

### **Excerpt from the memoir of Loreta Janeta Velazquez, Soldier in Disguise**

During the Civil War, women played an important role not only on the home front, but on the battlefield as well. Women were generally limited to work as nurses, however, a few females secretly joined the military posing as men. The memories of one such woman, Loreta Janeta Velazquez, also known as Lieutenant H.T. Buford, are below.

WITHIN three days I managed to provide myself with a very complete military outfit; quite sufficient to enable me to commence operations without delay, which was the main thing I was after, for I was exceedingly anxious to carry out a magnificent idea I had in my mind, and to present myself before my husband, under such auspices that he could no longer find an excuse for refusing his consent to my joining the Southern army as a soldier. My uniform suit having been arranged for, it was an easy matter for me to procure the rest of my outfit without unduly attracting attention, and I soon had in my room a trunk well packed with the wearing apparel of an army officer, and neatly marked upon the outside with the name I had concluded to adopt.

Lieutenant H. T. Buford, C. S. A.

When I saw the trunk with this name upon it as large as life, my heart fairly jumped for joy, and I felt as if the dream of my life were already more than half realized. There was a good deal, however, to be done before I could move any [p. 62] farther in this momentous affair, and while waiting for the tailor to send my uniform suit, I thought and planned until my head fairly ached. At length I hit upon a method of arranging my financial matters which I judged would prove satisfactory, and concluded to call in a gentleman who was a very old and intimate friend of both my husband and myself, and demand his assistance.

Discussion questions:

- 1.) Why might a Southern woman want to join the Confederate Army? Compare and contrast the role in the army verses other roles women might have played during this time period.
- 2.) What would have been necessary for her to gather in order to become a soldier? How might she have hidden her feminine qualities while being a soldier?
- 3.) Give two reasons for and two reasons against her husband trying to talk her out of joining the army.
- 4.) If you were joining the military under an assumed name, what would you pick as your name and why?
- 5.) Give reasons why the friend would feel compelled to help Velazquez and reasons why he would not.

\* End note on Velazquez: She did end up joining the Confederate army and was present during some very important battles. Her main role was as a spy for the Confederates. While on active duty in the Confederate army, her identity was not discovered.