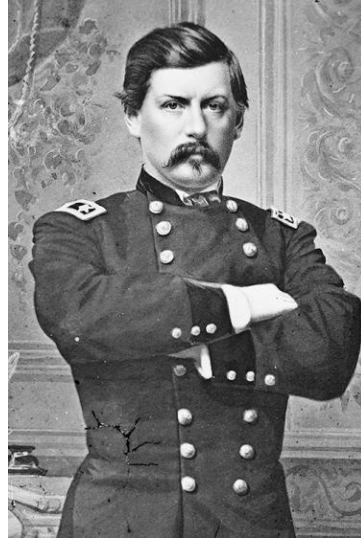
The savagery of the opening battle for the Glendale crossroads left both sides shaken



and exhausted. With the issue very much in doubt, Union and Confederate reinforcements hurried toward the fray. More Confederates arrived first, in a formidable second line composed of some 10,000 men from the Longstreet's and A.P. Hill's divisions. Sweeping into the battered Union elements left over from the first phase of the battle, the Southerners were on the verge of a breakthrough when fresh Union troops began to arrive.

These were men redeployed from the sectors left unthreatened by Benjamin Huger and Stonewall Jackson, more than 12,000 in all. They arrived at the crossroads at the critical moment in the battle and refilled the fractured Union line. The Confederate effort stalled as the weary attackers went to ground and exchanged volleys in the waning light. Engulfing darkness put an end to the fighting soon afterwards. Despite their early success, the Confederates had been prevented from interdicting the vital crossroads by the timely shift of reinforcements that, if Lee's plan had worked, would have been pinned down by Jackson and Huger on the flanks.

Fact #9: The missed opportunities at Glendale led to a bloody frontal assault at the Battle of Malvern Hill the next day.



*George B. McClellan Library of Congress*

With the roads secure, Union troops continued to retreat towards Harrison's Landing. The landing was covered from the west and north by Malvern Hill, a commanding position where McClellan placed most of his army on July 1. With one last chance to decisively defeat their northern foes, the Confederate infantry charged the heights and broke up violently against the Union line.

If the Battle of Glendale had gone differently, perhaps more according to plan, the fruitless charges into massed artillery need not have happened. Writing after the war, Confederate artillery chief Edward Porter Alexander declared that "on two occasions in the four years, we were within reach of military successes so great that we might have hoped to end the war with our independence. ... The first was at Bull Run [in] July 1861 ... This [second] chance of June 30, 1862 impresses me as the best of all."

Fact #10: The Civil War Trust has spearheaded the preservation of hundreds of acres at the Glendale battlefield.

In the words of historian Bobby Krick, "the preservation success at Glendale defies comparison." Starting from approximately one acre of preserved land, the Civil War Trust and its members have saved almost the entirety of the battlefield, encompassing most of the major areas of fighting. This work is supplemented by hundreds more contiguous acres preserved by the Civil War Trust at Malvern Hill.

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## The Women Who Fought in the Civil War

**Hundreds of women concealed their identities so they could battle alongside their Union and Confederate counterparts**



*One of the best-documented female soldiers is Sarah Edmonds. She was a Union soldier and worked during the Civil War as a nurse. (Bettmann / Corbis)*

By Jess Righthand  
SMITHSONIANMAG.COM  
APRIL 7, 2011

Even though women weren't legally allowed to fight in the Civil War, it is estimated that somewhere around 400 women disguised themselves as men and went to war, sometimes without anyone ever discovering their true identities.

Bonnie Tsui is the author of *She Went to the Field: Women Soldiers in the Civil War*,

which tells the stories of some of these women. I spoke with the San Francisco-based writer about her research into the seldom-acknowledged participation of women in the Civil War.

### Why weren't women allowed to fight in the Civil War?

At the time, women weren't perceived as equals by any stretch of the imagination. It was the Victorian era and women were mostly confined to the domestic sphere. Both the Union and Confederate armies actually forbade the enlistment of women. I think it was during the Revolutionary War that they established women as nurses because they needed help on the front when soldiers were injured. But women weren't allowed to serve in combat. Of course, women did disguise themselves and enlist as men. There is evidence that they also did so during the Revolutionary War.

### How did they do it?

Honestly, the lore is that the physical exams were not rigorous at all. If you had enough teeth in your head and could hold a musket, you were fine. The funny thing is, in this scenario, a lot of women didn't seem any less manly than, for example, the teenage boys who were enlisting. At the time, I believe the Union had an official cutoff age of 18 for soldiers, but that was often flouted and people often lied. They had a lot of young guys and their voices hadn't changed and their faces were smooth. The Confederacy never actually established an age requirement. So [women] bound their breasts if they had to, and just kind of layered on clothes, wore loose clothing, cut their hair short and rubbed dirt on their faces.

They also kind of kept to themselves. The evidence that survived often describes them as aloof. Keeping to themselves certainly helped maintain the secret.

### **When the women were found out, did it provoke an uproar?**

Even in the cases where these women were found out as soldiers, there does not actually seem to be much uproar. More or less, they were just sent home. The situations in which they were found out were often medical conditions; they were injured, or they got sick from dysentery or chronic diarrhea. Disease killed many more soldiers than bullets did. You're sitting in camps among all these people who are in close quarters. There wasn't a lot of knowledge then about bacterial infection and particularly in close quarters there wasn't much chance to prevent it.

There is some documentation that shows that some soldiers that were discovered as women were briefly imprisoned. In the letter of one [female disguised as a male] prison guard, it said that there were three [other] women in the prison, one of whom was a major in the Union Army. She had gone to battle with her fellow men and was jailed because she was a woman. It's really interesting hearing about her being a woman, disguised as a man, standing as a prison guard for a woman imprisoned for doing the same thing.

### **What was the motivation on the part of the women you studied? Did it seem pretty much the same as the men?**

It absolutely did. I think by all accounts, the women seemed honestly to want to fight in

the war for the same reasons as men, so that would range from patriotism, to supporting their respective causes, for adventure, to be able to leave home, and to earn money. Some of the personal writings that survive show that they were also running away from family lives that were really unsatisfying. You can imagine that perhaps they felt trapped at home or weren't able to marry and felt that they were financial burdens to their families. If you profile the substantiated cases of these women, they were young and often poor and from farming families, and that is the exact profile of the typical male volunteer. If you think about that, girls growing up on a farm would have been accustomed to physical labor. Maybe they even would have worn boys' clothing to do farm chores. But then there are also some cases in which women follow their husbands or a brother into battle, and so there are at least a couple of those cases in which female soldiers were on record of enlisting with their relative.

### **What duties did the women perform?**

They did everything that men did. They worked as scouts, spies, prison guards, cooks, nurses and they fought in combat. One of the best-documented female soldiers is Sarah Edmonds—her alias was Frank Thompson. She was a Union soldier, and she worked for a long time during the war as a nurse. You often can't really draw a delineation between "civilian workers" and battle, because these people had to be in battle, tending to soldiers. They were often on the field or nearby trying to get to the wounded, so you could argue that it was just as dangerous for them to work as nurses as to be actively shooting and emptying gunfire.

**What is another one of your favorite stories from your research?**

One of my favorite stories of the Civil War era is of Jennie Hodgers, and she fought as Albert Cashier. She enlisted in Illinois and she fought the entire Civil War without being discovered and ended up living out the rest of her life as a man for another fifty years. She even ended up receiving a military pension and living at the sailors' and soldiers' home in Illinois as a veteran. The staff at the home kept her secret for quite sometime, even after they discovered that she was a woman.

Even though it seems pretty outstanding that women were disguising themselves as men and going off to fight, it seems like actually they were accepted amongst their peers. This kind of loyalty to your fellow soldier in battle did in certain cases transcend gender. It's pretty amazing; there was a lot of respect.