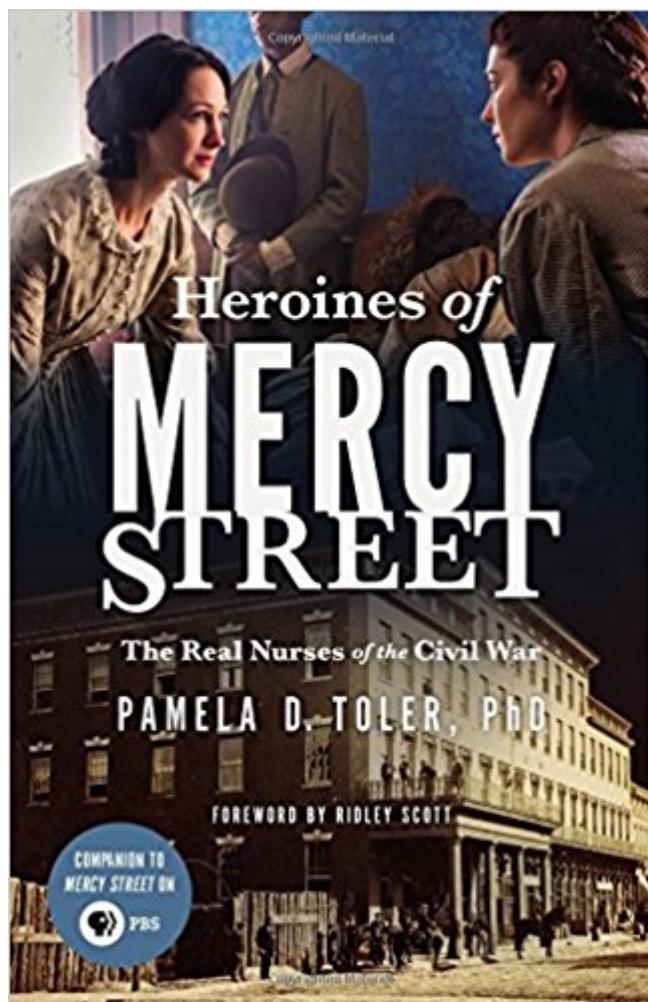


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Heroines Of Mercy Street: The Real Nurses Of The Civil War



Synopsis

A look at the lives of the real nurses depicted in the PBS show Mercy Street. *HEROINES OF MERCY STREET* tells the true stories of the nurses at Mansion House, the Alexandria, Virginia, mansion turned war-time hospital and setting for the new PBS drama Mercy Street. Among the Union soldiers, doctors, wounded men from both sides, freed slaves, politicians, speculators, and spies who passed through the hospital in the crossroads of the Civil War, were nurses who gave their time freely and willingly to save lives and aid the wounded. These women saw casualties on a scale Americans had never seen before, and medicine was at a turning point. *HEROINES OF MERCY STREET* follows the lives of women like Dorothea Dix, Mary Phinney, Anne Reading, and more before, during, and after their epic struggle in Alexandria and reveals their personal contributions to this astounding period in the advancement of medicine.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you buy this book thinking it is exactly like PBS's "Mercy Street," you will be disappointed. This is not fiction, but this tells the true stories of the Civil War nurses, their struggles with the Army of the Republic, the doctors, and with society's expectations of women in the mid-19th century. This book is easy to read; it is not filled with jargon or dull writing. Ms. Toler takes the facts and presents them in an interesting manner. Many people associate only Clara Barton with Civil War nursing, but *Heroines of Mercy Street: The Real Nurses of the Civil War* will introduce them to other women who made great contributions to nursing during the Civil War and the profession of nursing, in

general. This book would be a wonderful YA book to introduce the role of nursing and women during the Civil War. As a former US History teacher, I would, without, hesitation recommend this book as supplemental reading. The length is short, for a history text, and would be perfect as an introductory text.

Don't buy this book if you are interested in a recounting of the PBS series.... It's not. Instead it's a carefully written history of nursing in the Civil War. I kept waiting for the story to start! But as a nurse and somewhat of a nursing history buff, I really enjoyed the book (dry in parts...) and was fascinated at the state of the art in the 1860's. The book recounts the inbred tension between schools of nursing (Dix vs Nightengale, for example), and truly lays a foundation for art of the nursing we know today. Lots of familiar names for me.... Clara Barton and others. The narrator was fair, some mispronunciations (Scutari, for example), but overall easy to listen to. I was especially fascinated with the history of nursing schools (I'm a diploma grad originally... 45 years of nursing practice) and how nurses were trained in the beginning. I see a lot of those traditions carried forward to my training and mourn the loss of those rituals in today's university nursing programs. Ours is a rich history and I honor the women who have walked before me in this profession.

AudioBook Review: Stars: Overall: 5 Narration: 5 Story: 5
Don't think that you will find the clearly navigable bones of the television show here – some of the characters do share name and backstories, but the reality of these actual lives, painstakingly and thoroughly researched and presented by Pamela D. Toler, PhD, is gripping and intriguing. Remember that during the American Civil War, nursing (even medicine in the modern sense) was in its infancy. The first woman of renown to challenge that belief was Florence Nightengale, and her work in Crimea and London that first brought the profession forward, are depicted through letters, journals and diaries as well as books brings a whole new light on the first notable moments of nurses in America. Stories from Mary Phinney von Olnhausen, Dorothea Dix, as well as Louisa May Alcott, Clara Barton, the Woolsey sisters and others, as well as accounts from stewards, surgeons, officers, politicians and others all help to show both the social and physical trials that these women faced, even as they are keeping pace with advancements (and the often brutal methods) of current medical treatment. Research for this story is effectively presented: this isn't a dry read, in fact, the narration by Suzanne Toren helps to provide a sense of life to these women, known and unknown, that puts the letters into a frame that is accessible to all readers, not just those interested in history or the facts. I've actually given copies of this title to friends who are nurses, and can

wholeheartedly suggest this for readers with or without an interest in history or the US Civil War. If you are a fan of the PBS Series, or are interested in learning more about the women who made history – this is the title for you. I received an audiobook copy of the title from Hachette Audio for purpose of honest review. I was not compensated for this review: all conclusions are my own responsibility.

I read this after beginning to watch the PBS series. Initially, I was disappointed because it is so much darker than the series, but then why wouldn't it be? It is by no means a "fun" read, but it is very informative. It very clearly documents the horrors of the time but focuses mainly on the struggles of the women to take their places in the medical profession. While history seems to treat the Union far more nobly than it treats the south (in part, I suppose because it is another example of history being written by the victors) I was shocked to see the intensity of hatred of the Confederacy born out even in hospital settings by so many in the Union. Although it was not totally surprising to see the mistreatment of "free" slaves in the North ... it WAS surprising to see it documented so well. It was an interesting view of the evolution of women in nursing far more than it was anything else. Very well documented.

The book can be considered more a lite history about nursing in the Civil War. It is written by one of the advisors on the show and it covers with broad strokes how these women were recruited and assigned to their duties. I was disappointed that the author didn't get into how the volunteer southern nurses came into story but that hopefully will be covered at a later date. Reenactors should study this book.

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