

## Pauline Cushman: Spy of the Cumberland

*William J. Christen*

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#2480918 in Books Edinborough Press 2006-05-28Ingredients: Example IngredientsOriginal language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x 1.45 x 6.00l, 1.93 #File Name: 1889020117480 pages | File size: 67.Mb

**William J. Christen : Pauline Cushman: Spy of the Cumberland** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pauline Cushman: Spy of the Cumberland:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A difficult readBy andruinthatlineI was really excited to read this book after I read an article about Pauline. The problem isn't her story, it's that the writing got in the way of the story. Mr. Christen frequently inserts within the narrative long excerpts from source materials (e.g. a review of a play Pauline was performing in), that only serve to disrupt the flow of the book. All of it could have been indexed in the back.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Following Pauline's Footsteps...By FrontierMommyWilliam

Christen's book, *Pauline Cushman: Spy of the Cumberland*, is an amazing biography of an extraordinary woman. Christen spent thirteen years researching the Major (Pauline Cushman) and compiled his findings into a complete and accurate biography that looks at the woman behind the legends. The Major was a charming and intelligent woman whose story is one that kept me intrigued. At times I found myself disliking her, yet I felt sorry for her. And, all the while I admired her spunk, independence and fearlessness. It was probable the Major could out-shoot and out-drink many a man but she demanded the respect due a lady. Christen is to be commended for undertaking the biography of a real and complex woman who experienced setbacks and financial struggles throughout her life. Leading a relatively nomadic life, the Major was an extremely unconventional woman for her time. Christen's book explores her obscure beginnings to her career on stage. He then takes his readers to the battlegrounds of the Civil War and to the dusty desolate territory of Arizona. The journey then continues from the wild frontier to her final days in San Francisco. In addition, Christen confronted the complicated task of exploring the relationships between the Major and those she left behind; and her unpleasant dependence on alcoholism and drug abuse. Any reader interested in the historical roles of women will enjoy Christen's book *Pauline Cushman* as it chronicles the life of a unique lady whose spirit roams the stage by day and whose memory lingers like the crimson-tinted sky of an Arizona sunset. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. History is interesting when it's hard! By Catherine Devlin Pauline Cushman, it turns out, was an unusually hard-to-document character. Intentionally and unintentionally, she accumulated layers of myth and legend around her like nobody else I know of. It was very interesting to see Christen teasing the truth out of the legends. He supplies lots of detail about the process of finding documents, verifying claims, and so forth. It's a neat glimpse into the historian's art - gives you a clearer view of what the discipline of history itself is, neither revealed truth nor bunk, but the fruits of a painstaking and rational process. It's also a great look at the world around the 19th-century theater.

One of the most famous Union spies during the Civil War, Pauline Cushman's exploits over the course of a few weeks in Kentucky and Tennessee secured her place in the annals of the war, yet the traditional stories are often based on myth rather than fact. This sweeping biography follows her service as a spy, detailing how she gained renown as Miss Major Pauline Cushman and embarked on a tempestuous life that took her from P. T. Barnum's New York stage to the Wild West of Arizona and California.

Christen's diligence shows us a clearer picture of the legend and the person behind the curtain. --The Journal of Arizona History A welcome contribution to scholarship about the historical roles of women, particularly in relation to the Civil War. It also is overdue recognition of a 19th-century personality who served the Union cause and went on to make a name for herself despite societal barriers that existed at the time. --Washington Times The research is phenomenal. and I am extremely impressed with his breadth of knowledge of his subject, and with his sensitive, yet straightforward, treatment of her story. Most writers would have been content to accept the legend without question, or dismiss Pauline out of hand. Christen brings the real woman to life. --DeAnne Blanton, author, *They Fought Like Demons* About the Author Bill Christen is a retired automotive engineer who has spent the last twenty-five years engaged in research about the social and material culture of the nineteenth century. He was the publisher of *The Watchdog*, a quarterly journal for enactors and interpreters of the 1850 to 1875 time period. In the course of his work on the book, Bill and his wife, Glenna Jo, visited many of the scenes where Pauline's story unfolded.