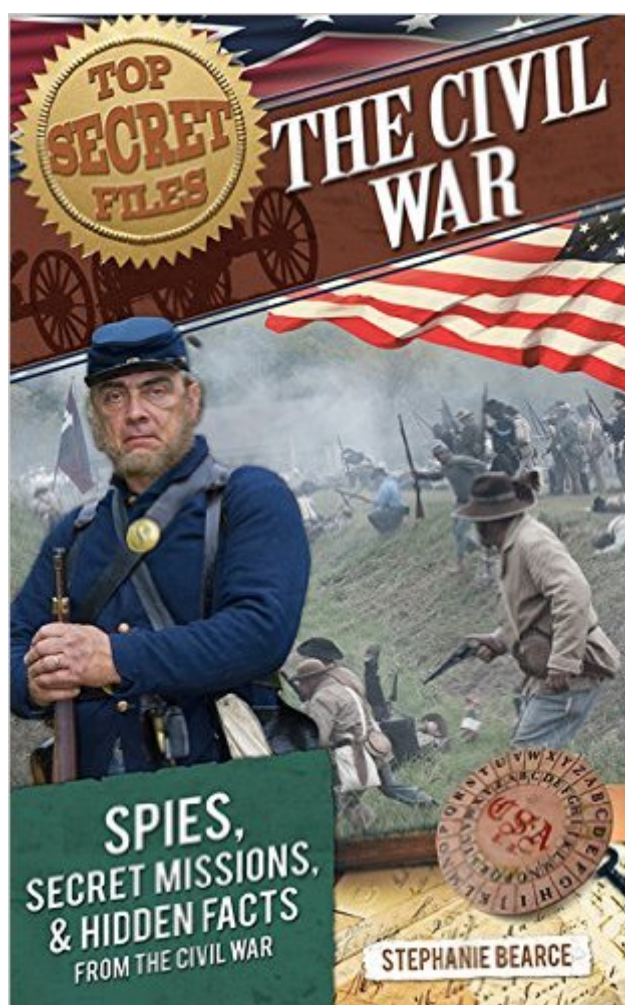


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# Top Secret Files: The Civil War: Spies, Secret Missions, And Hidden Facts From The Civil War (Top Secret Files Of History)



## Synopsis

The pigpen cipher, the Devil's Coffee Mill, and germ warfare were all a part of the Civil War, but you won't learn that in your history books! Discover the truth about Widow Greenhow's spy ring, how soldiers stole a locomotive, and the identity of the mysterious "Gray Ghost." Then learn how to make a cipher wheel and send secret light signals to your friends. It's all part of the true stories from the Top Secret Files: The Civil War. Take a look if you dare, but be careful! Some secrets are meant to stay hidden...

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1000 (What's this?)

Series: Top Secret Files of History

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (12 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #355,397 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #62 in [Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > Civil War Era](#) #223 in [Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > Military & Wars](#) #39699 in [Books > History](#)

Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Getting kids interested in history can be tough if they think it is about nothing more than dates and names and lists of tedious facts. Bearce, on the other hand, has written a book about history that kids will want to read. After all, who doesn't want to get in on a good secret? Bearce's series is all about spies, their missions and the tools they used to get the job done. She writes about plots against Lincoln, slaves acting as spies, women disguised as men, submarines, secret codes and attempts to steal locomotives. Each book in this series has five sections: Secrets, Spies, Special Missions, Secret Weapons and Secret Forces. Young readers will learn about the part played by the Pinkerton detectives, a woman who used laundry as a code to send messages to Union forces, spy

balloons, and the importance of maps. Bright lights were even used as a weapon. That said, not everything Bearce discusses was successful which is fortunate since the Confederacy tried to use germ warfare against the Union. My favorite section was the one on Ft. Davidson. The fort isn't far from my home and I've seen for myself just how small it is. It is featured in Bearce's book because the Union Forces stationed there won a decisive victory by sneaking away and blowing the place up. I also liked the how-to pieces. Readers learn the Confederate Signal Corp alphabet, how to create a scytale and even how to make a working model of a hot air balloon. With so much information in one place, it might be overwhelming but Bearce has broken each section into easily-digestible chunks. A reluctant reader can easily conquer a section of 2 or 4 pages while more eager readers can devour much more. Readers who are especially intrigued by the topic will find a list of resources in the back of the book. This is a very well balanced look at the Civil War. Bearce shows that the Union and the Confederacy both had successes and failures. She also includes information about men, women and children, slave and free. It isn't a comprehensive look at the Civil War but it does give young readers information that they aren't going to find in other books on the topic. Bearce is a former teacher and she knows both how to hook her readers and how to deliver the facts. Pick this one up for history buffs, those who aren't sure and even adult enthusiasts. Each will find something new in this book.--SueBE

This book is truly well put together. The author balances everything out and makes sure not to pay more attention or credit to one side or the other. She acknowledges the triumphs and tragedies of both sides in the war. She also celebrates women, children, and blacks that helped out whatever side they believed in. The chapters are short and very approachable. They're interesting and give enough facts without it being overbearing. It's a great supplement, especially when textbooks and history class only tell you so much. The author also includes a few websites or videos for kids to check out if they're more interested in an event or mini project that is in the book. At the end of each section there are two different "Spy Trainings". These can be used to help get a child more interested in history or even more engaged in a classroom. They range from map skills to hiding secret messages in eggs. There's plenty of activities to choose from and most children should be able to find one that looks interesting to them. It is a well structured and thoughtfully organized and executed book. I highly recommend this for teachers or parents, especially those that have kids interested in history or the military. Quick and easy read that makes history fun and approachable! (\*Note I was given a free copy in exchange for an honest review through Goodreads Giveaways.)

This is a book on the Civil War in the nonfiction series *Top Secret Files*. This is a well written book with an excellent format for the young reader. Each chapter is very short, informative and interesting that regardless of age the reader will wish to continue reading. Throughout the book are graphics that are engaging and informative as well. Some chapters have projects that young readers can try on their own or with assistance from a parent/adult that shows the practicality of what was described in the chapter. And for the more complex devices, there are links referenced that lead to a video showing how a particular device or process discussed in the chapter worked. A great book on little known facts from the Civil War that every one would enjoy. And a wonderful book for the young reader.

Told in tantalizing tid-bits, *THE CIVIL WAR (Top Secret Files series)* by Stephanie Bearce is packed with interesting information, intriguing photographs, and fun illustrations. The author provides lesser known facts "a failed assassination attempt on newly-elected President Lincoln foiled by Pinkerton spies; Civil War inventions like the submarine and machine guns; Confederate secret signals with how-to instructions and so much more. The book contains instructions for numerous activity adventures, such as creating your own fan messages or egg communications. Young readers will be tempted to test their spy skills by creating codes, cipher wheels, and spy kits. This is a great learning tool for 4th-8th grade students who want to uncover secrets from the Civil War era. An extensive bibliography and website references are included. Readers will be surprised how entertaining the past really is and eager to try another book in the series of *Spies, Secret Missions, & Hidden Facts!*

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