

**Collection:** GREENHOW, ROSE O'NEAL, Papers  
New Hanover County--Wilmington  
London and Paris  
1863-1864

**Physical Description:** 6 items: originals--cipher (also photograph) and diary (with typescript memorandum); xerox copies--letter and address book.

**Acquisition:** Cipher given by Mrs. Ralph Magraw, [REDACTED], Lexington, Va., September 25, 1964. Mrs. Magraw, the granddaughter of Col. William Lamb, found the code in one of the William Lamb diaries when they were given to the College of William and Mary in the late 1930s. Letter of 1863 and address book were loaned for copying by the New Hanover-Wilmington Museum via Mrs. E. M. McEachern, 1969. The diary was transferred from the Walter Clark Collection (P.C.8.19) with a memorandum from Dr. H. G. Jones, April, 1972.

**Description:** Rose O'Neal Greenhow (1816-1864), born Port Tobacco, Md.; moved to Washington ca. 1831; married Robert Greenhow, 1835; four daughters. Robert Greenhow was a physician, historian, scientist, and translator for the State Department [See DAB]. Widowed in 1854, Rose participated in secessionist rallies, became an agent for the Confederacy, was arrested in August, 1861 for espionage, published a diary of her captivity, My Imprisonment and the First Year of Abolition Rule at Washington, 1863. She accepted a diplomatic mission from President Davis and sailed from Wilmington, N.C. for the British Isles via Bermuda. On the return trip she was drowned off Fort Fisher and was buried in Oakdale Cemetery in Wilmington on October 2, 1864. For further biographical information see: Ishbel Ross, Rebel Rose, 1954, and Nash K. Burger. Confederate Spy: Rose O'Neale Greenhow, 1967.

In this small collection is a laminated cipher code recovered from Rose Greenhow's effects by Colonel William Lamb, the commander of Fort Fisher. Included are glossy photographs of both sides of the cipher.

An address book once in the possession of the Cape Fear Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy is now in the New Hanover-Wilmington Museum. This xerox copy shows an unsigned note entered in the front of the small book "An old address book of your Grand Mother's.... In her many letters (which I burned with all others on leaving America this last time) contained an invitation to witness the unveiling of a statue to her husband." Under the address of Thomas Carlyle is written "a great

GREENHOW, ROSE O'NEAL, Papers  
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P.C.1226.1  
-2

DESCRIPTION (cont'd)

admirer of your grandmother," and by Lord Wharncliff's address, Wharncliff House, "But for the death by drowning of your grandmother, you would have been his granddaughter--she was intending to return to Eng. to marry him." [Biographers write that her love was Lord Granville.] Also included is a xerox copy of a letter to Mrs. Greenhow dated November 20, 1863, from James Spence, Liverpool. Spence, a writer (American Union) and businessman who ran an agency in Liverpool for the sale of Confederate bonds, refers to persons supportive of the Confederacy and to a meeting with Mrs. Greenhow and Lord Campbell (portion missing).

The following summary of the diary of Rose Greenhow was written by Luna Lambert, graduate history student, North Carolina State University, May 6, 1976.

The diary of Rose O. Greenhow (August 5, 1863 - August 10, 1864) is a personal account of her experiences as a diplomat on behalf of the Confederacy in Paris and London. President Jefferson Davis requested Rose to act as a Confederate envoy to win political and financial support for the Confederate cause. Her diary is a descriptive and ideological journal of her excursions exclusive of any financial accounts. Beginning with her voyage to London via Bermuda, her keen sense of political affairs is recorded in reflections of conversations about neutrality and the morality of the slavery issue. For example, she writes that the Negroes of St. George are "lazy, vicious, and insubordinate, and are constantly encroaching upon the prerogatives of white settlers." Observing that the agricultural productivity of Bermuda had declined since Negroes were emancipated in 1834, she offers the Southern system of "servile labor" as an example of the productivity resulting from "the exercise of Christian humanities."

Rose's descriptive accounts of her journey outnumber accounts of her diplomatic encounters. She records her impressions of the Westminster Cathedral, the Houses of Parliament, Tuileries, Place de la Concorde and the Louvre like any observant traveler who is seeing the continent for the first time. The fact that Mrs. Greenhow goes sightseeing before she makes diplomatic appointments suggests that her mission lacked the quality of urgency. Nonetheless, she is received by Emperor Napoleon, and she records part of their dialogue in French. She judges the Emperor to be sympathetic, and she asks him to consider the question of Confederate recognition. Concluding that the French are too occupied with "the Mexican question", Mrs. Greenhow wrote to Jefferson Davis that "our only

GREENHOW, ROSE O'NEAL, Papers  
New Hanover County--Wilmington  
London and Paris  
1863-1964

P.C. 1226.1

-3

DESCRIPTION (cont'd)

chance of recognition must now come from England." Her most significant British diplomatic exchange is with Lord Derby. She records that "my object was to give him information about the Confederacy and to let him know what our expectations were." Rose explained that "we expect recognition and the impartial observance of the neutrality laws." Her awareness of the British political complexion is evident as she criticizes Lord Russell's foreign policy. Lord Derby judged Rose to be "the best diplomat I have ever seen."

Analyzing the British position, Rose concluded that "the Queen was the chief obstacle" to recognition. Yet, she repeatedly records the overall British and French sympathy with the Southern cause. Her diary is significant for its wealth of descriptive, feminine testimony on Confederate foreign relations and its insights into the conscience of a Confederate activist. Note: Dr. Haskell Monroe of Texas A & M University has edited this diary for publication.

Finding Aids:

Main Entry Card  
Geographic Cards  
North Carolina - Wilmington  
London  
Paris

Date Card  
1863-1864

Autograph Card  
Spence, James

Subject Cards  
BEAUREGARD, GENERAL P.G.T.  
BERMUDA  
GREENHOW, ROSE - Diary  
RUSSELL, LORD JOHN  
SLAVERY  
WAR - CIVIL WAR

See also: Rose O. Greenhow Papers, Manuscript Collection, Duke Library.

Finding Aid completed June 8, 1976, Luna Lambert and Ellen Z. McGrew