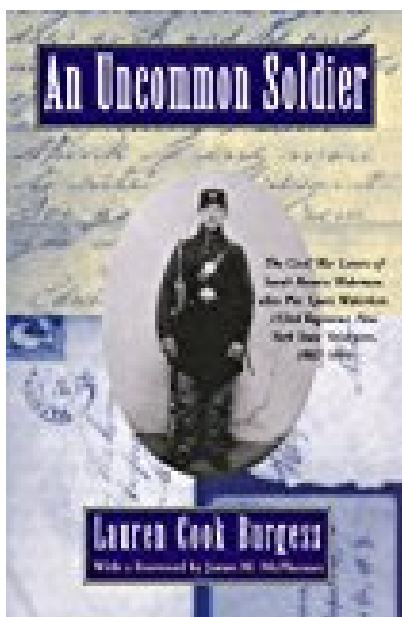


An Uncommon Soldier The Civil War Letters of Sarah Rosetta Wakeman alias Pvt. Lyons Wakeman 153rd Regiment New York State Volunteers 1862-1864



BOOK DETAILS

- Author : Sarah Rosetta Wakeman
- Pages : 110 Pages
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BOOK SYNOPSIS

"I dont know how long before i shall have to go into the field of battle. For my part i dont care. I dont feel afraid to go. I dont believe there are any Rebels bullet made for me yet."--Pvt. Lyons Wakeman. Similar sentiments were expressed by tens of thousands of Civil War soldiers in their diaries and in their letters to loved ones at home. What transforms the letters of Pvt. Lyons Wakeman from merely interesting reading into a unique and fascinating addition to Civil War literature is who wrote them--for Private Wakeman was not what "he" seemed to be. The five-foot tall soldiers true identity was that of a simple young farm girl from central New York state named Sarah Rosetta Wakeman. Her letters, the only such correspondence known to exist, provide a rare glimpse of what life was like for a woman fighting as a common soldier in the Civil War under the guise of a man. Written shortly after she left home to pursue her fortune in 1862, Rosettas letters over the next two years tell of army life in the defences of Washington, D.C. and on the march and in battle during the 1864 Louisiana Red River Campaign. She wrote frequently to her family in Afton, NY, and her letters contain feelings and observations like those expressed by the majority of her fellow soldiers. We read of her determination to perform honorably the duty required of a soldier, the trials of hard marching and combat, her pride in being able to "drill just as well as any man" in her regiment, and her eventual fatalistic attitude toward military service, and her frequent expressions of faith in God and the afterlife. Although Rosetta did not survive the war, her letters remain as an singular record of female military life in the ranks, a phenomenon largely ignored by historians and researchers. Private Wakeman was not alone in embarking on her strange adventure. Hundreds of women, from both the North and South, disguised themselves as men and enlisted in the armies of our nations bloodiest war. The experiences of these women during the Civil War are just beginning to be recognized as elemental to understanding the life of this country during those turbulent times. Little is known about these women precisely because they enlisted and served in constant secrecy, fearful of revealing their true identities. This unique collection of letters offers a firsthand look at the personality and character of a woman who defied convention to take a mans place in the Union army.

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