

New Hampshire in the Civil War

New Hampshire Nurses in the Civil War

Created by New Hampshire in the Civil War workshop participants and the New Hampshire Historical Society, 2014–15

Topic Women and Nursing Practices during the Civil War

Level Middle School and High School

ABSTRACT / SUMMARY

Prior to the Civil War professional medical care and treatment of the sick and wounded was the responsibility of men. Women were able to nurse their families within their own homes but were prevented from serving as nurses in hospitals. During the Civil War men were needed on the battlefields, opening the opportunity for women to work as nurses in military and battlefield hospitals.

Several women from New Hampshire served as nurses during the Civil War. Their letters and journals shed light on their experiences treating the sick and wounded, and their sometimes tense interactions with the male doctors and surgeons. The letters contain details of the horrors of war, the wounds received by the soldiers, and the women's views on the importance of their positions.

QUESTIONS / TASKS

What was it like to work as a woman tending the injured, wounded, and ill under the direction of male doctors and surgeons during the Civil War?

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Learn to use primary sources and secondary sources to answer research questions
- Discover the experiences of New Hampshire women serving as nurses during the Civil War

SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES

1. Research the lives of female nurses during the Civil War.
2. Invent a fictional woman from the town or city where you live in New Hampshire. Give her a name that was common in the Civil War era.
3. In the persona of your invented character, write a journal including historically accurate details telling of at least four days of her experiences as a nurse. Refer to a Civil War timeline and maps so you can include mention of battles and other events taking place at the time you are writing.
4. Go back and fact-check to make sure you have been accurate and have not included any details from our own time that would not have been a part of your character's experience.

Alternative assignment: Students can dress in period costume and read their journal or an actual nurse's journal in persona to the class.

ASSESSMENTS

The journal will comprise historically accurate and believable details consistent with medical treatment and social expectations of the time.

PROJECT DURATION

In-Class Time: 2 class periods

Out-of-Class Time: 6 hours or more

RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT THE NEW HAMPSHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Archives and Special Collections:

Adeline Chadburne Papers, 1862–1863	1961.012 (m)
Harriet Patience Dame Papers, 1866–1897	1995.002 (m)
Dame Family Papers, 1824–1951	1986.010 (m)
Letter from James M. Hawks and Esther H. Hawks, 1861	1995.128 (m)
Sarah Low Papers, 1844–1965	1965.010
Frost-Sawyer Collection: Sarah Low	1986.041

Library Collections:

Edmonds, S. Emma E. <i>Nurse and Spy in the Union Army</i> . Hartford: W. S. Williams & Company, 1865.	973.78 E24
Hawks, Esther Hill. <i>A Woman Doctor's Civil War: Esther Hill Hawk's Diary</i> . Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1984.	973.775 H395w
Lawler, Lee Anne Rogers. <i>"Dear" Aunt Harriet: The Story of Harriet Patience Dame, Civil War Nurse</i> . McHenry, IL: LA.R. Lawler, 2001.	920 D157h
Low, Sarah, <i>Dover's Civil War Nurse</i> . Dover: Northern Colonists Historical Society, 1962.	920 L912
Documents relating to Civil War Service of and Pension for Harriet P. Dame of Concord, NH	973.781 D157

Museum Collections:

Bandages and cloth fragments	1983.002.39
Civil War Reunion materials, haversack and utensils, cartridge bag	1991.044.021-e
Cliffburne Hospital in Washington, DC, lithograph	1967.027.93
Commemorative medals and ribbons worn by Harriet Dame	2013.019
Esther H. Hawks, engraving	2010.501.0526
Nurses' station at military hospital, painting	2013.012.02
Portable writing desk	2013.012.01

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Re: Dr. Esther Hill Hawks from New Hampshire, worked as a female doctor

"Esther Jane Hill Hawks," Find A Grave, n.d. Accessed July 16, 2015.

<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=26563739>

Re: Sarah Low, nurse from Dover, NH, worked briefly at Union Hotel Hospital, then Armory Square

Northern Colonists Historical Society. "Sarah Low: Civil War Nurse from Dover," Dover Public Library, n.d. Accessed July 15, 2015. http://www.dover.lib.nh.us/DoverHistory/sarah_low.htm

“More Highlights from the Recent Sarah Low Acquisition,” New Hampshire Historical Society, n.d. Accessed July 15, 2015.

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs114/1103155922201/archive/1114622173121.html>

Re: Hannah Ropes, matron at Union Hotel Hospital with Sarah Low. Ropes was born in Maine and married a New Hampshire school teacher, who left the family.

Granstra, Pat. “Hannah Ropes: The Other Woman behind ‘Little Women,’” *Civil War Primer*, 2012. Accessed July 15, 2015. <http://www.civilwarprimer.com/2012/03/hannah-ropes-the-other-woman-behind-little-women/>

“Hannah A. Ropes, 1809–1863,” American Association for the History of Nursing, n.d. Accessed July 15, 2015. <http://www.aahn.org/gravesites/ropes.html>

MacLean, Maggie. “Hannah Ropes,” *Civil War Women*, 2010. Accessed July 15, 2015.

<http://civilwarwomenblog.com/hannah-ropes/>

Re: Armory Square Hospital

“Armory Square Hospital was a military hospital that sprang up in Washington, DC, during the Civil War, from 1862–1865, which recorded unprecedented numbers of soldier casualties and deaths,” History Engine, n.d. Accessed July 15, 2015.

<http://historyengine.richmond.edu/episodes/view/5393>

Crouch, Tom. “On This Spot,” AirSpaceBlog: Behind the Scenes at the National Air and Space Museum, 2009. Accessed July 15, 2015. <http://blog.nasm.si.edu/aviation/on-this-spot/>

Re: Louisa May Alcott, from Concord, MA, author of Hospital Sketches and Little Women. Wrote about nursing experiences at Union Hotel Hospital in Washington, DC

Alcott, Louisa May. *Hospital Sketches*. Boston: James Redpath Publisher, 1863. Accessed July 15, 2015. <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/alcott/sketches/sketches.html>

“Louisa’s Civil War,” *Louisa May Alcott: The Woman Behind Little Women*, n.d. Accessed July 15, 2015. <http://www.alcottfilm.com/the-book/from-the-book/excerpt-from-chapter-eleven/>

“Scenes from the Hurly Burly Hotel: Louisa May Alcott’s Civil War,” *O Say Can You See? Stories from the National Museum of American History*, 2011. Accessed July 15, 2015.

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/blog/2011/07/scenes-from-the-hurly-burly-hotel-louisa-may-alcotts-civil-war.html>

Re: Harriet P. Dame, nurse from Concord, NH

“Harriet Patience Dame and the 2nd NH Regiment,” Seacoastonline.com, 2012. Accessed July 15, 2015.

<http://www.seacoastonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20120525/NEWS/205250377/-1/NEWSMAP>

“Harriet Patience Dame (1815–1900) 2002 Inductee,” American Nurses Association: Nursing World, n.d. Accessed July 16, 2015. <http://www.nursingworld.org/HarrietPatienceDame>

“Harriet P. Dame Headstone,” My Old Dead Relatives, n.d. Accessed July 16, 2015.

<http://www.olddeadrelatives.com/showmedia.php?mediaID=279>

“Harriet Patience Dame,” New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources: Publications, Likenesses of New Hampshire War Heroes and Personages in the Collections of the New Hampshire State House and State Library, 2007. Accessed July 16, 2015.

<http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/publications/warheroes/dameh.html>

Haynes, Martin A. *Second Regiment NH Volunteer Infantry, War of the Rebellion, 1861–1865*. Lakeport, NH, 1896. Accessed July 15, 2015

<http://belmontnh.homestead.com/WarFiles/WarofRebellion2ndNHVolunteerC17-C19.pdf>

see pp. 296–302 for information re: Harriet Dame

Rimkunas, Barbara. “Harriet Patience Dame and the 2nd New Hampshire Regiment,” Exeter Historical Society, 2012. Accessed July 16, 2015.

<http://exeterhistory.blogspot.com/2012/05/harriet-patience-dame-and-2nd-new.html>

Re: Civil War nurses and women in general

Brumgardt, John R., ed. *Civil War Nurse: The Diary and Letters of Hannah Ropes*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1980.

Schultz, Jane E. “Ten Common Myths about Women in the Civil War and How to Dispel Them,” George Mason University: History News Network, n.d. Accessed July 16, 2015.

<http://hnn.us/article/52894>

“‘So Much Need of Service’ The Diary of a Civil War Nurse,” Smithsonian: Albert H. Small Documents Gallery, 2011. Accessed July 16, 2015.

http://americanhistory.si.edu/documentsgallery/exhibitions/nursing_1.html

Smithsonian online exhibit focusing on Amanda Akin from Quaker Hill, NY, who worked as a nurse at the Armory Square Hospital in Washington, DC during the Civil War.

“The Civil War in Four Minutes: Women,” Civil War Trust, 2014.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufdcQVVFkbc>

“The Civil War in Four Minutes: Civil War Medicine,” Civil War Trust, 2014.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDYWP2fz4-E>