

Transman Civil War Hero?

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Abstract

I won't lie, I'm a lover of history. One of the the blogs I regularly read is Civil War Women. The blog is thick with biographies of women that lived and thrived in the Civil War era. One of the "women" she posted about caught my eye. He was born Jennie Irene Hodgers, but lived [...]

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I won't lie, I'm a lover of history. One of the the blogs I regularly read is Civil War Women. The blog is thick with biographies of women that lived and thrived in the Civil War era. One of the "women" she posted about caught my eye. He was born Jennie Irene Hodgers, but lived most of his adult life as Albert D.J. Cashier. Albert served in the 95th Illinois Infantry Regiment. The 95th was was part of the Army of the Tennessee, led by Ulysses S. Grant. The 95th engaged in many fierce battles including including the siege at Vicksburg, the Red River Campaign and the combat at Guntown, Mississippi.

After the Civil War, Albert worked as a janitor, a lamplighter, and other odd jobs. It was not until a car accident that 1910, was revealed Albert was female bodied. His caretakers kept his secret, even when he was admitted into the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home at Quincy, Illinois. It wasn't until he was admitted to Watertown State Hospital for the Insane, that the secret became widely known.

You can read a wonderful biography of him here.

Even a cursory look at his life suggests that he was transgender. The evidence:

1. He volunteered on August 6, 1862 in Boone County. When his regiment was retired in 1865, they were in Belvidere, Illinois. He could have stayed in his home town of Bevidere, if he wished to return to life as a woman. Yet he moved 138 miles southeast of Boone County, to Saunemin, IL and continued to live as a man.

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2. It might be argued that he did not live as a woman because he wanted the pension that came with service. But to receive the pension Albert would have been required to take a physical exam. He refused until later in life, when he was assured that his secret would not be made public.

3. At the Watertown State Hospital for the Insane, he had NOTHING to gain from living as a man. Yet even then when forced to wear a skirt he would bring the skirt in with pins to make the skirt into pants.

4. Albert secured his home with a number of locks, changing them frequently in case someone had somehow

gotten a key. If he was going to be away from his house, he nailed the windows shut. Why? Being female bodied, there would be some evidence in his home of this.

Albert D.J. Cashier went to great lengths to protect his gender identity all his life. Even in death, he was gendered male. Those who knew and loved him went to great pains to keep his secret.

Rest in peace, my brother.

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