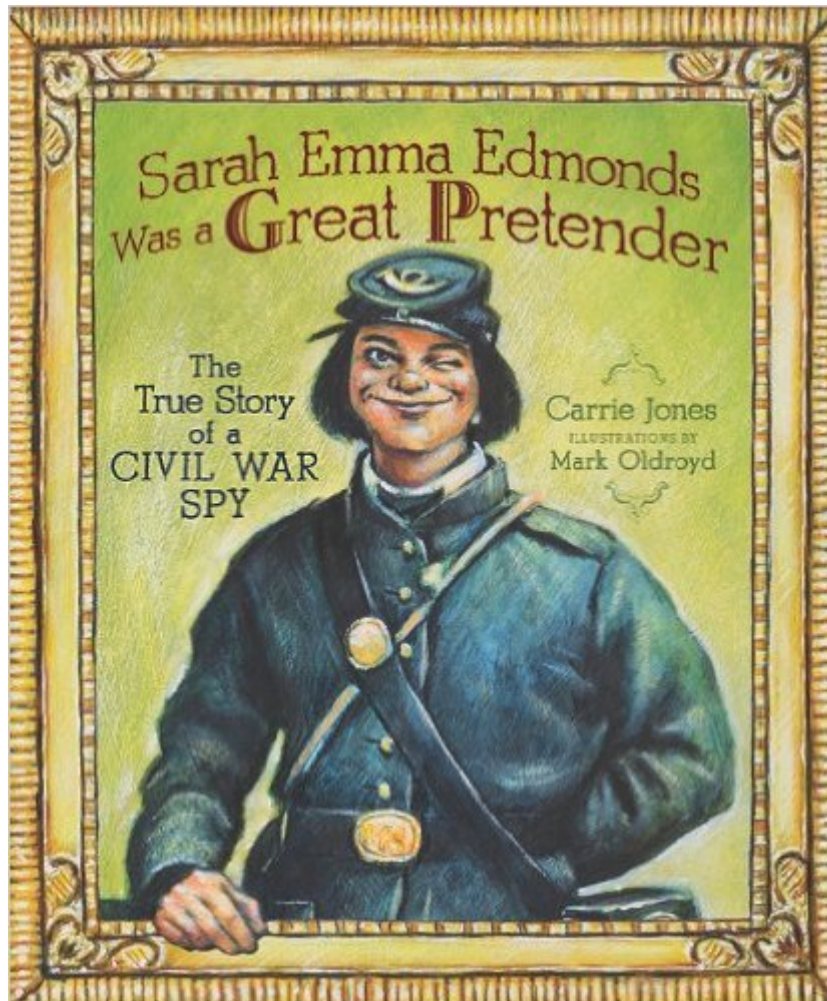


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# Sarah Emma Edmonds Was A Great Pretender: The True Story Of A Civil War Spy (Carolrhoda Picture Books)



## Synopsis

This is a picture book biography of Sarah Emma Edmonds, a Canadian-born woman who served as a spy in the Union Army during the Civil War. Edmonds's story has natural appeal. After coming to America, teenage Edmonds posed as a man, eventually lying her way into a post as a male battlefield nurse in the Union Army at age 17. Several times she posed as woman or as a slave (or both) and snuck behind Confederate lines. Since no one in her company knew she was actually a woman, many of her disguises required her to pretend to be a man pretending to be a woman. Eventually, she published her memoirs, was granted a federal pension, and became the only woman granted membership in the Civil War veterans group, the Grand Army of the Republic.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 780L (What's this?)

Series: Carolrhoda Picture Books

Library Binding: 1 pages

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Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 9.5 x 0.5 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (3 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #306,926 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #52 in Â Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > Civil War Era #243 in Â Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Women #553 in Â Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Historical

Age Range: 7 - 10 years

Grade Level: 2 - 5

## Customer Reviews

Sarah Emma wasn't really a boy, but she pretended to be because she wanted to please her father. He was really mean to her and "she thought if she were a boy he might like her." It wasn't going to happen because he was abusive and nothing she could do would ever change the way he felt about her. Sarah was really, really good at pretending and eventually that talent would come in mighty handy, but in the meantime she'd have to put up with that big old accusing finger pointing at her. She knew that being a "pretend boy" would never make him happy so when she was a teenager

she decided to run away. Being a runaway teen from Canada wasn't going to help her eat and so she started selling Bibles. It wasn't safe for women to roam the countryside in the 1850s so she decided to pretend again. This time she "bought men's clothes and cut her hair." Sarah, or Frank Thompson as she was now known, began her new life in the United States. Soon the Civil War began to roil around the country and in 1861 she thought to herself, "What can I do? What part am I to act in this great drama?" She pensively put her hand to her chin and decided that she would try to join the Union only to be rejected for being "too small." There was no doubt she would try again. Finally, when she was able to enlist Sarah became a nurse in the Second Volunteers of the United States Army. They were headed to the South where the fighting was fierce. As Sarah stood outside a tent watching someone being operated on, she once again grew pensive. There was a great need for someone to spy because a Union soldier had just been captured. Sarah was still Frank, but she was also a great pretender. Could she possibly pretend enough to get the job?

Sarah Emma Edmonds Was a Great Pretender: The True Story of a Civil War Spy tells the incredible story of a girl who pretended to be several people, even pretending to be different races! Sarah Emma Edmonds was a Great Pretender opens with Sarah depicted as a boy. Carrie Jones explains Sarah was unhappy about being a boy in 1840's Canada...and so was her father. The story doesn't go into explicit details, only saying "He treated Sarah badly." The use of these statements helps as an excellent framing device for Sarah's "pretending," keeping the story short. Once in the United States, Sarah sold Bibles door-to-door only to find many people weren't buying. Jones puts a little historical context in here, explaining "It was unusual back then for a woman to travel by herself, and people weren't buying a lot of books." So Sarah turned to pretending to be a man. She cut off her hair, dressed more masculine, and referred to herself as Frank Thompson. The result, Jones adds was "she started selling a lot more Bibles." Then came the Civil War. As Shelf Employed blog points out, the war details aren't rehashed for readers in Sarah Emma Edmonds; only brief details are given for Sarah is the heroine here. In 1861, Sarah decides to enlist as Frank Thompson, male nurse. Sarah/Frank volunteered to spy on the Confederacy for the Union, after their spy was captured. This time she became Cuff, a Southern slave and darkened her skin with silver nitrate. While spying, Sarah found out numerous information for the Union, including the fact the Confederacy painted giant logs as cannons! Sarah Emma Edmonds goes on to pretend to be an female Irish peddler named Bridget O'Shea.

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