

# The Civil Wars of Julia Ward Howe: Exploring the Extraordinary Life of an American Icon

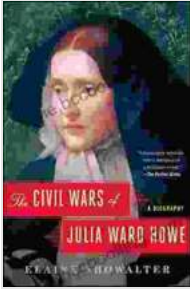


## The Civil Wars of Julia Ward Howe: A Biography

by Elaine Showalter

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English



File size	: 56374 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 321 pages



Julia Ward Howe, a name synonymous with the iconic anthem "Battle Hymn of the Republic," was a woman who defied societal norms and emerged as a leading voice of the 19th century.

Born in New York City in 1819, Howe grew up in an affluent and intellectually stimulating environment. Her father, Samuel Ward, was a wealthy banker and a staunch supporter of the arts. Her mother, Julia Rush Cutler Ward, was a writer and a passionate advocate for the rights of women.

Howe's early education was primarily focused on traditional subjects such as literature, music, and art. However, she also developed a keen interest in social issues, particularly the abolition of slavery and the rights of women.

### **Abolitionist and Women's Suffrage Activism**

In the 1840s, Howe became actively involved in the abolitionist movement. She joined the New England Anti-Slavery Society and worked alongside prominent abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips. Her writings and speeches on the issue were both powerful and

persuasive, contributing to the growing momentum for the abolition of slavery.

Howe's commitment to social justice extended beyond the abolitionist cause. She was also a vocal advocate for women's rights. In 1869, she co-founded the American Woman Suffrage Association and served as its president for several years. Her tireless efforts helped lay the groundwork for the eventual passage of the 19th Amendment, which granted women the right to vote.

### **Literary Prowess and the "Battle Hymn of the Republic"**

In addition to her activism, Howe was also a gifted writer. She published numerous poems, plays, novels, and essays. Her writing style was characterized by its lyrical quality, its exploration of social and political issues, and its advocacy for social justice.

Howe's most famous work, "Battle Hymn of the Republic," was written in 1861, shortly after the outbreak of the Civil War. Inspired by the Union troops marching past her home, she wrote the poem as a rallying cry for the abolitionist cause. The song quickly became a patriotic anthem, sung by both Union soldiers and civilians. Its powerful lyrics, which invoked the imagery of a "glorious cause" and a "mighty host," continue to resonate with Americans to this day.

### **Role in the New England Renaissance and Transcendentalism**

Julia Ward Howe was also an influential figure in the New England Renaissance and the Transcendentalist movement. She was a close friend of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, and her writings often

reflected the Transcendentalist ideals of self-reliance, individualism, and the importance of nature.

Howe's literary salon, which she hosted in her home in Boston, became a gathering place for leading intellectuals and artists of the time. It was here that she engaged in lively discussions on philosophy, literature, and social issues, contributing to the vibrant intellectual climate of the New England Renaissance.

## **Post-Civil War Activism and Legacy**

After the Civil War, Howe continued her advocacy for social justice. She worked with the Radical Republicans to promote Reconstruction and ensure the rights of freed slaves. She also became involved in the peace movement, advocating for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the promotion of international cooperation.

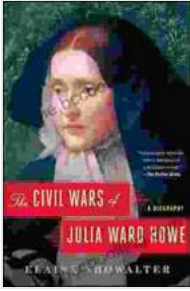
Julia Ward Howe's legacy is vast and enduring. She was a pioneer in the fields of literature, social activism, and women's rights. Her writings continue to inspire and challenge readers, and her contributions to American society have had a lasting impact.

Through her activism, her writing, and her unwavering dedication to social justice, Julia Ward Howe left an indelible mark on the tapestry of American history. Her life is a testament to the transformative power of one individual, and her legacy continues to inspire future generations to strive for equality, justice, and a better world for all.

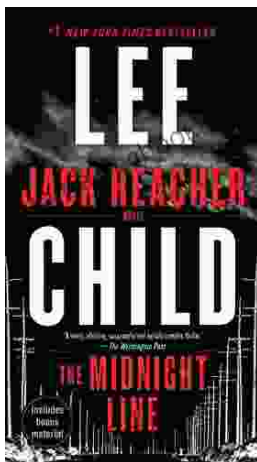
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