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THE GRAY GHOST'S SANCTUARY:
CIVILIANS IN MOSBY'S CONFEDERACY DURING THE CIVIL WAR

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Abstract

This work examines why civilians in Mosby's Confederacy supported the 43rd Battalion of Virginia Cavalry. The tactics used by Mosby placed civilians at considerable risk with Union authorities, for his men did not live in a separate camp but stayed either in hideaways in the mountains or, more commonly, with families they knew in the area. The nature of the guerrilla warfare practiced by Mosby's men, which involved late night gatherings, lightning strikes on the enemy's weakest points, and then dispersal into the countryside until the next raid, frustrated the Federal commanders who fought against them. These commanders, however, perceived from the start the essential role civilians played in the successful operation of the 43rd Battalion and therefore vented their wrath upon Mosby's supporters in an attempt to weaken their resolve to assist him. Countless raids through the area pillaged farms, looted houses, arrested men, insulted women, and left the population on the brink of starvation. However, despite all the risks and sufferings the people endured, they supported Mosby and his rangers steadfastly through to the end of the war. Civilians in Mosby's Confederacy supported the 43rd Battalion because they embraced the Confederate cause, saw Union raids as standard enemy behavior and not solely a result of Mosby's actions, were inspired by Mosby's victories, sought the relief and protection offered by the partisans, and personally knew or were related to many of the rangers.
Introduction

In January 1863, fifteen Confederate soldiers led by John Singleton Mosby, later known as the “Gray Ghost,” successfully raided a minor Union outpost near Chantilly, Virginia. Over the next twenty-eight months the command, formally known as the 43rd Battalion of Virginia Cavalry, grew to include eight companies and over four hundred men, conducted countless raids against Union supply lines and picket posts in northern Virginia, and fought and won several engagements. During this time, these men, called partisan rangers, rangers, or guerrillas, operated almost exclusively behind Union lines, surviving only because of the support given by the local population that was loyal to the Confederacy. Union commanders noticed the civilian’s loyalty and sent countless raids to scour the area, known as Mosby’s Confederacy, with the goal of both capturing the rangers and breaking the will of the people who supported them. Despite the constant threats, arrests, and destruction brought by Union raids, civilian support was so strong that instead of surrendering, Mosby’s command disbanded as an intact unit nearly two weeks after Appomattox.

The history of the guerrilla war conducted by Mosby and his famous band of partisan rangers has been told and reevaluated often since the close of the war. Members of the 43rd Battalion wrote the first accounts, which appeared just after the war (such as Mosby and His Men by J. Marshall Crawford)¹ and shortly after the turn of the century (such as Mosby’s Rangers by James J. Williamson).² Their authors sought to justify their wartime actions, contrast themselves with Union troops, put their feelings and memories in writing, or simply honor their departed


comrades. All of these works focused on the battalion: how the men lived, who they were, and what battles they fought.

Historians first turned their scholarly attention to Mosby and his rangers in the mid-twentieth century as part of a growing interest in the Civil War’s guerrilla war. During the 1940s and 1950s, Civil War works focused on battles and leaders, with a prime example being Douglas Southall Freeman’s *Lee’s Lieutenants,*³ a study on the major commanders in the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. According to historian Daniel Sutherland, authors who wrote on guerrilla warfare followed the mainstream and “focused on the exploits—mostly heroic and romantic—of famous guerrilla leaders.”⁴ The first major work on John Singleton Mosby, *Ranger Mosby* by Virgil Carrington Jones,⁵ exemplified this creed. Despite the period’s limitations, the foundations for more detailed studies that moved beyond battles and leaders were laid during this time, as the impact of guerrillas in military strategy was first analyzed in books, journals, and theses.⁶

Historians largely overlooked Mosby during the next two decades; however, new scholarly trends developed which uncovered the historical relevance of guerrilla operations. In light of lessons learned from the Vietnam War, historians reevaluated the guerrilla war by


⁶ Sutherland, 6-8.
emphasizing the historical framework of guerrilla operations, similarities in guerrilla warfare throughout history, and anti-guerrilla strategies.\(^7\)

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed an explosion of scholarly study in guerrilla warfare and Mosby and his men were again at the forefront. Sutherland observed "A deeper appreciation for the totality of the guerrilla experience clearly gained ground" as new works uncovered topics that were unheard of just decades before.\(^8\) Guerrilla warfare, which embraced merely the tactics used, was de-emphasized in favor of guerrilla war. This new concept covered the impact of the war on civilians, investigated anti-guerrilla units, evaluated the guerrillas' influences across a larger geographical area, and even explored the motivations behind the guerrillas.\(^9\) Unit histories, such as Jeffry D. Wert's *Mosby's Rangers*,\(^10\) placed more emphasis on the men and their surroundings than their leaders, and such biographies as James A. Ramage's *Gray Ghost*,\(^11\) reevaluated their subjects in a more critical and less romantic light than previous works. Despite these advances, there is still much that historians do not know about partisan warfare.\(^12\)

The studies of Mosby and his rangers are no exception: the vast majority of works examine only the lives of Mosby and his men. The civilians who suffered at the hands of the Union troops and provided the havens that allowed the command to survive are mentioned only from the rangers' point of view. Specific studies of civilians in Mosby's Confederacy do not

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\(^7\) Ibid., 10-14.

\(^8\) Ibid., 16.

\(^9\) Ibid., 15-21.


\(^12\) Sutherland, 21-22.
exist—relevant information is scattered among studies of counties or regions (such as Charles P. Poland’s *From Frontier to Suburbia*),\textsuperscript{13} diaries (such as Nancy Chappelear Baird’s *Journals of Amanda Virginia Edmonds*),\textsuperscript{14} and collections of letters written by those who lived in the area (such as Margaret Anne Vogtsberger’s *The Dulanys of Welbourne*).\textsuperscript{15} Therefore, it is no surprise that historians have questioned whether Major General Philip Sheridan’s burning raid in late 1864 broke the spirits of civilians in the area or if they continued to support Mosby with the same enthusiasm as before.

The historian’s answer largely depended on where he looked to find the answer. Most historians who focused on the civilians of Loudoun County asserted that Mosby and his men were falling into disfavor. Jeffry Wert declared, “sentiments had shifted, and the locals adjusted to the new order of things, which meant Federal control.”\textsuperscript{16} Another historian, Charles Poland, took that argument one step further and speculated that “weary county residents, even Confederate supporters, eagerly greeted the termination of what they considered unfair harassment by Union and Confederate troops.”\textsuperscript{17} Freeman Jones believed that anti-Mosby feelings were prevalent throughout his entire area of operation, for “local support abated during the winter of 1864-65 as more public sentiment shifted to acknowledge the Union control of the


\textsuperscript{16} Wert, 275.

\textsuperscript{17} Poland, 220.
area.”18 These historians would all have agreed with the observation of a Federal officer serving in Loudoun: “The desire is to have peace—with coffee, sugar, etc.”19

Historian Gary Gallagher and two former rangers stand in opposition. Gallagher analyzed a wider geographical area and declared “Sheridan's policy of intimidation, imprisonment, destruction, and hardship never broke the will of Mosby's civilian supporters.”20 J. Marshall Crawford unknowingly stood in the face of much modern scholarship when he recalled that during their foraging expeditions in Loudoun in 1865, “[t]he citizens were very kind to us, especially the Quakers” and they even rejoiced over and entertained them.21 James J. Williamson took a more moderate stance as he recalled events from 1865: “although the war was waged as earnestly, and the Southern people were as true to their cause, as at any time since the commencement, still one could see that there was a longing for peace.”22 To this date, however, no scholarly work exists that specifically examines the reasons for the support given by these civilians who lived in the heart of Mosby’s operations, shared their homes with his men, and bore the brunt of the Union’s efforts to eliminate his forces.

The purpose of this work is to examine why the civilians in Mosby’s Confederacy supported the 43d Battalion of Virginia Cavalry. The tactics used by Mosby placed civilians at considerable risk with Union authorities, for his men did not live in a separate camp but stayed either in hideaways in the mountains or, more commonly, with families they knew in the area.

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19 Quoted in Wert, 274.


21 Crawford, 343-344.

22 Williamson, 339.
The nature of the guerrilla warfare practiced by Mosby's men, which involved late night gatherings, lightning strikes on the enemy's weakest points, and then dispersal into the countryside until the next raid, frustrated the Federal commanders who fought against them. These commanders, however, perceived from the start the essential role civilians played in the successful operation of the 43rd Battalion and therefore vented their wrath upon Mosby's supporters in an attempt to weaken their resolve to assist him. Countless Federal raids through the area pillaged farms, looted houses, arrested men, insulted women, and left the population on the brink of starvation. However, despite all the risks and sufferings the people endured, they supported Mosby and his rangers steadfastly through to the close of the war. Civilians in Mosby's Confederacy supported the 43rd Battalion because they embraced the Confederate cause, saw Union raids as standard enemy behavior and not solely a result of Mosby's actions, were inspired by Mosby's victories, sought the relief and protection offered by the partisans, and personally knew or were related to many of the rangers.

This paper will primarily examine the opinions and feelings of civilians who lived in Mosby's Confederacy, which was composed of the northern part of Fauquier county and the southern part of Loudoun county, Virginia (see map below). Fauquier and Loudoun counties were part of the larger area of northern Virginia, which is defined for this work as the area north of the Rappahannock River, east of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and south and west of the Potomac River. Although Mosby's men fought all over northern Virginia, the Shenandoah Valley, and Maryland and had steadfast supporters throughout these areas, Mosby's Confederacy was the center of his operations. He assembled his men in one of its towns at the beginning of each raid, dispersed them in its confines at its conclusion, and did not permit them to leave the area when they were not on duty. The households and hideaways that welcomed the rangers at
night and housed them until the next raid were located in this region. Although it had existed in practice for quite some time, the confederacy was not officially defined until June 22, 1864. In a statement to his rangers, Mosby described the area as being: "[f]rom Snickersville, along the Blue Ridge Mountains to Linden; thence to Salem (now called Marshall); to The Plains; thence along the Bull Run Mountains to Aldie, and from thence along the turnpike to the place of beginning, Snickersville."²³ Many references in this text, however, extend beyond these boundaries and embrace all of Loudoun and Fauquier counties in order to facilitate the explanation of events and figures provided.

The Land and People

One of Fauquier County's most prominent historians, John K. Gott, wrote, "it took little prescience to realize that, should there be a war, northern Virginia would become a sort of Flanders, the meeting place of conflicting armies."²⁴ This was no understatement; the armies of the North and the South clashed in northern Virginia longer than in any other portion of the Confederacy. Long after the Union's western armies pushed through Tennessee and Mississippi and into North Carolina, small rebel units such as the 43rd Battalion still threatened its front doorstep. The action in northern Virginia began with the battle of First Bull Run and continued nearly unabated until after General Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House. It was not by chance but rather by the strategic value of the area for both sides that the conflict continued there for four years.

²³ Ibid., 175.

At the operational level, northern Virginia was one of the most crucial sectors of the country because of its location directly between the two rival capitals of Washington, D.C., and Richmond, Virginia. Both sides considered control of the area to be crucial. Due to the geography of the region, specifically the fact that the Potomac River could not be crossed below Washington, any invasion of enemy territory by either side had to commence in northern Virginia. With the exception of General George B. McClellan’s Peninsula Campaign, every major Union offensive started from northern Virginia. General Lee launched three of his four northern movements, Second Bull Run, Antietam, and Bristoe Station, in this area. No other region of Virginia, not even the Shenandoah Valley, long hailed as the highway for invading armies, could claim to be as important.

For most of the war, this area was behind Union lines; its highways and railroads served as major supply arteries for northern armies. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and the Potomac River were the main Federal lines of supply and communication to all points west of the capital. Supply and communication lines for the several overland campaigns initiated to capture Richmond traversed the area. Also, Union advances from this area up the Shenandoah Valley to the west of the Blue Ridge Mountains required long lines of supplies and communications. Partisan rangers under Mosby would make their living upon these lines during the war. Their incessant attacks upon these lifelines, especially in 1863 and 1864, caused the detachment of thousands of Union troops and the retracting of defensive lines, all to the advantage of the Southern cause.²⁵

The terrain, especially in Loudoun and Fauquier counties, was ideal for partisan warfare; it was characterized by

²⁵ Wert, 139; Emily Ramey, *The Years of Anguish: Fauquier County, Virginia 1861-1865* (Warrenton, VA: The Fauquier Democrat, 1965), 139.
hundreds of square miles of forested mountains, woodlots and hills interspersed with fertile farmlands. A single sentry on horseback, stationed on a knoll, could scan miles of territory for enemy units. Country lanes, edged with stone walls, and obscure trails provided a network for movement.  

Mosby’s secret to success was surprise; he appeared out of nowhere, struck quickly, and then disappeared when pursued. Mosby and his men were intimately familiar with the area and knew how and where to escape from Federal pursuers or sneak up on an unsuspecting enemy.

A third strategic factor, besides the operational importance and general conduciveness to partisan warfare, was the abundance of food in the area. Before the war, Loudoun and Fauquier were two of the richest counties in Virginia. Fauquier had the second greatest number of improved acres for farming and Loudoun was not far behind at sixth. The “cash value of their farms” was even more impressive: Loudoun’s were the second most valuable and Fauquier’s were third. The people of Fauquier and Loudoun ranked third and fourth, respectively, in terms of the value of “farming implements and machinery” they purchased for their property. Livestock was also plentiful as Fauquier placed first in total value while Loudoun was third.

Fauquier and Loudoun dominated the surrounding counties in Virginia and made up a large portion of the state’s agricultural economy. The seven surrounding counties combined had only 50 percent more improved acres, 33 percent more value in their farms and implements, and only 10 percent more value in livestock. Fauquier and Loudoun combined to have 4.3 percent of all improved acres, 5.5 percent of the total cash value of farms, 5.6 percent of the value of live stock, and 5.1 percent of the value of farming implements in the state.

26 Wert, 35.


29 Ibid.
Both sides thoroughly appreciated the abundance of food and livestock in the two-county area. Loudoun and Fauquier supplied Mosby and his men, raiding Union parties, and even the Army of Northern Virginia and the Union Army of the Potomac when they moved through the area.\(^{30}\) Despite constant foraging, raids, and outright destruction that began in early 1862, the region continued to supply food for its inhabitants and visitors until Sheridan’s burning raid devastated the area in late 1864.

Fauquier County, formed in 1759 from neighboring Prince William County, numbered 21,706 residents in 1860.\(^{31}\) The county seat, Warrenton, home to 604 residents in 1860, was “a fashionable resort during the summer on account of the mineral springs in its neighborhood.”\(^{32}\) The town boasted “three hotels, two newspapers, fifteen stores, professional offices, an iron foundry, and wooden sidewalks” as well as several churches, a newly founded college for young women, and a connection to the Orange and Alexandria Railroad.\(^{33}\) Smaller towns were dispersed throughout the county, many of which had benefited from the newly built Manassas Gap Railroad before the war. Of all the towns east of the Blue Ridge, Salem (later Marshall) was the most important stop on this railroad that served as a direct connection between the fertile Shenandoah Valley and Washington, D.C. and eastern Virginia.\(^{34}\) The largest town in Mosby’s Confederacy, Upperville, was located in Fauquier and had 398 inhabitants in 1860.\(^{35}\)

\(^{30}\) Poland, 184.


\(^{32}\) Ibid., 520; Ramey, Plate A.

\(^{33}\) Wert, 38.

\(^{34}\) Williamson, 18; Wert, 38, 224; Ramey, Plate A; Gott, 38.

Fauquier County had a higher proportion of slaves than every state in the Confederacy except Mississippi and South Carolina. At 49.6 percent, slaves narrowly outnumbered whites; free blacks and mulattos made up the rest. Forty percent of white families owned slaves—128 of these families owned twenty or more slaves, while 285 owned between eight and nineteen. These totals were far higher than Virginia’s 30.7 percent slave population and 25 percent slave-owning families.\(^{36}\)

Loudoun County, formerly a part of Fairfax County, boasted about 21,774 residents in 1860. The county seat, Leesburg, “was a center of commerce and government” and was the largest town in the two counties with a population of 1,130.\(^{37}\) Many smaller villages were also scattered throughout the county. Loudoun differed from Fauquier in the makeup of its white population. While Englishmen who practiced slavery settled Fauquier and the southern part of Loudoun, Loudoun’s northern sector was populated by sizable German and Quaker settlements. These groups opposed slavery, lived on smaller farms, and held strong Unionist sentiments during the war.\(^{38}\)

Due to the presence of the Germans and the Quakers, slaves made up only 25.3 percent of Loudoun’s population, which was 5 percent lower than Virginia’s average.\(^{39}\) However, there were still 31 families that owned twenty or more slaves and 165 that owned between eight and nineteen. The slaveholding families in both counties, although not all of them lived in Mosby’s Confederacy, often assisted Mosby when he was operating in their area. As historian James A.


Ramage stated, "Mosby had selected this base of operations...very effectively; he depended on a concentration of slave owners true to the Southern cause."\textsuperscript{40}

The threat of conflict between the North and the South loomed in the minds of residents of Loudoun and Fauquier before the Civil War. In 1856, pro-slavery and anti-slavery interests in Loudoun clashed as a local newspaper, the \textit{Democratic Mirror}, denounced a "BLACK REPUBLICAN MEETING" that sympathized with many of the abolitionist movements dominating the northern states at that time.\textsuperscript{41} John Brown's Raid upon nearby Harpers Ferry unleashed unprecedented activity. Muster calls of local companies and regiments became more frequent as the region realized it needed to improve its defenses.\textsuperscript{42} When a rumor circulated that abolitionists were attempting to free John Brown, the vast pro-slavery faction quickly sent troops to intercept them. One resident of Fauquier, who joined the rush, defended his actions feeling that "if [he] hesitated [he] should forfeit all claim to the blood of those who were ever foremost in defending their country, from the first French and Indian Wars through the Revolution, and to the War of 1812, against all assaults upon [their] liberties."\textsuperscript{43}

In the 1860 presidential election, the residents of Fauquier and Loudoun supported either the Southern Democrats or the Constitutional Unionists—this was the trend in the rest of the state as well. Virginia cast its ballot for the Constitutional Unionists by only 156 votes over the Southern Democrats. Fauquier county had broken with the old Whig party in 1852 by voting Democratic and continued that trend by voting, 55-45 percent, for John C. Breckinridge, the Southern Democrat nominee over John Bell, the Constitutional Union candidate. Out of 1,856

\textsuperscript{40} Ramage, 101-102.

\textsuperscript{41} Quoted in Janney, 40.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 41.

\textsuperscript{43} Quoted in Ramey, 9-10.
votes cast, only one person voted Republican and thirty-nine voted Northern Democrat. In Loudoun, where support for the Whigs lasted until 1852 and then transferred to the shortly lived American Party in 1856, the result was the opposite, as Bell won with 69 percent of the votes. However, like Fauquier, support for the Northern Democrats and Republicans was small; out of 2,942, only 120 and eleven voters, respectively, cast ballots for either party.  

The two counties responded overwhelmingly in favor of leaving the Union when called to ratify Virginia's ordinance of secession. Although Loudoun's delegates voted against the measure, the majority of its people supported it despite the opposition of three precincts of Germans and Quakers. The vote was much easier in Fauquier, where the civilians were almost unanimous; several hundreds voted for secession, four opposed, and thirty-seven abstained. Regardless of their feelings before the vote, the majority of civilians, except for the Quakers, believed their primary responsibility was to Virginia, and therefore readily supported her cause.  

When secession became a reality, the men of these two counties eagerly joined Confederate service as militia units "were overwhelmed with applications to join their ranks." The residents of Mosby's Confederacy were accustomed to military activities as Salem was the headquarters for one of the militia regiments. "Large crowds of spectators usually attended the regimental and battalion musters" which the members of the regiment were required to attend. Richard H. Dulany, a member of a prominent family in Mosby's Confederacy, noticed, "all the


45 James W. Head, History and Comprehensive Description of Loudoun County, Virginia (Washington, D.C.: Park View Press, 1908), 147; Janney, 41-42; Gott, 58; Vogtsberger, xxi; Wert, 39.

46 Gott, 38.

young men in the neighborhood have joined the army."\(^{48}\) Still, he managed to find enough troops nearly a month later to form a new regiment composed of "the sons of Dulany's neighbors; if he did not know them personally, he was well known to them."\(^{49}\)

Thus, the residents of Loudoun and Fauquier counties, with the exception of the German and Quaker elements, eagerly supported the Confederate cause—and nowhere was this more evident than in Mosby's Confederacy. Mosby and his men took refuge amongst a people that supported secession whole-heartedly and were perfectly willing and able to support them throughout all the hardships of war.

First Taste of War

During the period before the arrival of John Singleton Mosby and his rangers, from April 1861 to December 1862, the civilians of Mosby's Confederacy experienced their first taste of war. The area experienced four different phases of occupation during this time. First was the period of April 1861 to February 1862 when the Confederates controlled the area. Next was the first occupation of the area by Union troops, beginning in March 1862. In August 1862, the third period began as Confederate armies liberated the area. This lasted for just a few months as Union forces returned following the battle of Antietam in November 1862, marking the start of the fourth period. The civilians in Mosby's Confederacy experienced nearly all the hardships of war during this time that they again experienced after the arrival of Mosby. Union troops arrested men, searched houses, pillaged farms, and restricted personal movement. Also present, however, was their undying devotion to the cause—which would endure throughout the war—openly expressed through hospitality to Confederate soldiers and hatred of the Yankee invaders.

\(^{48}\) Quoted in Vogtsberger, 2.

\(^{49}\) Ibid., 5.
Thus, the civilians welcomed Mosby with full knowledge of what to expect from their Union overlords—by the time of his arrival they were hardened veterans experienced with the terrors of war.

Festive spirit and great enthusiasm for the Confederate cause characterized the first months of the war. Civilians, especially those from the town of Salem, demonstrated this by the hospitality and overwhelming support they showed Confederate soldiers. On their way to the battle of First Bull Run, Captain John D. Imboden’s artillery batteries, which belonged to General Joseph E. Johnston’s army, were much encouraged by the reception that awaited them. They were greeted by the entire town, especially young women, who left “their own breakfasts [and] turned out to greet the soldiers, bringing plates, trays, and baskets filled with food.”50 A few weeks later, Richard H. Dulany praised these same civilians in a letter to his daughter Fanny. His men received “corn and large buckets of milk and tubs of ice water” that lifted their spirits.51

However, the calamities of war quickly arrived. Following the battles of First Bull Run and Ball’s Bluff, wounded soldiers filled the regions surrounding Warrenton and Leesburg, respectively. Churches, public buildings, and homes were all used to tend the injured.52 The absence of men in the fields, due to their having enlisted in the army, and the beginnings of the Union blockade caused shortages of supplies throughout the area. In Loudoun County, “by the fall of 1861, all residents felt the acute shortage of coffee, sugar, and salt as village grocers were unable to procure those items to replace their diminished stock.”53 Mail service faltered,

50 Gott, 40.

51 Quoted in Vogtsberger, 7.

52 Ramey, 53; Poland, 200.

53 Poland, 185.
newspapers closed or shrank in size, and road maintenance ceased. Fauquier experienced similar hardships as well, as Amanda Virginia Edmonds, who lived near Paris, Virginia, commented in late 1861 that she “had a tiresome ride to Rectortown, hardly paid us for ride for goods are so scarce -- have to go in every direction to get goods to suit a body.”

To this point, the civilians had nothing to fear from Union soldiers, as Confederate forces in northern Loudoun and Manassas Junction held the Federal forces at bay. There was even reason to believe that should they fall into the hands of the invaders, they would be treated fairly, for both the previous Federal Commander, Brigadier General Irvin McDowell, and the current one, Major General George McClellan, advocated conciliatory policies towards civilians and ordered their troops to adhere to the policies.

These assumptions did not last long once the Union troops under Colonel John W. Geary crossed into Loudoun County at the beginning of March 1862. They followed closely on the heels of Confederate General Daniel Harvey Hill, who was burning supplies useful to the Union forces as he evacuated the area in conjunction with the larger Confederate withdrawal from northern Virginia. The Unionists in northern Loudoun initially welcomed Geary’s men, but the reception quickly changed by the time he arrived in Leesburg on March 7. He pushed into the outer limits of Mosby’s Confederacy on March 12 when his troops occupied Snickersville and then entered its heart at Upperville on March 15. As only small detachments of Confederate cavalry opposed his advance, he continued moving through the territory, visiting Aldie and Middleburg. After a brief march through Catlett’s Station and Warrenton on April 11, Geary and his men returned to the Confederacy, intent to stay and repair the Manassas Gap Railroad. By

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55 Baird, 62.
March 29, the command successfully completed repairs through the confederacy to the town of Front Royal, Virginia.56

Geary mentioned the pillaging and occupation of Mosby’s Confederacy done by his men only as it related to supply difficulties: “we were compelled to procure our forage and subsistence through our quartermaster from citizens throughout the country, and many local places were so impoverished that numerous difficulties were attendant upon getting our necessities.”57 The civilians of Mosby’s Confederacy viewed the matter quite differently as Geary’s men introduced them to nearly every act of destruction that plagued them for the remainder of the war.

Several letters by Fanny Scott Carter, a child living in Mosby’s Confederacy, gave insight into how the civilian’s world was turned upside down. She wrote that Kate Powell lost much to the Union forces when they occupied Upperville, including “a great deal of corn, 17 heads of cattle, a Waggon [sic] and four horses, [and] all the fowls.” The Yankees made constant intrusions and broke into her house despite her family’s attempts to keep them out.

Fanny also told of a clash that took place in the streets of Salem in which Rebel cavalry captured eight prisoners. In response, Union troops threatened to burn the town and continued to abuse the local populace.58 This was the first of many times when humiliated Union forces, unable to defeat their enemies in the open field, threatened to burn a nearby town.

Over the next several weeks, many slaves left using the newly repaired railroad. Union pickets covered the area and cut off the population from the outside world. Newspapers were


57 Poland, 516.

58 Quoted in Ramey, 57-59.
scarce; rumors were the only form of news available and often contradicted one another. In addition, any kind of movement from where one lived required a pass from Union officials.\textsuperscript{59} Amanda Virginia Edmonds's insight—"Ah! This is the way they are going to subdue the South—by starvation" appeared to be true as a new round of pillaging occurred at the end of April.\textsuperscript{60} Along with many others, Mary Cary Ambler Stribling lost much of the produce of her farm.\textsuperscript{61} In a statement prepared for Union authorities, John Peyton Dulany, father of Richard H. Dulany, recounted in detail the actions of Union troops on his land. After arresting the only two adult white males, himself and a teacher, the Yankees searched the house, broke into all of the storerooms, insulted the women, and threatened to burn his house. Stolen items included "my bacon, four of five demi-johns of whiskey, a trunk with the clothes of one of my granddaughters, a gold snuff box, a silver tumbler and the keys of the wardrobes and rooms up stairs" as well as "Madeira wine[,] 1/2 barrel of whiskey[,] 1/2 barrel of brown sugar[,] 6 loaves white sugar[,] 2 chests of tea[,] 3 saddles[,] 2 bridles[,] 1 silver spoon[,] 3 silver handled knives[,] 2 guns[,] and] 3 horses."\textsuperscript{62} Acts of violence against life and limb also accompanied the new Union presence. Amanda Virginia Edmonds told the story of a civilian, Mr. Hutchinson, who tried to escape from his house, and not hearing the command to halt, was shot in sight of his wife and daughter. In another account, Union authorities allowed a small company of civilians to hunt down two

\textsuperscript{59} Baird, 82; Ramey, 59, 109-111, 114.

\textsuperscript{60} Baird, 80.

\textsuperscript{61} Ramey, 116-119.

\textsuperscript{62} Quoted in Vogtsberger, 27-29.
deserters who were stealing throughout the area. The company cornered them and, in the ensuing firefight, one was killed and the other captured, but at the loss of two civilians.\textsuperscript{63}

The need for passes, the arrest of civilians, and the foraging by Union troops continued throughout the rest of the first occupation. More threats of retaliation against the citizens followed a victory of Dulany’s regiment as the Union troops threatened to “arrest every man between Markham and Linden and … drive off the women and children.”\textsuperscript{64} Again, Union commanders showed that their favorite response to a Confederate victory was to threaten to burn a nearby town. The civilians thus experienced many of the hardships that they later suffered in greater frequency when Mosby and his rangers entered the area. Their resolve was impressive, as Amanda Virginia Edmonds commented, “we are willing to endure most anything if the lives of our friends are restored to us and our independence gained.”\textsuperscript{65}

Life in Mosby’s Confederacy changed almost overnight from a time of fear to a time of jubilation with the withdrawal of Union forces and the return of the Confederate army. Following his victory in the Seven Days’ Campaign in front of Richmond, General Lee determined to carry the war northward, with the hopes of liberating Virginia from its invaders. From August 25 to the twenty-sixth, Major General Stonewall Jackson’s men marched into the confederacy at Salem and then proceeded down the Manassas Gap Railroad towards Manassas Junction. Lee and Major General James Longstreet followed shortly thereafter. The movement resulted in the Confederate victory at Second Bull Run that was quickly followed by an invasion of Maryland in early September 1862. Lee’s army fought the Union troops to a standstill at the

\textsuperscript{63} Baird, 83-84, 86-87.

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 90.

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 95-96.
battle of Antietam on September 17, but was forced to withdraw back to Virginia due to heavy losses.

Despite losing so much during the Union occupation under Geary, civilians rushed to the aid of Confederate soldiers. Edward Carter Turner wrote “people everywhere relieve[d] them to the utmost of their ability.”\textsuperscript{66} When Jackson’s troops arrived in the midst of a forced march, the people responded to his call for food. Mrs. Henry Grafton Dulany, although she suffered as much as the rest, sent “corn, hams, tomatoes, a barrel of flour, and as much as the wagon could hold.”\textsuperscript{67} The town of Middleburg also warmly received the soldiers and offered them food and thanks.\textsuperscript{68} The arrival of Lee and Longstreet to the area also attracted considerable attention, with “people nearly wild with excitement.”\textsuperscript{69} One other amazement awaited the civilians—payment for the goods that they contributed.\textsuperscript{70}

In the midst of all the excitement, there were still complaints. After the fighting portion of the army moved on, stragglers remained in the area, trying to get food from civilians. Edward Carter Turner complained that “the whole country is swarming with stragglers or deserters” who begged for food. These men roamed throughout the area earning the disrespect and anger of the people until the return of the Union army.\textsuperscript{71}

Wounded soldiers once again flooded the countryside following the battles of Second Bull Run and Antietam. Salem and Middleburg became hospital centers, with the latter serving

\textsuperscript{66} Quoted in Ramey, 18.
\textsuperscript{67} Quoted in Ibid., 64.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{69} Quoted in Ibid., 19.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 64.
\textsuperscript{71} Quoted in Ibid., 20-21; Ibid., 20-21, 24, 65-66.
1,500 men. Private homes from Leesburg south to Warrenton also tended the sick and wounded and provided provisions for their care. Larger homes, such as the one lived in by Amanda Virginia Edmonds, also entertained soldiers who served in the area.\textsuperscript{72}

The fortunes of war did not allow this time to last, for by the end of September Union troops threatened on the horizon and by the middle of October they once again raided into Mosby’s Confederacy.\textsuperscript{73} During their brief respite, the civilians confirmed their commitment to helping their own troops despite having very little to offer. Their dedication to the Southern cause was deep and the recent fortunes of war did not shake their faith. After learning of the deaths of some soldiers she knew, Mrs. Henry Grafton Dulany confided that “every such sacrifice only increases my detestation of the wicked government that has caused such needless suffering, and intensifies my love for the cause daily becoming more and more hallowed by the dearest and noblest blood of our land.”\textsuperscript{74} In the same vein, Amanda Virginia Edmonds asked, “are we again to be subjected to every vile and base treatment and maybe lose our lives? How horrid to think we will again be giving up to them. Better that for awhile than subjugation if we can gain our independence and liberty, sweet liberty.”\textsuperscript{75}

The Union returned in force at the end of October and the beginning of November as Brigadier General Alfred Pleasonton’s cavalry drove Major General J.E.B. Stuart’s Rebels south out of Mosby’s Confederacy. Engagements occurred at Mountville and Union, and nearby civilians aided the Confederate soldiers. On one farm, women busily supplied passing soldiers with meat and bread and left huge tubs of milk and water outside for them to drink. Meanwhile,

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 22, 24, 65; Poland, 205-206; Baird, 110, 113.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 117-119; Ramey, 28.

\textsuperscript{74} Quoted in Ibid., 65.

\textsuperscript{75} Baird, 119.
the men sent food south to the Confederate army and Major General J.E.B. Stuart made a guest appearance.76

Mosby’s Confederacy once again suffered at the hands of the invaders. In some cases, however, property was protected, Union soldiers offered to pay for what they took, and stolen items were recovered.77 However, the vast majority of cases reflected the devastation of the previous occupation. Edward Carter Turner estimated his losses at “100 sheep, 34 hogs, 5 yearlings, 4 very fine horses and a large quantity of poultry.”78 He later heard of “houses robbed and burned, bread and meat taken to the last morsel. The last cent of money taken from the pockets of defenseless people.”79 The effects of war on the terrain concerned Mrs. Henry Grafton Dulany, for “the whole country is a vast common, not a rail fence to be seen for miles, and the stone fences pulled down to let the armies pass, until they do not serve at all as enclosures.”80

The Union army left Mosby’s Confederacy in the middle of November in order to strike south in another “On to Richmond” campaign that culminated at the battle of Fredericksburg. At the same time, it left behind small units of cavalry to scout the area. After a short while, Confederate cavalry also patrolled the area. Meanwhile, civilians traveled to Washington, D.C. to try to obtain supplies (although many were detained by authorities for weeks at a time) and

76 Vogtsberger, 47-49, 55-56.
77 Baird, 125; Ramey, 29-30.
78 Quoted in Ibid., 31.
79 Quoted in Ibid., 33.
80 Quoted in Ibid., 69.
tried to enjoy the Christmas holiday. However, a lack of supplies kept most parties small and most people remained in doors.\textsuperscript{81}

The civilians of Mosby's Confederacy showed their support for the Confederate cause in 1862 and while they already had endured many hardships, they experienced even more in the years to come. However, the course of the war in northern Virginia soon brought a new hope to these hardened veterans. The dawning of 1863 revealed that the Union high command, as well as the troops serving in the area, was equally susceptible to raids by enemy forces.

The Wooing of Fauquier and Loudoun

The successful defense of Washington, D.C. was one of the highest priorities of President Abraham Lincoln and the War Department during the Civil War. A thirty-seven mile perimeter of forts and earthworks that stretched from bank to bank of the Potomac River in both Maryland and Virginia enclosed the city. The felling of trees and removal of brush established a one-mile field of fire all around the defenses. The greatest minds in the Army of the Potomac advised a defensive force of 25,000 infantry and powerful artillery to secure the works and an early warning system of 3,000 cavalry to patrol Fairfax County. In addition, when the Army of the Potomac campaigned away from the capital, the number of troops protecting the city needed to be doubled. The Union high command implemented this precaution as 1863 dawned for the Army of the Potomac was encamped on the Rappahannock, opposing the Army of Northern Virginia, which was firmly planted behind its entrenchments near Fredericksburg. The Washington defenses numbered some 60,000 troops, with 5,200 infantry and 3,300 cavalry making up the early-warning system.\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 32-33, 35, 37-38.

\textsuperscript{82} Ramage, 58.
This system of defense, designed to protect against a large-scale assault, was completely unprepared for the events of the night of January 28, 1863—the capture of nine vedettes, with their arms and horses. This was not a major event except for the fact that John Singleton Mosby conducted the attack. He led a fifteen-man detachment of the 1st Virginia Cavalry undetected through the Union lines, struck outside Chantilly, Virginia, and then fled into the night. He and his men were fast asleep near Middleburg, Virginia before the Union pursuit was underway. This was the first of many attacks that confounded and annoyed all levels of the Union army for the next twenty-eight months.\(^3\)

Union Colonel Percy Wyndham organized the pursuit to Middleburg. Although unable to find Mosby, he learned that his captured men had been held briefly in the town. This fact, combined with Mosby’s continued attacks against Union pickets over the next week, led Wyndham, in the fashion of Union commanders before him, to threaten to burn Middleburg. Several prominent residents, unwilling to see their town destroyed over the guerrilla tactics used by Mosby and his men, asked Mosby to suspend his operations on February 4, 1863.\(^4\)

Undaunted by friend or foe, Mosby replied the same day in writing to Messrs. F. W. Powell, S. A. Chancellor, I. G. Grey, W. B. Noland and others of Middleburg:

I have just received your petition requesting me to discontinue my warfare on the Yankees because they have threatened to burn your town and destroy your property in retaliation for my acts. Not being yet prepared for any such degrading compromise with the Yankees, I unhesitatingly refuse to comply....[Y]ou are at liberty to inform them that no such clamor shall deter me from employing whatever legitimate weapons I can most efficiently use for their annoyance.\(^5\)

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\(^3\) Wert, 41.

\(^4\) Ibid., 42.

Mosby continued his skirmishing with Colonel Wyndham over the next month despite his precarious relationship with the inhabitants of Middleburg. In order for his command to survive, he needed the support of the people of Fauquier and Loudoun, and he had to begin by winning the hearts of the men and women of Middleburg.

Less than a month later, the town of Middleburg rallied to Mosby’s support ironically through no act of his own. On the night of March 1, Major Joseph Gilmer of the 18th Pennsylvania Cavalry led 200 men towards Middleburg in order to capture Mosby’s men. A few days earlier, Mosby and his rangers overran a fifty-man detachment and the Union high command determined that Gilmer should lead the retaliatory raid as Wyndham was absent. Just before daybreak, his men encircled the town, searched every building, and arrested every adult male they found. Gilmer awaited the results of the search in the local tavern, and when Mosby was not found, he forced the prisoners, all old or lame men, to march around town in military formation. The ride back to the Union camp soon began, but not before Gilmer renewed the threat to burn the village if the civilians did not put an end to Mosby’s operations. A woman, who had a better understanding of the situation than Gilmer did, replied “he might as well begin now for they had no more power to prevent Capt. Mosby than they could prevent them from coming.”

The command had not gone far, only a few miles past Aldie, when Gilmer spotted mounted troops arrayed in line of battle just up ahead. Gilmer, who was by now completely drunk, mistook these men, who formed part of Capt. Franklin T. Huntoon’s 1st Vermont Cavalry, to be Mosby’s men. As his troops rode double with civilians (and thus could not engage in

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87 Quoted in Wert, 44.
battle), he elected to turn off the turnpike and onto a muddy road towards Centerville. His cavalrymen quickly bogged down due to the arduous path of this self-inflicted rout and they dropped their prisoners off on the side of the road. Mosby’s men meanwhile raced through Middleburg in pursuit of Gilmer, only to encounter and defeat the 1st Vermont at Aldie. Mosby arrived just in time, however, for the dropped civilians to identify him as the reason why they had been saved.\footnote{Ramage, 62-63.}

The convoy of guerrillas, old men, and prisoners of the 1st Vermont returned triumphantly to Middleburg, heralded by the victorious cries of ranger Dick Moran. When the civilians saw their friends and family return, they “poured, cheering, into the streets” and welcomed Mosby’s men as heroes. Mosby and his men were accepted by the town and celebrated well that day. The support of Middleburg was the first step towards overall acceptance in the area; however, Mosby knew he needed a greater victory to ensure the support of the rest of Fauquier and Loudoun.\footnote{Hicks, 21; Wert, 45.}

On March 8, 1863, Mosby and twenty-nine of his men began a raid that proved to be one of the most famous of the war. Only Mosby knew where they were going and the objective; he was attempting a feat so dangerous that he later recalled “my fate was then trembling in the balance … if we should get caught it would end my career as a partisan.”\footnote{Williamson, 43.} With the help of a recent Union deserter, Private James F. “Big Yankee” Ames, Mosby planned to sneak his men through Union lines, into Fairfax Court House, and kidnap Colonel Wyndham from his own headquarters.\footnote{Ramage, 66; Wert, 18.}
Using the password "Fifth New York Cavalry," Ames's old regiment, they bypassed the Union lines and came to the outskirts of Fairfax Court House. The command then split up, some cut telegraph wires while others captured horses and guards. Mosby quickly discovered that Colonel Wyndham was in Washington that night, but learned that an even more valuable quarry was right under his nose: the commander of a brigade of Vermont troops, Brigadier General Edwin H. Stoughton. He was quickly woken from his slumber, helped to get dressed, and escorted back to Confederate lines along with thirty-two other men and fifty-eight horses—without a single loss to Mosby's command.  

The fame and acceptance of Mosby and his men instantly spread far beyond the confines of Middleburg into all of Loudoun and Fauquier. One ranger commented that "there was nothing in boldness or originality which surpassed it during the entire war ... nor did anything reflect more credit on the little command or create any more notoriety than his [Stoughton's] capture." In Fauquier, Walter Frankland, one of the rangers who participated in the capture, rode ahead of his column and woke up the entire town of Warrenton. As the news spread, the town awoke, fed the hungry soldiers, and celebrated. James J. Williamson, touched by the moment, recalled forty-six years later how "at Warrenton men, women, and children came out to give us an ovation." So great was the excitement that one-week later Mosby wrote to Stuart, his commanding officer: "Public sentiment seems now entirely changed...and I think it is the universal desire for me to remain."

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92 Ibid., 18-22.
93 Quoted in Ibid., 47.
94 Hicks, 29-30.
95 Williamson, 45.
96 Quoted in Wert, 49.
This was definitely the case in Salem, which soon became the center of activity for Mosby’s men because of its many highways and defunct railroad. Civilians “felt safer with them about and gladly carried messages back and forth on their behalf.”97 Furthermore, throughout his soon to be confederacy, “letters to the Virginia and Confederate governments confirm[ed] that, after the first few weeks when they realized that the Union army would not burn their homes, Mosby’s hosts welcomed his men.” Mosby’s men soon defied the stereotype that partisans were a nuisance to civilians—they actually were seen as a form of protection against Union stragglers and Confederate deserters. Ranger John Munson confirmed this and observed that the people “were glad to have Mosby’s men among them, not only to show their sympathy with the South, but also to have the protection which the presence of the Partisans afforded them.”98 Both Generals Lee and Stuart praised their subordinate not only for his performance raiding against the enemy, but also for relieving the hardships faced by civilians.99

The civilians were not naive, however, for in the midst of their support for his command, a few people expressed concern over Mosby’s ability to lighten their burdens. After three straight days of Union raids through Loudoun and Fauquier in which they searched homes and stole supplies, Ida Dulany, who lived near Upperville, did not feel secure: “I fear it is just the reverse...as every raid Moseby [sic] has made has produced a retaliating raid from the Yankees in which the citizens suffer severely. Moseby [sic] having always to get out of their way.”100 Her relative, John Peyton Dulany, expressed similar concerns in a letter to his son: “unless our

97 Gott, 43-44.


99 Ramage, 100.

100 Quoted in Wert, 56.
men could remain and protect our property, it would be better for us if they staid [sic] away.\textsuperscript{101}

He felt that the Yankees and Rebels had "some understanding" as the Yankees seemed to always arrive the day after Mosby's men went on a raid.\textsuperscript{102} Edward Carter Turner, a pacifist with Unionist leanings, expressed the greatest concern over Mosby's men. He "did not respect the service in which Mosby was engaged. Its object was mercenary rather than patriotic." His viewpoint may have been colored by the fact that his son, an early member of Mosby's command, was mortally wounded in one of their raids.\textsuperscript{103} Despite these objections, the vast majority of civilians in Mosby's Confederacy supported the 43\textsuperscript{d} Battalion after its capture of General Stoughton.

Mutual Benefits

The years of 1863 and 1864 witnessed a reversal of fortune for Confederate military forces from which they never recovered. The year began with a stalemate across all fronts: Union General Ulysses S. Grant's attempt to capture Vicksburg, Mississippi was stopped dead in its tracks just outside of Tennessee, and General William Starke Rosecrans narrowly escaped defeat further east at Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Meanwhile, in Virginia, the Army of the Potomac was still licking its wounds following its defeat at Fredericksburg. However, Union forces soon gained the upper hand. Grant captured Vicksburg on Independence Day and Port Hudson, Louisiana fell shortly thereafter, placing the Mississippi in Union hands and cutting the Confederacy in two. The Confederate offenses at which began at Chickamauga and Gettysburg resulted in severe manpower losses and crushing tactical defeats rather than the hoped for

\textsuperscript{101} Quoted in Vogtsberger, 79.

\textsuperscript{102} Quoted in Ibid., 98.

\textsuperscript{103} Quoted in Ramey, 39-40.
brilliant victories. In May 1864, with the initiative firmly in his hands on all fronts, General Grant began a massive campaign to defeat the Confederates through simultaneous attacks against the strategic points of Atlanta, Georgia, the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, and Richmond, Virginia.

Unlike their counterparts, Mosby, his rangers, and the civilians in Mosby’s Confederacy carried on their part of the war effort with amazing success during this time. On April 1, 1863, Mosby and his men overcame a surprise attack at Miskel’s Farm and routed their opponents. During the Gettysburg campaign, Mosby provided the intelligence that encouraged Stuart to embark on his controversial ride around the Union army. Raids against Union troops and their supplies continued unabated and the rangers gained victories at Warrenton, Guilford Station, and Brandy Station, before suffering a major defeat at Loudoun Heights at the beginning of 1864. This new year saw no let up in pressure, however, as Mosby’s attacks helped defeat a Union army raiding up the Shenandoah Valley. Sheridan, Grant’s handpicked solution to the problems in the Shenandoah Valley, also failed to stop Mosby as the rangers burned his supply trains at Berryville and assisted in Lieutenant General Jubal Early’s invasion of Maryland.

The civilians who protected Mosby engaged in a daily struggle with the Union forces in the area, for as Carter and both Dulanys feared, civilians received the anger that the Union forces could not direct against Mosby. In retaliation, therefore, for acts of violence conducted by Mosby, or simply to search him out, Union patrols scoured the area searching homes and villages, pillaging farms, arresting citizens, and, in a few rare cases, burning homes and outbuildings.

Despite these hardships, the civilians of Mosby’s Confederacy continued to support, house, and hide the rangers at nearly every opportunity. The reasons for their willingness to
endure extended beyond their original reasons for offering support, the backing of the Southern
cause and the inspiration that his men gave them. The people of Mosby’s Confederacy also
welcomed the rangers because of the ending of the straggler problem, the supplies they would
gain, and because most rangers were either friends or family, or would be by the end of the war.

The presence of Mosby’s rangers in the area effectively ended straggling by both
northern and southern soldiers. As mentioned earlier, straggling was a serious problem for
civilians in Mosby’s Confederacy and the surrounding area. After the appearance of Mosby and
his rangers, however, stragglers were no longer habitual guests, but appeared only after the Army
of the Potomac passed through the region, as after the Gettysburg and Wilderness Campaigns.¹⁰⁴
At other times, the country was relatively free of trouble. The Charleston Mercury reported “the
country people hereabouts are loud in their praises for Mosby. They say that he has done the
Yankees great harm...preventing straggling and raiding parties from going through the country
committing depredations.”¹⁰⁵ Northern soldiers feared being carried off in the middle of the
night by an unseen enemy and stayed closer to their units during marches. Northern papers
likewise received word of Mosby’s effectiveness and declared that he and other partisans “pick
up or kill all who straggle behind.”¹⁰⁶ Mosby’s influence was not limited to Northern soldiers
alone, for he and his men “aided conscript officers in the apprehension of deserters and of
civilians eligible for military service.... and held periodic rendezvous to ferret out runaways
from Lee’s army.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Charleston Mercury, August 4, 1863, June 4, 1864, as cited in “The Civil War: A Newspaper

¹⁰⁵ Charleston Mercury, October 23, 1863.

¹⁰⁶ New York Herald, July 29, 1863, as cited in “The Civil War: A Newspaper Perspective,” Accessible

¹⁰⁷ Wert, 75.
The capture of supplies formed a large part of the rangers’ mode of warfare, and they gratefully shared their spoils with their civilian protectors. Ranger John Munson commented, “whenever we made a successful raid, we made it a point to repay the farmers and country people whose bounty we enjoyed, in live stock and supplies. The return from a sutler’s raid was a holiday occasion, for everybody got something.”\(^{108}\) These items ranged from livestock, to food, such as “good rio coffee and oystes,” to “a nice riding whip,” to the recapture of a doctor’s saddlebags, which were extremely valuable “as the blockade had made medicine scarce.”\(^{109}\) The capture of a Union payroll chest, in what was popularly called the “Greenback Raid,” caused the free exchange of U.S. dollars to the point “that never afterwards was there a pie or blooded horse sold in that section for Confederate money.”\(^{110}\)

The most influential factor, however, was the personal relationship that the rangers had with the civilians in the area. Many soldiers hailed from the area where Mosby operated: more than “28 percent were from Loudoun and Fauquier Counties, and over 80 percent were from Virginia.”\(^{111}\) Of the remaining number, a large portion was from Maryland, and the rest came from other parts of the Confederacy or abroad.\(^{112}\) Having a place to stay was not a question for many of the rangers, for “many of them stayed at their parents’ homes, and many others resided with family friends or distant relatives.”\(^{113}\)

\(^{108}\) Munson, 28.


\(^{110}\) Williamson, 263.

\(^{111}\) Ramage, 96.

\(^{112}\) Ibid., 96; Wert, 12.

\(^{113}\) Ibid., 79.
The civilians in Mosby's Confederacy thus had a unique tie with the rangers. One woman commented that they "all had brothers cousins & lovers with Mosby,"\footnote{114} as well as fathers and sons. The civilians and the rangers grew close to one another as the war continued and, in some instances, what began as mere acquaintances soon led to marriage.\footnote{115} One of the greatest female socialites of the area wrote:

I have become perfectly devoted to the society of the Rebels, too indifferent to females. Why should I not love them for their heroic valor and fortitude and some very pleasant, agreeable and fine company. I can look back when the war is over and recall some of the happiest moments of my life -- yes, even amid the terrible war with all its sorrow and grief. I have spent many happy days full of change, variety and romance -- excitement is the thing that suits my fancy.\footnote{116}

The enjoyment of the society was not lost on the rangers either, as J. Marshall Crawford later reflected that "now, at this distant day, when I recall the hours I have spent to happily around the firesides of our friends in that country, in the society of their charming daughters, it seems like a dream."\footnote{117} Another believed that many of the rangers began to feel that their surroundings were their own homes and willingly laid down their lives to protect "home and loved ones."\footnote{118} He spoke of tearful good-byes before each raid and the comfort that should one die, there would be a "quivering lip to "kiss him for his mother"" upon his return.\footnote{119}

\footnote{114} Quoted in Ibid., 116.

\footnote{115} Ibid., 123-124.

\footnote{116} Baird, 173-174.

\footnote{117} Crawford, 122-123.

\footnote{118} Munson, 31.

\footnote{119} Ibid.
After the Ashes

As 1864 progressed, the Confederate military effort buckled under pressure. Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant battered his way to the gates of Richmond only to see his troops massacred at the Battle of Cold Harbor. He then changed his strategy and began to cut the city’s lifelines by attacking the vital rail center of Petersburg, Virginia. The resulting campaign strangled Lee’s army as it stretched its ranks over a forty-five mile front to prevent starvation. Lee’s last major attempt for victory was conducted by one of his subordinates, Jubal Early, who miraculously reached the outskirts of Washington, D.C. before his army was destroyed by Sheridan in the ensuing Shenandoah Valley Campaign. General John Bell Hood attempted to liberate Tennessee after he lost the city of Atlanta; his army was decimated in front of Nashville, Tennessee. Finally, two weeks before Christmas, Major General William T. Sherman successfully concluded his March to the Sea, leaving hundreds of miles of ravaged countryside behind him.

In Mosby’s Confederacy, however, the end result of the war was less certain as the rangers continued to raid and defeat their enemies and avoided every trap that was set for them. Union troops under Brigadier General George Custer, serving under Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley, shot or hanged six rangers who were prisoners in outrage against Mosby’s constant attacks. This failed to deter Mosby as he received authority from the War Department to hang an equal number of Union troops—cooler heads prevailed after his retaliation and prevented more hangings. Mosby’s men also prevented the repair of the Manassas Gap Railroad, which had been out of operation since the Confederate liberation in August 1862. This was accomplished despite Union authorities placing prominent Southern civilians on the trains that were traveling the tracks. Finally, in late November 1864, Mosby captured Blazer’s Scouts, a unit of
handpicked soldiers armed with repeating rifles whose sole goal was to eliminate Mosby and his
rangers, thus ending another attempted countermeasure. The greatest countermeasure, however,
was yet to come.

Sheridan and the War Department knew that their efforts to dispose of Mosby’s Rangers
throughout the summer of 1864 had failed because the rangers maintained the support and
protection of the civilians in Mosby’s Confederacy. Their attempts, however, had been limited;
the vast majority of the Union forces were busy fighting Early’s army in the Shenandoah Valley.
Following the Confederate’s final defeat at Cedar Creek on October 19, however, the Union
forces turned their full attention to the Loudoun Valley, an area comprising most of Loudoun and
Fauquier counties, and prepared to strike what they hoped would be the final blow to break the
people’s will to resist.

On November 9, Grant told Sheridan that it was absolutely necessary that he destroy any
subsistence that gave Mosby a reason to operate in Loudoun and Fauquier counties.120 A few
weeks later, Sheridan informed Major General Henry Halleck, the Chief of Staff of Union forces,
of his decision to conduct a burning raid of the Loudoun Valley in order to bring about “an
intense hatred of [Mosby].”121 He wanted those who supported the rangers to realize that
“[Mosby] does not injure me a great deal, but causes a loss to them of all they have spent their
lives in accumulating.”122 By transferring the responsibility for the raid upon Mosby and forcing
the civilians to “bear their burden by loss of property and comforts,” Sheridan hoped that a “cry
for peace” would arise and put an end to the rangers’ activities.123

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120 Wert, 260.
121 Quoted in Williamson, 317.
122 Quoted in Ibid.
123 Quoted in Ibid.
The burning raid began on November 28 and lasted until December 1, 1864. Sheridan sent three columns through the Loudoun Valley, "one of which went along the Bloomfield road and down Loudoun, in the direction of the Potomac; another passed along the Piedmont pike to Rectortown, Salem and around to Middleburg; while the main body kept along the turnpike to Aldie, where [it] struck the Snickersville pike."  

The orders Sheridan gave to his subordinates were simple: "consume and destroy all forage and subsistence, burn all barns and mills and their contents, and drive off all stock in the region.... however, that no dwellings are to be burned, and that no personal violence be offered the citizens." During this time, Mosby and his command were active as they attacked Sheridan's men when the opportunity arose and assisted the civilians in protecting some of their livestock, either by moving them to areas of safety or into areas that had already been ravaged.

At first the raid appeared to be a complete success. According to one Federal chaplain, "388 horses, 8 mules, 5520 cattle, 5837 sheep, 1141 swine, and property destroyed to the amount of $2,508,756" were the results of the raid. Catherine Broun watched the devastation approach her family and wrote, "the whole heavens are illuminated by the fires." J. Marshall Crawford was equally horrified and lamented "if old Satan himself had thrown open the gates of hell and turned loose all the devils in there, they could not have inflicted greater misery and woe." Destruction and devastation was not limited to Mosby’s Confederacy, however, as

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124 Quoted in Ibid.

125 Quoted in Wert, 260.

126 Williamson, 322-324.

127 Quoted in Hicks, 157.

128 Quoted in Wert, 261.

129 Crawford, 310.
many of the victims were Quaker Unionists who opposed Mosby, but nevertheless suffered hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage.\textsuperscript{130} However, it was evident that Sheridan’s attempt to break the will of the people of Mosby’s Confederacy had failed.

The civilians displayed their continuing support in many ways. Following a victory at Ashby’s Gap on February 19, 1865, the people of Paris, as in previous times, joyfully welcomed their conquering rangers. Many civilians continued to house the rangers and hide them when Union forces arrived. Also, when half of Mosby’s command had to leave the region for the Northern Neck of Virginia due to lack of supplies in Loudoun and Fauquier counties, a farewell party was held in Salem in which many of the women encouraged the soldiers. However, the greatest display of support was shown and voiced when Mosby was wounded on December 21, 1864.\textsuperscript{131}

While attending the marriage of his ordinance sergeant, Mosby and a fellow ranger received word that Federal forces were nearby, quietly left, and went to investigate. Along the way, they stopped at the home of Ludwell Lake, a friend of Mosby, for dinner. The partisan commander, thinking the area was then free of Union patrols, neglected to keep guard; however, the house was quickly surrounded by Union troops. After several rushed into the house, a shot was fired through the window that struck Mosby, sending him to the floor instantly. The family denied knowledge of Mosby’s identity while he claimed to be a lieutenant from a nearby Confederate cavalry unit. When the doctor who was with the Union forces pronounced his wound mortal, the Federals left, leaving him with the family. Realizing that he was not dead, the

\textsuperscript{130} Wert, 262.

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 272; Crawford, 325-328.
family prepared an ox cart that started him on his successful journey to safety and a healthy recovery.\textsuperscript{132}

News of the event quickly spread across the land and “it was a source of much regret to both citizens and soldiers,” as Mosby’s wound was rumored to be mortal.\textsuperscript{133} One ranger asserted that despite being offered large rewards for the whereabouts of Mosby from pursuing Union troops (who realized their earlier mistake) the people of Salem replied simply, “No one knows.”\textsuperscript{134} Amanda Virginia Edmonds, summing up the feelings of many others, rejoiced over Mosby’s escape but feared for his health: “Lo! escaped from their fiendish hands, our dear Guerrilla Chief; the despised, the anxiously sought for Mosby, how wonderful! His wound is very serious and is feared will prove mortal. Oh! Will an all power restore him to health, to his command and to his country again?”\textsuperscript{135}

**Faithful to the End**

The conflicting nature of historians’ evaluations and the evidence presented here reveal that interpreting the support offered from civilians in Mosby’s Confederacy is more complicated than was originally assumed. The civilians had desired peace since the beginning of the war, but it had always been with a Southern victory. In the spring of 1865, the civilians were still supporting Mosby’s rangers and were not prepared for a defeat. There was hardly ever a recorded incident of a civilian speaking against Mosby and his rangers and, despite Sheridan’s beliefs, they never accused Mosby of causing the destruction of the burning raid. Instead, they

\textsuperscript{132} Williamson, 328-330.

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 334-335.

\textsuperscript{134} Crawford, 321.

\textsuperscript{135} Baird, 209-210.
embraced his cause and supported him to the very end. On April 18, 1865, Amanda Virginia
Edmonds declared:

God bless his [Mosby’s] noble, brave, unyeilding, Southern heart. Words cannot
express my admiration for his qualities as a soldier. The dear fellow responded to
the waves and cheers of the ladies as he returned home to his little Confederacy
with, "No surrender, no surrender," and smiled with it too. Oh! Mosby must we
give the up?"  

The civilian’s dismay cited by other historians was most likely caused by events that occurred
outside of Mosby’s Confederacy, from other areas of the war. In a letter dated February 24,
1865, to his son, who was a colonel in the cavalry, John Peyton Dulany asked that he return
home to care for his children—not because of problems in Mosby’s Confederacy, but because “a
man has this moment informed me that Charleston has fallen...under present circumstances it
would be hard to be hopeful of coming events.” In agreement, historian James Ramage wrote:
“[Mosby] and his men and their civilian friends were winning their guerrilla war, and they were
emotionally unprepared for the end. When Lee surrendered, Catherine Broun recorded, ‘It is a
terrible disappointment, so unlooked for.’”

Conclusion

The civilians in Mosby’s Confederacy supported the 43rd Battalion of Virginia Cavalry for
many reasons. The first reason was their devotion to the Confederate cause, demonstrated
repeatedly throughout the conflict. It was expressed during times of good fortune as they
extended their hospitality to Southern soldiers, rejoiced over great victories, and were pleased to
see their heroes, such as Lee, Jackson, Stuart, and Longstreet. Difficult times did not diminish

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136 Ibid., 220.

137 Quoted in Vogtsberger, 274.

138 Ramage, 261.
their feelings: they endured raids, enemy occupation, isolation from the rest of the South, and even the loss of loved ones if it would somehow help their country.

Second, and the idea presented here for perhaps the first time, is that the civilians had already suffered much at the hand of Federal troops. They did not blame Mosby for the Union's raids. Hardships were felt in the area as early as 1861, and Mosby's Confederacy experienced a rough occupation by Union forces almost a full year before Mosby arrived. Thus, the civilians learned the difficulties of war early on and prepared to endure them. Arrests, the threat of starvation, the destruction of property, and the restriction of movement were all characteristics of their first occupation. The difficulties they experienced later with Mosby were not new—they simply occurred with greater frequency. Again, the greatest test of this was Sheridan's burning raid, which was designed specifically to convince the civilians that Mosby, not the Union forces, was ultimately responsible for their suffering. The civilians passed this test and continued to support Mosby and his rangers to the very end.

Mosby won over the residents of his confederacy with his great victories. When the people feared that he was going to bring them nothing but hardship, they asked him to leave. He refused, and later showed them that his rangers could bring them great victories through his apparent defeat of Major Gilmer and his capture of General Stoughton. These events convinced the people of Mosby's Confederacy and earned Mosby the love of the entire South. His men continually did this through countless victories during his nearly two-and-a-half-year campaign.

He also won over the residents because his men gave them protection against the Union forces. His men ended straggling in the area—a constant evil that had occurred since the first armies marched through the area. Also, his men distributed the supplies they captured from
Union sutler wagons and thus helped to relieve not only the strain they placed upon each household, but that placed by the Union raids as well.

Finally, the people of Mosby’s Confederacy supported Mosby because his rangers were made up of their fathers, brothers, other relatives, and friends. They lived their day-to-day lives with the partisans and adopted many of them into their families. Their concern was great for them when they went into battle and they rejoiced greatly at their safe return.

Mosby thus enjoyed undying support from a loyal population because they supported the Confederate cause, saw Union raids as standard behavior by the enemy and not solely as a result of his actions, were inspired by the rangers’ victories, supplies, and reduction of the straggler problem, and personally knew or were related to many of the rangers. This support was so strong that the Union army could not break it—only the complete defeat of Confederate forces in other theaters brought an end to Mosby and his confederacy.
Bibliography

Primary Sources


Amanda Virginia Edmonds's journal is complete with many social occurrences and strong opinions, but is lacking in description of major events and thoughts beyond her social life.


Provides copies of the Charleston *Mercury* and the New York *Herald*.


One of the first works by a ranger published after the war, Crawford is extremely biased in his views and often confuses his wartime chronology.


This memoir follows Munson from the date of his first meeting Mosby through to the end of the war. It is full of description about partisan life and contains some interactions with civilians.


Not very helpful for this thesis; this work concentrates on Mosby's life and the command and hardly ever mentions civilians.


This work also contains little about civilians but is useful for Mosby’s correspondences that can indirectly relate to the people of Loudoun and Fauquier.


This is extremely helpful for anything military; in this work, it helped to further explain troop movements.


The most comprehensive memoir published by a ranger; however, it still largely ignores civilian life. This work contains copies of official correspondences and other letters and has an extensive appendix that provides further details on the 43rd Battalion.

**Secondary Sources**


This work was very biased towards the South and thus could not provide much reliable information.


This work concentrated on Mosby and his men and referred to civilians only as they related to the rangers.


Jones’s work was almost entirely devoted to a military analysis of the guerrilla war conducted by Mosby.


This is one of the first biographies of Mosby and portrays him in an heroic light.


Currently the best biography on Mosby available.


Very helpful work that contains many smaller articles, diaries, and other collections. This book provided much primary material and valuable historical insights into Fauquier County during the Civil War.


This work is a collection of diary entries and letters of the Dulanys. It is annotated throughout by Vogtsberger and provides much insight into the everyday occurrences in Mosby’s Confederacy.


Currently the best study available on Mosby’s Rangers.