



A Groundbreaking Gallery

The first indication that I had of the importance of Chris Foard's collection of nurse portraits occurred during a digital scanning session last August. The resolute faces of these Northern women reminded me of similar images I had seen through the years of young soldiers and sailors who served on both sides of the conflict.

Curious to learn more about these courageous women, I discovered *Our Army Nurses* by Mary A. Gardner Holland. A quote in the preface grabbed my attention: "The privations and dangers which these noble characters endured called for a fortitude equal in many respects to the valor of the soldier. The army nurse was obliged to respond to duty at all times and in all emergencies. She could not measure her time, sleep, or strength. She was under orders to serve to the fullest."

Another book, *Woman's Work in the Civil War* by Dr. Linus P. Brockett and Mary C. Vaughan, includes this detail about nurse Maria Hall of Washington: "Surrounded by Secessionists, her father too far advanced in years to bear arms for the country he loved, with no brother old enough to be enrolled among the nation's defenders, her patriotism was as fervid as that of any soldier of the Republic."

By this point, I already knew that these extraordinary portraits and stories should appear in *MI*. This is not without precedent—past covers have featured women, and other issues contain images that include women—but this is the first time that a major gallery has been dedicated to their critical role as nurses. It is my hope that you'll find them as fascinating as I have, and that they expand your knowledge of the Civil War.



Covers from January-February 1999 (left) and May-June 2000

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