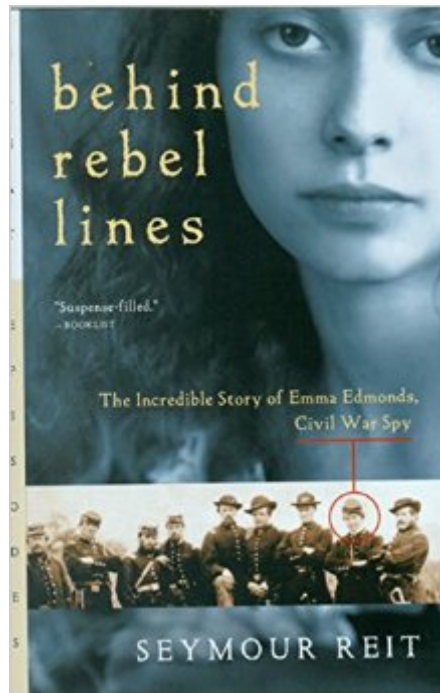


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Behind Rebel Lines: The Incredible Story Of Emma Edmonds, Civil War Spy



Synopsis

In 1861, when war erupted between the States, President Lincoln made an impassioned plea for volunteers. Determined not to remain on the sidelines, Emma Edmonds cropped her hair, donned men's clothing, and enlisted in the Union Army. Posing in turn as a slave, peddler, washerwoman, and fop, Emma became a cunning master of disguise, risking discovery and death at every turn behind Confederate lines.

Book Information

Series: Great Episodes

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Shipping Weight: 0.3 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars See all reviews (88 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #18,931 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #1 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Canada #1 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > Canada #3 in Books > Teens > Education & Reference > History > United States > Colonial & Revolutionary Periods

Age Range: 12 - 14 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

This is a very quick read even for the 9-12 year age group it is intended for. Never-the-less, it is a very exciting and interesting bit of true Civil War drama. It is the story of Sarah Emma Edmonds, or Emma Edmonds as she was known, a young woman, born in Canada, who, disguised as a man, became a soldier, battlefield nurse, spy and detective for the Union army. Emma was sworn into the Union army as Private Franklin Thompson and served bravely and cunningly in many dangerous missions and in many disguises. She was also a devoted and skilled battlefield nurse and tended the wounded of both the Union and the Confederacy with compassion. Her career as a male soldier ended at Vicksburg when she became so ill with malaria that she had to go AWOL in order to escape detection as a female. Her adventures did not stop there. This book is sure to grab the

interest of anyone who picks it up. It is not a great work of writing skill, being very episodic with little to link together the various elements of Emma's courageous life. The dialogue is fabricated, of course, and rather stilted, but the facts here are accurate and taken from Emma's memoirs and other historical documents. At least 400 women disguised as men fought for the North during the Civil War, but Emma's tale of espionage is perhaps the most thrilling. I highly recommend this book to young people as a wonderful introduction to the Civil War. Getting to know the people who fought this tragic and bloody war is a wonderful way to understand this astonishing chapter of American history. This book is definitely a page turner and so all the better for keeping interest high and fostering curiosity and discovery. Don't miss it.

Behind the Lines is an adaptation of the Emma Edmonds story for young adults. Emma Edmonds was a native of Saint John New Brunswick, Canada who left for the United States several years prior to the war. She eventually found her way to Michigan where, following the outbreak of war, she under the alias Franklin Thompson enlisted with the 2nd Michigan Infantry. She served with the unit as an orderly for about a year before she volunteered herself as a spy, and during the course of the next year went on eleven assignments. Not only were her spying activities dangerous, but she always had to remain vigilant among her comrades as well, lest her identity be discovered. This is a very interesting and entertaining bit of history, one that is sure to interest even some of those who insist that history is "bo-ring".

While not a Civil War scholar, or even amateur historian, I do know the Civil War was a turning point in so many ways. Slavery abolished, of course, but also changes in sociology, technology, communications, economics and politics can be traced to that national cataclysm. I've wanted to learn more about the Civil War and want my kids to have a greater perspective than I got in school on the war and it's aftermath. So I was interested to see this slim volume on a woman who joined the army, disguised as a man, and then who went on to become a spy, all while concealing her identity as a woman. Yes, I saw some of the reviews that criticized the book as being a series of discreet adventures rather than completely woven story of Emma Edmonds' life. In my experience, however, the book was perfect for middle schoolers. I could read one adventure at a time to them and each one was described in glowing detail. We were, literally, on the edges of our seats as we read them. Additionally, the book provided enough about Emma's early and later life to give context to the stories. By the end, I could tell my kids cared about her and were interested in what happened to her after the war. All in, this book met and exceeded my expectations. It gave my middle school

kids a hook for further study about the Civil War and we all learned a lot.

Written by Seymour Reit, "Behind Rebel Lines" tells the true story of Emma Edmonds. Running away from her father at the age of sixteen, she had left Canada for the country where freedom and liberty would become a reality. Now the year 1861, Emma is now 21 and the Civil War between states has begun. When President Lincoln asks for volunteers, Emma is determined not to just sit by. She disguises herself as a man and enlists herself into the Union Army. Now everyone, including her superior officers and fellow soldiers, believe her to be Private Franklin Thompson, assigned to Company F. But Emma wants to do more, so she volunteers to be a Union spy. But while she has been all this time fooling her own army, can she keep her secret behind rebel lines? A truly well-written story, "Behind Enemy Lines" is sure to please. The author did a lot of research to write this book, re-creating Emma Edmond's story through Emma's memoirs, U.S. Army Records, and files from the National Archive. At the front cover of the book it is written "Great Episodes". This is because each chapter is separated in such a way. In that sense, while reading the story the reader might feel as though the book does not really flow as well as you would like. But on the overall, the whole story is written well if not a bit aimed more for younger audiences. Emma's character is captivating and very realistic. Oh, I know that she WAS a real character, but in few cases, some authors cannot seem to grasp the character of who they're writing about. Fortunately, Seymour Reit puts down Emma's life down on paper flawlessly. You can almost 'hear' the imp voice in Emma's ear! On the whole, "Behind Rebel Lines" is a gripping and fascinating historical biography and I can easily recommend it. Best for ages 10 - 14 but older teens and some adults might find this a good read. "This stranger-than-fiction story will captivate history buffs and hold the attention of the most reluctant reader." -Bank Street College of Education-

My daughter really enjoyed this book! Great way to personalize the Civil War and make it come alive for kids. Good for upper elementary/ middle school. True story that really keeps the kids interested!

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