Mosby’s Fairfax Court House Raid
March 9, 1863
“The Wildest Devils Ride”
by William Page Johnson, II

One hundred and fifty years ago this month, during the early morning hours of March 9, 1863, John Singleton Mosby, one of the Civil War’s most celebrated and colorful characters, embarked with 29 of his men on their most daring and significant raid – Fairfax Court House.

Mosby’s object was the capture of Union Col. Sir Percy Wyndham. Wyndham, a British soldier of fortune, disapproved of Mosby’s unrefined guerilla style tactics and, in the months preceding, is alleged to have slandered Mosby by labeling him Horse Thief. Mosby was incensed and wanted Wyndham as a prize.

In December 1862, acting Brigadier General Edwin Henry Stoughton, of Bellows Falls, Vermont, the newly appointed commander of the 2nd Vermont Brigade had moved his headquarters to Fairfax Court House.

“Fairfax Court House reminded me of a hog yard, everything was so dirty! There was a few little groceries and sutler’s shops there and that is about all.”

Stoughton, had recently been nominated for Brigadier General, by President Lincoln, but had not yet been confirmed by the United States Senate. At 24, he was then the youngest Brigadier General in the Union army. The 2nd Vermont Brigade, composed of the 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th Vermont Infantry Regiments, were encamped in tents several miles to the south of Fairfax Court House along Wolf Run Shoals on the Occoquan River and Union Mills along Bull Run. In addition to his Headquarters Guard and the troops detached to the Provost Marshal of Fairfax Court House, General Stoughton

Col. John Singleton Mosby, 43rd Battalion Virginia Cavalry
Source: Library of Congress

Continued on Page 3
Message from the President

I hope that you have all have a successful start to the New Year. HFCI is looking forward to another full year of events. The first big event will be Mosby’s Raid and Reenactment and Commemoration being held on March 9th. This event organized by the City of Fairfax Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee will involve a reenactment of Mosby’s capture of Union general George Mason. Talks by Mosby scholars and screening of Mosby’s Combat Operations in Fairfax County, Virginia. The Fairfax Museum will also have a special exhibit dedicated to Mosby.

The annual Civil War Day will be held at the Blenheim Civil War Interpretive Center on April 27. This has become one of the signature events for the City’s Office of Historic Resources and HFCI. It is always a fun event for the whole family. On September 27, HFCI will be holding the annual Taste of the Vine fundraiser. This is our most important fundraising activity and we hope that everyone will plan on attending.

HFCI’s support for the restoration of the City’s historic properties will be continuing this year. HFCI will be contributing $50,000 toward work to stabilization effort at Blenheim house. This work is critical to making the house safe for future expansion of visitation and use.

Please check our new website http://www.historicfairfax.org for information about these events as well as many others.

David L. Pumphrey

At the Fairfax Museum and Historic Blenheim...

Sunday, March 10 – 2 p.m.
Presentation and chocolate tastings with food historian and historical consultant Joyce White. Program is free, but reservations are required and limited to 25 people.

Sunday, April 14 – 2 – 2 p.m.
The Circus Comes to Town.
Naomi Zeavlin from the Fairfax County History Commission will explore the fascinating lives of the circus families, the Baileys and the Munsons, and the area of today’s “Bailey’s Crossroads.”

Sunday, May 12 – 2 – 2 p.m.
Women’s Fashions of the Civil War Era. Illustrated talk and “show and tell” of period clothing with Mary Doering, costume historian and professor at George Mason University. (Note: This is a joint program with Historic Blenheim. Location: The Civil War Interpretive Center at Historic Blenheim, 3610 Old Lee Highway.)

Sunday, June 9 – 12 – 2 p.m.
First House: Two Centuries with Virginia’s First Families. Illustrated talk, book signing, and sale by Mary Miley Theobald, author of First House, the official bicentennial book of the Virginia Governor’s Mansion, celebrating 2013 as the “Year of the Historic House Museum.”
Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 10209 Main Street, Fairfax. 703-385-8414

*** Special Events ***

Saturday, March 9 – 10 a.m.
Historic Downtown Fairfax

Saturday, April 27 – 10 a.m.
13th Annual Fairfax Civil War Day – Historic Blenheim, 3610 Old Lee Highway. Fairfax Living history presentations, slave life demonstration, historic house tours, military firings, musical performances, and much more!
Historic Blenheim and The Civil War Interpretive Center, 3610 Old Lee Highway. Fairfax. 703-591-0560

Fairfax Court House News of 150 Years Ago

...FROM FAIRFAX COURT HOUSE

At 10 p.m., on the 31st ult., a detachment of the Fifth New York cavalry, without commissioned officers, broke into a private house on Main Street, held the occupant, and took from him his wallet, containing $41.

From thence they proceeded to the outer establishment of Mr. M. H. Sullivan. The doors were closed for the night, but the troops broke them open, overpowered the three clerks in attendance, robbed the money drawer of about $250 in cash, and took about $600 worth of goods, comprising tobacco, gauntlet gloves, etc., and perfectly demolishing the contents of the store.

Lieut. Col. Charles Cummings immediately ordered his infantry guard to load, and they marched to the scene of the disturbance, when the cavalry fled to the outskirts of the town, where the cavalry fled to the outskirts of the town, when the cavalry fled to the outskirts of the town.

The matter is now undergoing investigation. – [Washington Republican.]

Alexandria Gazette, January 5, 1863, p. 4, c. 1.

The capture of Capt. Mosley, at Fairfax Court House, arrived last night by the Central train. We hear that the Yankee Brigadier, Slaughter, was the object of especial consideration, the lady passengers bestowing upon him such marks of attention that he might have been mistaken for a friend, rather than an enemy. This is something new under the sun.

Richmond Whig, March 13, 1863, p. 1, c. 6.

General Stahl has returned to Fairfax County House, having visited Washington to urgently adopt a more stringent measures in reference to disloyal citizens within the lines, and of forarn guerrillas in the surrounding county.

His proposals were promptly acceded to by General Heintzelman, and will be vigorously enforced.

Alexandria Gazette, April 18, 1863, p. 2, c. 3.

Endnotes continued from p. 22

195 Selected Records of the War Dept. Relating to Confederate POWs, Rec. Grp. 109, M598, p. 254, NARA, Wash., DC.
196 Selected Records of the War Dept. Relating to Confederate POWs, Rec. Grp. 109, M598, p. 261, NARA, Wash., DC.
197 Selected Records of the War Dept. Relating to Confederate POWs, Rec. Grp. 109, M598, p. 300, NARA, Wash., DC.
To the Voters of the 1st Congressional District of Virginia:

As the call of patrioticcitizens residing in the Ninth Congressional District, embracing the counties of Fairfax, Pednor, Loudoun, Prince William, Fauquier, Rappahannock, Page and Warren, and the individuals of these counties, who wish to aid in securing the next Congress of the Confederate States, to compliance with the call, from the same, and other parts, I now announce myself also, a candidate for the unexpired term, newly vacated by the resignation of Representative S.S. Mosby.

The regular election will take place on the fourth Thursday, May 9th, at which time the vacancy occasioned by the aforementioned resignation will be filled.

Richmond Whig, April 24, 1863, p. 1, c. 5.
had about one hundred of his infantrymen detailed immediately around him in the village. They were supported by Wyndham’s cavalry brigade, which consisted of the 1st West Virginia, 5th New York, and 18th Pennsylvania Cavalry regiments. The 1st West Virginia was detailed elsewhere but the 5th New York and the 18th Pennsylvania were camped nearby at Georgetown about a mile from Fairfax Court House.

It seems Stoughton preferred the comfort of a fine brick home, which Fairfax Court House had in abundance, while Wolf Run Shools and Union Mills did not.

"Why he was there, four miles away from the nearest regiment of his brigade, is explained by the fact that at Fairfax Court House are brick houses and comparatively comfortable quarters, which Gen. S. much preferred to living in a tent."

In January 1863, Annie Hayes, wife of Union General Alexander Hayes, was invited to dinner with General Stoughton. She noted the following in a letter to her father:

“One of the regiments, the 125th New York, had been ordered to command and protect the military stores at Fairfax Court House, and were invited to go over and dine with General Stoughton... I found General Stoughton one of the handsomest men I have ever met, well educated, his manners very refined, and only 24 years of age. He has not seen much service, and when I tell you that his brother, only 19 years old, commands his former regiment, you may rest assured he has friends high in authority. He commands Vermont regiments, his native state.

"General Stoughton... is elegantly quartered, has a large modern house, with many pieces of handsome furniture."

This was the home of Fairfax physician, Dr. William Presley Gunnell, which is now the Rectory for Truro Episcopal Church.

"Of course the dinner was good, but the band was the finest I have ever heard. Twenty performers on German silver instruments. After dinner we went to the 'Court House,' a small brick building, the bricks are red and black, alternate. The inside is entirely destroyed and is used for commissary stores. We then crossed over to the court and registers' offices, and there, in the greatest confusion lay masses of old papers and books. I picked up some, dating back as far as 1740, and a book of 'Stray Animals' of Fairfax County for 1786. I will take them home as souvenirs."

Some of the one hundred or so troops quartered in Fairfax Court House were the members of the 2nd Vermont Brigade Band. This band “of 17 pieces, ...furnished music for dress parades and special occasions.” Sjt. J. Hudson Kibbe, Co. C, 13th Vermont Infantry “staid with the company until sometime in December, when he was detailed into the Regimental [Brigade] Band. He was stationed at Fairfax Court House a great part of the winter of '62 and '63.”

General Stoughton was fond of the good life generally, and would occasionally entertain in particular, which included being entertained by the 2nd Vermont Brigade Band while at Fairfax Court House.

However, Stoughton was not the only Union officer who preferred the comforts of a brick house in Fairfax Court House to a tent in the field. Col. Sir Percy Wyndham, a British professional soldier, who had been knighted for his service in the Italian War of Independence, was a cavalry brigade commander. His brigade was present near Fairfax Court House as part of the screen for the outer defenses of...
Henry W. and Julia M. Thomas. Henry Thomas was a
and foreign observer who had served with Wyndham in the
Albany, New York, a former student of Harvard College,
Army Purveyor, or Sutler. Sweetser was occupying two
New York Cavalry and the Provost Marshall of Fairfax
Washington, DC.9 Wyndham was quartered in the home of
however, as evidenced by the following communication sent
Washington, DC nightly to discourage infiltration by Mosby.

Lastly, Stoughton’s brigade telegrapher was located in
the yard in front of his headquarters. If necessary,
was occupying two storesheds on Main Street.

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What is known is that late on the afternoon of March
30th 1863 Mosby and 29 men left Dover, Virginia, two miles
Road.

The identity of mysterious Captain referenced by
Mosby's Rangers: A Record of the Operation of the
Twentieth Battalion Virginia Cavalry, 1863, p. 31

Because of Mosby’s attacks on Union pickets
in the area, recent Union practice was to pull in most single
pickets to their reserve camps at night to save them from
being captured. The Union army was even said to have
frightened off some 100 Mosby's partisans as they travelled
across the Chain Bridge into Washington, DC nightly to
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however, as evidenced by the following communication sent to
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conceal themselves from Mosby. General Stoughton was not entirely without concern,
however, as evidenced by the following communication sent to
General Heintzelman.
William Vautier, a Citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 26, 1863, on the charge “Rebel & Spy.”

Miss Annie Walters, a Female res. of Warrenton, was arrested in Fairfax Co., March 17, 1863, on the charge “Spy & Disloyal.” Sent to City Point for exchange June 10, 1863.

Thomas W. Williams, age 50, a Citizen & Merchant and res. of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home March 9, 1863, on the charge “Rebel & rebel sympathizer.” Released on oath Sept. 6, 1863.

Johannus Wolf, a Citizen of Prussia, was arrested at Darnesville, March 16, 1863, on the charge “Giving information to the enemy.”

Augustus Wrenn, age 57, a Citizen of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 16, 1863, on the charge “Giving information to the enemy.”

Endnotes:
Caledonia, December 26, 1862, p. 2, c. 4.

Palmer, E.F., “The Second Brigade; or, Camp Life,” C. 1864, p. 91, F.P. Waldo, Montpelier, VT.


The position of Second Auditor was created by the Virginia General Assembly in 1823 to ease the burden of Auditor of Public Accounts.

Letters of Charles Cummins to his wife, January 29, 1863 & March, 1863. Cummins was Provost Marshal of Fairfax Co. from Dec. 1862 to Jun. 1863, enroute to Virginia by the mails. In 1862 while at Fairfax C.H. Cummins, boarded at the home Spencer & Mary Jackson, Vermont Historical Society.

Spencer & Mary A. (Richardson) Jackson operated the Virginia (Williams) Hotel at Fairfax Court House from 1841 to 1850. Mary’s father, William Pierpont Richardson also operated the tavern in the 1820’s.


Col. Sir Percy Wyndham, Wyndham’s Brigade

Mosby’s intended target, March 9, 1863. Note the Military Order of Saver given him by King Victor Emmanuel of Italy.

Source: Library of Congress

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Mosby’s men were naturally suspicious of Ames, a Yankee and a deserter. But he had inspired Mosby’s confidence after Ames and another of Mosby’s command, Pvt. Walter Frankland, had walked 25 miles through the rain and mud from Aldie to Germantown to obtain horses. The pair exploited the gaps in the Union lines and boldly entered the camp of the 5th New York Cavalry at Germantown. In full view of a guard they acquired two fine horses. If caught, Ames would have been summarily shot either as a deserter or a horse thief. This little adventure was related to Mosby and is likely the genesis of Mosby’s own plan.

As they rode along Mosby shared his plan with Ames. Nearly all of Mosby’s men were familiar with the roads around northern Virginia. Men like Ranger John Thomas, the son of Virginia State Senator Henry W. Thomas, was actually raised in Fairfax Court House and consequently knew it well. However, while these men were useful, Big Yankee Ames, as he came to be known, was the key to the success of this raid because of his familiarity with the Union troop strength and their routines in and around Fairfax Court House. Also, because of Ames and Frankland’s adventure, Mosby was aware of the gaps which existed in the Union lines. One of these gaps existed between Centreville and Chantilly.

As Mosby approached Chantilly, he turned his column south to avoid the Federal cavalry pickets posted there, passing between them and the infantry posted at Centreville. The meager light was fading fast with the setting sun. Ironically, there was a full moon, which would have been visible except for the fact that it was completely obscured by the rain and heavy mist. Pitchy darkness reigned and enveloped everything. The men wore black rubber ponchos over their uniforms to protect themselves from the rain, further obscuring them from view. The snow on the ground muffled the sound of the horses as they stealthily crossed through pine thickets and fields.

The column traveled overland southeast crossing over the road to Frying Pan Church (now West Ox Road) just south of the battlefield at Ox Hill. At about midnight, they entered the Warrenton Pike (now Lee Highway) between Fairfax Court House and Centreville and again turned east. They stopped long enough to cut the telegraph wires strung along the side of the road which connected Fairfax Court House and Centreville. As they rode further east several men began to realize where they were and Mosby found it necessary to bring these men into his confidence. As they approached Germantown, the fires of Wyndham’s cavalry camp became visible on their left. They shared a brushfire and, headed south, leaving the road for the shelter of the woods. Near here, the Old Ox Road (now Rust Road) ran south through the farm of Newman Burke and beyond to Braddock’s Road and Pope’s Head Road. In the woods a remnant of this road can still be seen today. Bisceting the wood...
Opposite the courthouse, on Main Street, stood the venerable old Wilcoxson Hotel (aka Union Hotel). Here, the 2nd Vermont Brigade had established a branch of Green Mountain Post Hospital, which they called the Brick Hotel Hospital. Speaking only in whispers, Mosby established this location as their rendezvous point and ordered Ames and Pvt. Walter Frankland to dismount and remain at the hotel as lookouts. He then divided his force into three squads. Two squads were assigned to search the town for Union officers, while a third was given instructions to search the town for all available horses. As officers were known to ride only the best horses, these horses were made a priority. There were large stables located immediately behind the courthouse and the hotel. It is likely the men began their search here. Although there were substantial sutler and government stores cached all over Fairfax Court House, Mosby did not have the time or the means to carry them off or even destroy them. Therefore, Mosby’s orders were clear, take Union officers and their horses only.

After the reporters had silently fanned out, a solitary Union sentry walked up Main Street to Ames and Frankland. The sentry challenged them. Ames calmly replied, “I belong to the 5th New York Cavalry. I am waiting here by order of Major White, whom I am expecting any moment.” As there really was a Major Amos H. White, of the 5th New York Cavalry, the sentry, satisfied, returned to his beat. As he passed by, Ames leaned forward and pressed his pistol to the man’s head and said, “if you utter a sound you are a dead man.” The astonished sentry quickly surrendered. Such was the case with every other Union soldier encountered by Mosby’s men. Deep within the safety of their own lines, they assumed all were friendly. The squad sent to retrieve horses accomplished their task. Several mounted Union pickets posted around the town and their horses were also captured. The surviving regimental books of the 18th Pennsylvania and 5th New York Cavalry include the following interesting notations:

Morning Report, March 1863, Co. I, 18th Pennsylvania Cavalry “Remarks:”

“March 8th Enemy captured three horses at Fairfax Court House”

Morning Report, March 1863, Co. F, 5th New York Cavalry “Remarks:”

“March 8th Six Mounted Men on Packet”

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Old Ox Road were the cuts and fills of unfinished line of Manassas Gap Railroad. These too, are still visible in this vicinity. Near here Mosby again turned east and continued on thick wood. It was here that a portion of Mosby’s column became separated. Mosby was forced to double back and search for them. After a significant delay the missing men were located and the column reformed. At last they reached the road that connected Fairfax Court House to Fairfax Station (now Chain Bridge Road).

It was approximately 2 AM on the morning of March 9, 1863 when Mosby and twenty-eight well armed Confederate horseman rode quietly into Fairfax Court House. The town was completely dark with not a soul was in sight. No dogs barked. All was silent. As they approached the familiar courthouse, those of Mosby’s command who had not yet figured it out were stunned to realize they were in Fairfax Court House, deep behind Union lines by at least five miles, and surrounded by thousands of enemy soldiers.
Corps. He declined the request of the board to be examined, stating:

“I am under charges that involve so great delinquency, that their existence cannot but have a tendency to prejudice the board, and to be dismissed while those charges are untried, would injure my character through life. I beg leave to submit, that an officer should have an opportunity to disprove before a Court Martial, charges from which he is under arrest, before it is attempted to dismiss him from the service by a collateral proceeding.”100

Johnstone, a lawyer, wanted his day in court. Although, he made it known that it was found innocent he intended to resign his commission. This was not enough for his enemies. The army needed their scapegoat.

Although under arrest, and stripped of both command and his arms, as an officer and gentleman, he was not placed in confinement. On the contrary, Johnstone remained present with the 5th New York, and even participated often rambling statement, he attempted to explain his how General Davis had been waiting for. Johnstone was lame and he straggled from the regiment. This was precisely what General Davis had been waiting for. Johnstone was the subject of a drum head Court-Martial held at Stephensburg, Culpeper County, Virginia, November 19, 1863. He was formally charged with the 5th New York Cavalry returned to Centreville, Lt. Col. Johnstone’s horse apparently became lame and he was arrested at home in Fairfax Co., March 27, 1863, on the charge of being a “Spy & Traitor.”101

Charles A. Arundell was arrested in Fairfax Co., March 12, 1863, on the charge of being a “notorious secessionist.” He was released on the oath of allegiance December 12, 1863.102

W.H. Beach was arrested at home in Fairfax Co., March 14, 1863, on the charge of being a “supposed spy.”103

Almond Birch of Loudoun Co., was arrested in Fairfax Co., March 25, 1863, on the charge of being a “Spy & Smuggler.” He was “willing to take the oath.”104

G.M. Corman, a citizen res. in Fairfax Co., was arrested at home March 27, 1863, on the charge of being a “Spy & Traitor” “Willing to take the oath.”105

G.M. Corman,106 David P. Conrad,107 a citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home March 29, 1863, on the charge of “Dishonour.”108

Enoch Cook, a railroad hand res. in Alexandria was arrested at Bull Run, March 15, 1863.109

James L. Cross,110 a citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 29, 1863, on the charge of “Dishonour.”111

Samuel N. Daniels,112 a citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 28, 1863, on the charge of being a “Rebel. Wiling to take oath.”113

Dension wrote to the Adjutant General to ascertain the facts, but apparently did nothing afterwards. That wasn’t the end of it. In 1867, the District Attorney for King County, New York, attempted to have Johnstone disbarred in consequence of the sentence of the court-martial. This did not occur. However, tragedy continued to dog him. In the early 1880’s Johnstone was briefly considered for public office in New York. It is likely the old stain on his record resurfaced and his name was withdrawn. Finally, his daughter, who was present with him in Fairfax Court House during the raid, committed suicide. Grief stricken, Robert Johnstone had to identify her body.114 Robert Johnstone died in 1891 and is buried in Green-Wood Cemetery, Brooklyn, NY. His grave has only recently been marked.

Fairfax County Citizens Arrested After the Raid on Fairfax C.H.

H. Adams115 was arrested at home in Fairfax Co., March 25, 1863 on the charge of being a “Spy & Traitor.”116

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Mosby accompanied the squad that went to the home of Thomas J. & Frances A. Murray, Thomas Murray, was an attorney in Fairfax and a staunch secessionist. He readily informed Mosby that Wyndham’s headquarters were located at the other end of town in the home of Henry W. Thomas. While Mosby was at the Murray house, Pvt. Joseph Nelson, guided by the light of a candle burning from inside a tent nearby, went to investigate and captured Robert F. Weitbrec and Richard Power, Jr. the brigade telegraph operators. They two were asleep in their tent which was located in the yard of the home of Fairfax physician, Dr. William Presley Gunnell. Before he left, Nelson smashed Weitbrec’s telegraph to bits ensuring there would be no signal to Fairfax Station for assistance. Weitbrec would later write of the incident:

“Then one of them whistled my telegraph instrument up into junk saying he didn’t want the incident to get into the morning papers or something like that.

I was taken out and mounted on a horse without saddle or bridle and away we went on the wildest devil’s ride that ever human beings took.”118

Nelson also captured a solitary Union soldier, who was asleep in an adjoining tent. Mosby then returned to the rendezvous point and was preparing to go to the Thomas house in search of Wyndham, when Nelson showed up with his three prisoners. The lone soldier taken by Nelson identified himself as an orderly to Gen. Stoughton. Hearing this, Mosby then sent Ames and several other rangers to the Thomas house after Wyndham. Mosby then, accompanied by Rangers Joe Nelson, William Hunter, George Whitescarver , Welt Hatcher, and Frank Williams, went to the Gunnell House to see about Stoughton. As much as Mosby wanted Wyndham, the lure of capturing a Union General now outweighed all other concerns.

At the Thomas house, Ames party found that Wyndham had left Fairfax for a visit to Washington on the afternoon train. A thorough search of the house revealed two other occupants. As they were pulled from their beds, both insisted they were civilians. One protested that he was not a citizen of the United States at all, while the other, occupying Wyndham’s bedroom, stated he was merely a “common sutler”.119 However, when Ames saw the two men he instantly recognized the common sutler as Captain Augustus James Barker, of the 5th New York Cavalry, the commander of Ames’ very own company before his
desertion. On seeing Ames, Gus Barker lowered his head and gave up without further protest.

In the meantime, Mosby and his party had arrived at the Gunnell house. Mosby knocked loudly on the door. An upstairs window flew open and Lt. Samuel F. Prentiss, an Aide de Camp to General Stoughton, stuck his head out and asked who it was. Mosby replied, “Fifth New York Cavalry with dispatches for general Stoughton.” Prentiss ran downstairs and opened the door. Mosby grabbed him by his collar, identified himself, and demanded Prentiss take him to General Stoughton’s room. Prentiss complied.

Leaving Rangers Hatcher and Whitscarver to guard the horses, Mosby and the rest of the rangers went upstairs. When they entered Stoughton’s room, they found him fast asleep, lying on his side, in bed snoring loudly. It was obvious that there had been a party from empty champagne bottles lying about the room. Stoughton did not stir when they entered his room. Someone lit a match. Stoughton slept on. Mosby approached the bed and drew back the blankets. Still Stoughton did not wake. He merely snorted and rolled onto his stomach. Mosby then lifted his bedclothes and spanked him. Stoughton sat bolt upright in the bed, blary eyed and indignant at the outrage, he demanded to know the meaning of the insult, thinking the culprit was one of his aides.

Stoughton was usually fastidious about his dress. He dressed rapidly, but did so before a full length mirror. The party then retreated down the stairs with Stoughton and Prentiss in tow. Outside they discovered that Hatcher and Whitscarver had rounded up an additional six prisoners. These men, Stoughton’s Headquarters Guard, were taken while slumbering in their tents in the rear of the Gunnell house. Hatcher and Whitscarver had also located several fine horses, belonging to the General, in the stables in the rear of the house. General Stoughton was placed on an unsaddled horse. The horse was not one of his own, but one of inferior quality. Stoughton was also not permitted to hold the reins of his mount. Mosby assigned Ranger William Hunter to hold the bride of Stoughton’s horse. Hunter was instructed to hold onto the General no matter what happened.

In their haste to leave, Mosby and his men failed to thoroughly search the other rooms of the Gunnell house. They left 1st Lt. George White Hooker, Co. E, 4th Vermont Infantry, Acting Assistant Adjutant General of the 2nd Vermont Brigade, fast asleep in his room. The party then returned to the rendezvous point.

The other squads were also returning with their captives including Ames, whom Mosby had sent in search of Wyndham. Ames informed Mosby that Wyndham was not in town. However, he proudly presented Mosby with Wyndham’s uniform, personal effects, and several of his horses as a consolation. Ames also introduced his two captives, 25 year old, Austrian nobleman, Baron Rupolph de Wardener, a foreign observer and friend of Col. Wyndham, and 20 year old, Augustus James Baker. Ames informed Mosby that Wyndham was fast asleep in his room. The party then returned to the rendezvous point.

“Two Alexandrians claim to have seen Benjamin Austin in Washington last week. Austin is the ex-clerk of the county court, and stands indicted for malfeasance in office and embezzlement. He disappeared from this city several years ago.”

Benjamin Austin died March 26, 1900 at St. Vincent’s Hospital in New York City. He was then residing at Mills Hotel and was employed as a Time Keeper. He was initially buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn, NY.

13 Col. Percy Wyndham is relieved from duty in this department, and will join his command in the Army of the Potomac. The major general commanding seize this occasion to express his high appreciation of the energy, gallantry and devotion to the service of Col. Wyndham, and to thank him for his services while in command of a cavalry brigade in this department.

By command of Maj. Gen. HEINTZELMAN.

Carroll H. Potter
Assistant Adjutant General.

He was severely wounded three months later at Battle of Brandy Station after which he resigned. He was later killed in a balloon accident in Madalay, Burma.

After his exchange, Captain Augustus Barker returned to the command of Co. L, 5th New York Cavalry. He was killed by guerrilla’s several months later on September 18, 1863 while returning from picket duty along the Rappahannock River near Kelly’s Ford, Virginia.

He was just 21 years old. He is buried in Albany Rural Cemetery, Albany, New York.

Benjamin Austin also returned to his regiment after his release. After the war, he married America Jane Johnson, on April 10, 1866, Washington, DC. He became naturalized US citizen on June 4, 1869 in Washington, DC. He resided in Alexandria County, Virginia on Columbia Pike. He worked as a clerk at the Navy Yard in Washington, DC and was a member of the G.A.R. post located there. He was elected Clerk of the Court for Alexandria and served from 1879 – 1886. He resided again of allegations of malfeasance and misappropriation of public money. He fled to Toronto, Canada, shortly thereafter. On May 27, 1890, he received a Federal pension. His wife and family apparently remained in Washington.

“Two Alexandrians claim to have seen Benjamin Austin in Washington last week. Austin is the ex-clerk of the county court, and stands indicted for malfeasance in office and embezzlement. He disappeared from this city several years ago.”

Benjamin Austin died March 26, 1900 at St. Vincent’s Hospital in New York City. He was then residing at Mills Hotel and was employed as a Time Keeper. He was initially buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn, NY.

He was disinterred and reinterred at Arlington National Cemetery, Feb. 14, 1917, Sec. 2, Grave 3864.

Provost Marshal Capt. Lawrence L. O’Connor, who was not captured and was allegedly not even present during the raid, was assigned some culpability. At least one of his fellow officers accused him of being a drunk. The unidentified officer wrote a scathing letter to a newspaper stating:

“in the little hole of Fairfax…the Provost Marshal...is always full of bad whisky. So things go, and it is all right. No wonder we don’t get along faster.”

Later testimony, contained in the pension application of Capt. O’Connor, seems to support the officer’s contention. In 1871, O’Connor’s pension application was rejected because of the applicant’s “vicious and depraved nature.” Capt. O’Connor “died in a fit, epileptic in nature” at his home in Keokuk, Iowa, September 20, 1874. "The most probable cause of the soldier’s death was alcoholic poisoning." He is interred at Oakland Cemetery, Keokuk, Iowa.

The northern papers ruthlessly vilified Stoughton. Johnstone, and the other Union officers present, as blundering incompetents. They were quick to capitalize on the humor of Gen. Stoughton being slapped on his backside and Lt. Col. Johnstone being caught , literally, with his pants down and hiding in an outhouse. Neither man ever fully recovered from his humiliation. Stoughten was said to have been responsible for the capture and loss of command. He returned home, resigned his colonelcy and practiced law until his untimely death in 1868.

Johnstone, however, is perhaps the most tragic figure. The capture of General Stoughton followed him the rest of his life. The Union army, being sufficiently embarrassed by Stoughton’s capture, needed a scapegoat. Johnstone, as the next highest ranking officer present at Fairfax Court House became the subject of much scrutiny. The humiliating image of him being nearly captured while naked and cowering under an outhouse, covered in filth, did not help. Shortly after the raid, by the order of Acting Brigadier General, Henry E. Davis, Jr. commanding the 1st Brigade, 2nd Division, Lt. Col. Robert Johnstone, was placed under arrest pending an investigation of the incident. In late July 1863, he was called before an Examining Board of the 3rd Division of the Cavalry
By that afternoon, they had made it as wagons filled with his stock and headed for the safety of Moses loaded up his wife, young son and four or five then invading Pennsylvania, Sweester’s store of goods at in pursuit of Robert E. Lee, who’s Confederate army was After the Union army had pulled out of Fairfax Court House Moses Sweetser several months later, on June 27, 1863. under arrest. Mrs. Sweetser pleaded directly with General his family were rounded up. Moses Sweetser was placed Cavalry brigade of General Fitzhugh Lee. Sweetser and located on the s.e. corner of Ravensworth Road and Little Falls, Vt. He has not been assigned to an &c. lead them to believe it religiously. But I wish to refute the base slanderers upon a defenseless female, now incarcerated in our national prison. I have not to apology to make for Gen. Stoughton. He is able to vindicate himself. Many think he was remiss in his duty. The ugliest innomundo against our Provost Marshall, Lieut. L.L. Conner, needs no refutation, as all who know him know it to be a base calumni and unjust accusation. He has conducted himself in a gentlemanly, dignified and patriotic manner.

I am a Union man from the North, connected with the army, and have taken particular pains to investigate this matter, and my own personal knowledge, compels me to write the above vindication of truth.

Yours, &c., MOSES SWEETER

This simple act of kindness paid a huge dividend for Moses Sweester several months later, on June 27, 1863. After the Union army had pulled out of Fairfax Court House, in pursuit of Robert E. Lee, who’s Confederate army was then invading Pennsylvania, Sweester’s store of goods at Fairfax Court House was left unattended and unprotected. Moses loaded up his wife, young son and four or five wagons filled with his stock and headed for the safety of Washington, D.C. By that afternoon, they had made it as far as Annandale, Virginia. At the home of Elijah Heath, Lewis Sweester and his family were rounded up. Moses Sweester was placed under arrest. Mrs. Sweester pleaded directly with General Fitzhugh Lee for the release of her husband who had been crippled in a car accident in 1861.

...he [is] unable even if he were willing to do so, (he is lame), to do injury to the Confederate government. She was joined by a minister, who related the part taken by Mr. Sweester in defending Miss Ford, arrested by the Federal troops as a spy. After hearing this Gen. Fitzhugh Lee, who was from Fairfax County and undoubtedly knew the Ford’s, released Moses Sweester. A gold watch which had been taken from him was returned. Lee then wrote the following pass in one of Moses’ own account books:

“This is to certify that Moses Sweester is turned loose to go home and behave himself. It is done on account of his defense of a harmless lady. Moses, June 27, 1863

Unfortunately, the Sweetser’s wagons, which contained shirts, boots, straw hats, shoes, chickens, tobacco, cigars, preserves and buttermilk, etc., did not fair well. The Confederates quickly rifled the contents. What couldn’t be carried away was then burned. Fortunately, they did not discover the $3,500.00 one of his clerks had hidden in the Heath House.” However, Mr. Sweetser’s loss in goods was estimated at $4,000.00.

In an attempt to ferret out spies and disloyal citizens new orders were issued permitting Union authorities to arrest anyone refusing to swear an Oath of Allegiance to the United States. Over the next several weeks nearly 60 residents of Fairfax County were arrested on for refusing to take the oath or on suspicion of being spies.

Stoughton’s military career was, as Mosby would later state, completely “wrecked.” By June 1863 he was back at his home:

“Gen. Stoughton is at his home in Bellows Falls, Vt. He has not been assigned to an active command, as was reported. The Vermont papers treat him very gingerly.”

President Lincoln is alleged to have said of Stoughton’s capture:

I do “not mind the loss of the Brigadier as much as the loss of the horses. For I can make a much better Brigadier in five minutes, but the horse’s cost a hundred and twenty-five dollars apiece.”

Col. Wyndham was politely relieved of his brigade command by order of General Heintzelman and returned to regimental command of the 1st New Jersey Cavalry, his old regiment.

“Headquarters, DEPARTMENT OF WASHINGTON, MARCH 21st, 1863.

Special Orders, No. 36

In spite of having several men riding in rear and beside the column as flankers the raiders lost a good many prisoners and horses in the darkness of the dense woods. Pvt. Zimri Messinger, of Co. E, 16th Vermont Infantry, a carpenter from Springfield, Vermont, was detached from his company and detailed as an Orderly in the Telegraph Office at Fairfax Court House. He assisted the brigade telegraphers, Robert Weibree and Richard Power, delivering messages as they arrived at headquarters. Zimri related what happened to him after he was captured at the Gunnell House:

“I was taken prisoner with Col. Stoughton and Staff, March 9th 1863 about two o’clock in the morning by Mosby’s Guerrillas. [I] was allowed only three minutes by our captors to prepare to march [and] was taken several miles. By changing positions number of times in the ranks, it being dark, I managed to wheel from the main line and escape, falling into the rear guard of the enemy. I was obliged to dismount and protect myself the best way possible, which I did by hiding under a log where I laid on the damp ground until nearly daylight then started back for Headquarters reaching there in the afternoon.”

Unlike most of the captives, Zimri was riding a saddled horse. During his escape the saddle girth broke and he was thrown from the horse and injured. He lay next in the wet woods all night as it rained on him. Without proper clothing he suffered from exposure. In the morning:

...he heard the reveille bugle call of some regiment when he tried to make his way toward it. After a while he fell in with a cavalryman who assisted him back to camp when he reported to our regt. headquarters and was sent to the hospital.”

Many of the horses Mosby had captured were also lost in the dense woods. One such animal was Black Dick, a Morgan raised in Essex County, New York and ridden by Pvt. George Black, Co. H, 5th New York Cavalry. Black Dick had been acquired for the regiment at the beginning of the war. He assisted the best way possible, which I did by hiding under a log where I laid on the damp ground until nearly daylight then started back for Headquarters reaching there in the afternoon.”

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They continued on and crossed Bull Run near Sudley Ford, then crossed over a portion the battlefield of Manassas. Pvt. Barney F. Pratt, Co. B, 16th Vermont Infantry and an Orderly to General Stoughton, recalled his experience while crossing the old battlefield:

“As soon as we were taken prisoners we were put upon old worn out horses, with Mosby’s men on either side of us, and marched toward the rebel lines. We were huddled together with the rebels around us. We forwarded Bull Run. They compelled us to jump the rifle pits. As the horse I was riding was jumping these pits he struck his fore feet into a pit and threw me over his head. I struck on a mound of dirt and breached myself in my pouch[?] ....

Col. Stoughton saw me thrown and he asked them to leave me there at a farm house because I was so bad off, but they would not....”

Barney Pratt had suffered a hernia. Pvt. A Chandler “Patty” Baker, also of Co. B, 16th Vermont Infantry, had been riding along aside his friend Barney Pratt at the time he was injured. Baker, too, and had been detached from the regiment as an Orderly to Gen. Stoughton and was assigned to take care of the generals horses. Baker related what happened next:

“It was with great difficulty that he could walk at all. Col. Mosby ordered him to mount the horse and he could not and they helped him upon his horse. I remember he fell off his horse several times.”

After crossing the battlefield the column re-entered the Warrenton Pike at Groveton just as the sun broke over the horizon. They were greeted by Mrs. Lucinda Dogan, a 46 year-old widow, around whose house the 2nd Battle of Manassas raged the previous summer. She came out to meet them and provided them with a meager breakfast. Years later she would relate seeing General Stoughton:

“He was a pitiﬁful looking object. He was only about half dressed and he did not have a hat on. He was riding a horse without a saddle and his legs were dangling. I think he had a shoe on one foot. I gave him some hot coffee and corn bread and he seemed thankful.”

Mosby moved his column rapidly through the woods, and reached the Warrenton Pike half-way between Centreville and Fairfax. He turned south and followed the Warrenton Pike toward Centreville. As they rode along Mosby came alongside Stoughton who said:

“Captain, you have done a bold thing, but you are sure to be caught.”

As the column continued down the road Mosby stayed behind in the rear and periodically stopped to listen for any sound of pursuit from their rear. All he heard was the soft hooting of owls. Ahead, the column halted within a half mile of Centreville. The watch fire of a Union picket post was smoldering beside the road just ahead of them. Mosby rode forward alone to inspect. He discovered the post was recently abandoned. Mosby realized this was because dawn was approaching and with the daylight the pikers were not needed.

Rapidly, Mosby turned the column off the road to the right and headed north intending to skirt around Centreville. The cannons in their redoubts and even the sentries on the parapets of the forts at Centreville were clearly visible silhouetted against the rapidly lightening sky several hundred yards away. The sentries apparently mistook them for a party of friendly cavalry leaving Centreville on a scout. At this moment, Captain Barker wheeled his horse bolted toward the safety of the fort in an attempt to escape. His horse stumbled in a ditch and Barker fell off and was recaptured.

Beyond Centreville they reached Cub Run, about a mile upstream from where it crosses the Warrenton Pike. They found usually placid stream a torrent from the rain and melting snow. Without hesitating they swam their horses and reached the Warrenton Pike at Groveton just as the sun broke over the horizon.

Mosby relaxed behind in the rear and periodically stopped to listen for any sign of pursuit behind them. He knew that any Union pursuers were not likely to take same chance in crossing the swollen Cub Run.

A few newspapers actually got it right, suggesting the possibility of a role played by the deserter, James F. Ames. Most still focused solely on Antonia however. On the same date several other residents of Fairfax County were also arrested. Provost Marshal O’Conner seemed intent on making an example of Antonia and the other prisoners by forcing them to walk the entire 14 or so miles to the Old Capitol Prison in Washington, D.C. Moses Sweetser, a well known Union Army sutler, intervened. Sweetser had maintained a residence and storehouse in Fairfax Court House for nearly two years and consequently knew the Ford family well. He offered to provide one of his own wagons to transport Antonia and the other civilian prisoners to be transported to Old Capitol in one of Moses Sweetser’s wagons.77 After her arrest, Sweetser also wrote to the Evening Star newspaper in Washington, D.C. refuting the allegations against Antonia and defending her character.

On March 25th, General Stuart, was concerned enough for his part in Antonia’s arrest that in a communiqué to Mosby he requested that Mosby furnish him with any evidence of “…Miss Ford’s innocence of the charge having guided in your exploit at Fairfax, so that I can insist on her unconditional release.”

After the war, Mosby would acknowledge that none of the citizens of Fairfax had anything to do with Stoughton’s capture:

“It was charged at the time that citizens of the place were in collusion with me, and had given the information on which I had acted. It was not true. I had no communication with any one there.”

Antonia Ford was actually incarcerated several times. Her arrest on March 13, 1863 was recorded in an intake register of Old Capitol Prison:

Miss Antonia Ford, a Female res. of Fairfax Co., arrested in Fairfax Co., March 13, 1863, on the charge of being a “Rebel Spy.” Sent to City Point, Va. for exchange May 20, 1863.
He was asleep in his room at the Gunnell House and went to sleep before the sun went down that day: The northern newspapers, spurred by various accusatory letters from the men of the 2nd Virginia Brigade, were quick to turn a suspicious eye toward the people of Fairfax Court House, in particular Antonia J. Ford. A famous Fairfax Court House Provost Marshal, Lawrence L. O’Connor, immediately arrested the following nine male citizens of the town, who were sitting in cells in Old Capitol Prison, Washington DC, before the sun went down that day:

Edward R. Ford, a merchant and resident of Fairfax C.H., arrested at home March 9, 1863, on the charge of being a “Spy & Disloyalty.” Sent to City Point for exchange June 10, 1863.63 Arrested again at Fairfax C.H., September 12, 1863, on the charge of being “Rebel & rebel sympathizer.” Released on oath Sept/Oct 1863.64

Joshua C. Gunnell, a gentleman and resident of Fairfax Co., arrested March 9, 1863, on the charge of being “Disloyal” and a Spy. Sent to City Point, Va. for exchange June 10, 1863.65

Thomas Lewis66

Thomas R. Love67

Thomas J. Murray, a citizen and resident of Fairfax Co., arrested in Fairfax Co., March 9, 1863, on the charge of being a “Spy & Disloyal.” Sent to City Point, Va. for exchange June 10, 1863.68

Elisha C. Ostrander, a citizen of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home March 9, 1863, on the charge of being a “Spy & Disloyal.” Willing to take the Oath.69

Beverly M. Powell, age 24, a citizen and resident of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 9, 1863, on the charge of being a “Spy & Disloyal.”70

John R. Taylor, age 43, a Citizen of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 9, 1863, on the charge “Spy & Disloyal.”

Thomas W. Williams, age 50, a Citizen & Merchant and resident of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home March 9, 1863, on the charge of “Spy & Disloyal.” Sent to City Point for exchange June 10, 1863.71 Arrested again at Fairfax C.H., September 12, 1863, on the charge “‘Rebel & rebel sympathizer.’ Released on oath Sept/Oct 1863.”

Later that day, when the column reached Warrenton, nearly the whole town turned out and cheered Mosby and his men. Mosby took Stoughton to the home of John Grigsby, Beckham located at 37 Culpeper Street where they ate. The other Union officers and men dined at the Warren Green Hotel. Stoughton had attended West Point with Beckham’s son, Robert F. Beckham, now an artillery officer in the Confederate army. He had visited the Beckham home once before, vacationing there while attending West Point. After their meal the group mounted up again and moved on toward Culpeper.

That evening, after crossing the Rappahannock River into Culpeper County, Mosby placed the enlisted prisoners in charge of Pvt. Richard Dick Y. Moran, my great-great-grandfather, with orders to meet him near Culpeper Court House the next morning.72 Moran then corralled his prisoners into “a little log shanty at a farm house near Hazel Creek [River],”73 while presumably he and his fellow rangers stayed in the farm house and took turns guarding them. Mosby, accompanied by Ranger Hunter, then escorted Gen. Stoughton, the other Union officers, and the injured Pvt. Pratt, to General Fitzhugh Lee’s headquarters near Brandy Station where they spent the night. Barney Pratt recalled:


The next morning, March 10, 1863, Dick Moran met Mosby at the appointed location. Mosby then turned Stoughton and the other prisoners over to General Fitzhugh Lee. The prisoners, accompanied by Lt. Henry B. McClellan, Adjutant of the 3rd Virginia Cavalry, were placed on a train to Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia, by way of Gordonsville. Fitzhugh Lee had instructed McClellan to lodge Stoughton and the other officers in Ballard’s Hotel. The instruction apparently also included the injured Pvt. Barney Pratt, who would later gratefully acknowledged Fitzhugh Lee:

“Through his request, I staid [sic] with him at Ballard’s Hotel the first night and the other prisoners were marched off to Libby Prison”

When the enlisted prisoners arrived at Libby Prison on March 11, 1863, it was discovered that their number did not match the list that accompanied them. Detained pending the fact that General Stoughton would not be treated any differently than any of the other officers, Major Thomas Pratt Turner, the commandant of Libby Prison, sent a Capt. Bossieux and squad of men to Ballard’s to take charge of Stoughton and the others. The Richmond Examiner reported the incident:

“DISTINGUISHED HOTEL ARRIVALS. – On the reception at the Libby prison on Wednesday evening, of the prisoners sent from Gordonsville, 1863, it was found that the list accompanying them did not tally with either their number or rank. In fact, Brigadier General Stoughton, Baron Warden, Captain Barker, and a servant, were non set, and answered no to the call of the roll. The commandant of the prison, suspecting that Lieutenant McClellan, of General Fitzhugh Lee’s cavalry, who came down in charge of the prisoners, had given the distinguished prisoners a choice of the Richmond hotels for the night, dispatched Captain Bossieux, with a file of men, to the Ballard House, where, sure enough, they were found, in bed, the distinguished prisoners occupying room No. 95, and Lieutenant McClellan No. 89, sleeping with one eye open. Captain Bossieux demanded that the prisoners at once change their quarters from the Ballard Hotel to one of the prominent hotels in the city.”75

Continued on Page 19
Stoughton and the other officers remained imprisoned for several months until they were exchanged on May 5, 1863. Weitbrec, the telegraph operator would later claim that he had said he was a Union Captain in order to be exchanged quicker although no evidence has yet been discovered to support this. Baron de Wardener wrote several scathing letters to General Winder and others attempting to secure his own release. As an Austrian citizen he was somewhat in limbo as Austria had not established diplomatic relations with the Confederate government. Consequently, he was ignored. Eventually, the Austrian Consul in Washington came to his assistance.

Historically, Mosby is said to have captured a General, two Captains and 28 enlisted men and 58 horses. Baron de Wardener always maintained that he was not an enemy combatant and the uniform in which he was encased was not his. As Barker and de Wardener were sharing the same quarters, in the Thomas House, it is likely that in the haste to leave Fairfax, de Wardener was dressed in one of Barker’s frock coats. However, although de Wardener claimed not to have been a participant, years later he did apply for a Federal pension citing his service to Col. Wyndham.

Stoughton and the others were sent to Libby Prison, early the next morning.

The enlisted men, mercifully, remained in Libby Prison only a week. They were sent to City Point, Virginia where they were paroled on March 18, 1863. They boarded the transport ship the *State of Maine* and arrived at Camp Parole, Maryland on March 21, 1863. They were released from Camp Parole on May 16, 1863 and sent to the “Defenses of Washington” or their respective regiments.

The following is a list of those Union prisoners who have been positively identified as being captured Mosby that morning. The list is taken from either through Compiled Military Services Records (CMSR), Pension records, or newspaper accounts. This list also correlates with the above account by Benedict with respect to the prisoners captured. Benedict’s account was likely provided by either those who were captured or from those present at Brigade headquarters that morning. The identity of the “photographer” remains a mystery:

**General Edwin Henry Stoughton**, age 24, 2nd Vermont Brigade

**Captain Augustus James Barker**, 45, age 20, 5th New York Cavalry

**Lt. Samuel F. Prentiss**, Co. I, 13th Vermont Infantry

They also secured 55 horses, 14 of which belonged to General Stoughton and his aids.44

It is now documented that Mosby captured one General, one Captain, one 2nd Lt., one Austrian Baron, two telegraphers, one brigade postmaster, and at least 10 enlisted prisoners. This discovery and the composition of the prisoners is supported by the narrative of a 2nd Vermont Brigade historian:

“The raiders spent an hour in the village without a shot being fired and without causing any general alarm, and between three and four o’clock they left as they came, taking with them General Stoughton, Captain Barker, Lieutenant Austin, a Baron Vardner [sic] who was a guest at Wyndham’s headquarters, the telegraph operator, post postmaster, a photographer, and 15 private soldiers, several of whom were members of the Vermont regiments, on duty at headquarters as guards and orderlies.”

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But the officers were held much longer. Stoughton and the others officers remained imprisoned for several months until they were exchanged on May 5, 1863. Weitbreck, the telegraph operator, would later claim that he had said he was a Union Captain in order to be exchanged quicker although no evidence has yet been discovered to support this. Baron de Wardener wrote several scathing letters to General Winder and others attempting to secure his own release. As an Austrian citizen, he was somewhat in limbo as Austria had not established diplomatic relations with the Confederate government. Consequently, he was ignored. Eventually, the Austrian Consul in Washington came to his assistance.

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Stoughton and the other officers remained imprisoned for several months until they were exchanged on May 5, 1863. Weitbreck, the telegraph operator, would later claim that he had said he was a Union Captain in order to be exchanged quicker although no evidence has yet been discovered to support this. Baron de Wardener wrote several scathing letters to General Winder and others attempting to secure his own release. As an Austrian citizen, he was somewhat in limbo as Austria had not established diplomatic relations with the Confederate government. Consequently, he was ignored. Eventually, the Austrian Consul in Washington came to his assistance.

Historically, Mosby is said to have captured a General, two Captains and 28 enlisted men and 58 horses. Baron de Wardener always maintained that he was not an enemy combatant and the uniform in which he was encased was not his. As Barker and de Wardener were sharing the same quarters, in the Thomas House, it is likely that in the haste to leave Fairfax, de Wardener was dressed in one of Barker’s frock coats. However, although de Wardener claimed not to have been a participant, years later he did apply for a Federal pension citing his service to Col. Wyndham.

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The following is a list of those Union prisoners who have been positively identified as being captured Mosby that morning. The list is taken from either through Compiled Military Services Records (CMSR), Pension records, or newspaper accounts. This list also correlates with the above account by Benedict with respect to the prisoners captured. Benedict's account was likely provided by either those who were captured or from those present at Brigade headquarters that morning. The identity of the "photographer" remains a mystery:

**General Edwin Henry Stoughton**, age 24, 2nd Vermont Brigade
**Captain Augustus James Barker**, age 20, 5th New York Cavalry
**Lieutenant Samuel F. Prentiss**, Co. I, 13th Vermont Infantry

They also secured 55 horses, 14 of which belonged to General Stoughton and his aids.44

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**General Edwin Henry Stoughton**, age 24, 2nd Vermont Brigade
**Captain Augustus James Barker**, age 20, 5th New York Cavalry

Baron Rudolph de Wardener, age 25, Austrian Citizen, Aide de Camp, Sir Percy Wyndham.

Robert Frederic Weitbrec, age 14, Telegrapher, United States Military Telegraph.

Richard Power, Jr., age 21, Telegrapher, United States Military Telegraph.


Pvt. James Cook, age 22, Co. F, 18th Pennsylvania Cavalry.

Pvt. David W. Howard, age 26, Co. D, 18th Pennsylvania Cavalry, Brigade Postmaster.


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Pvt. Harry Trawitz, age 22, Co. E, 18th Pennsylvania Cavalry.


The following men were either present at Fairfax Court House and not captured, or were captured and escaped.

Lt. Col. Robert Johnstone, age 37, 5th New York Cavalry (escaped).

Major Amos Hall White, age 28, 5th New York Cavalry (not captured).

Capt. Lawrence Lewis O’Conner, age 28, 5th New York Cavalry (not captured).

1st Lt. Samuel Frederick Prentiss, age 21, Co. I, 13th Vermont Infantry, age 21, (escaped).

1st Lt. George White Hooker, age 25, Co. E, 4th Vermont Infantry. Assistant Adjutant General, 2nd Vermont Brigade. He was asleep in his room at the Gummell House and went undiscovered by Mosby’s men.

Pvt. Orman Prescott, Jr., age 19, Co. B 16th Vermont Infantry, age 21 (escaped).


Pvt. Zimri Messinger, age 29, Co. E, 16th Vermont Infantry, age 29, Detached as Orderly to Brigade Telegraph Office (escaped).

Black Dick, horse, Co. H, 5th New York Cavalry (escaped).

Later that morning, after a good bath, Lt. Col. Johnstone set out in pursuit of Mosby and his captives. He returned empty handed. In the meantime, suspicion fell onto the citizens of Fairfax Court House. The northern newspapers, spurred by several accusatory letters from the men of the 2nd Vermont Brigade, were quick to turn a suspicious eye toward the people of Fairfax Court House, in particular Antonia J. Ford. A furious Fairfax Court House Provost Marshal, Lawrence L. O’Connor, immediately arrested the following nine male citizens of the town, who were sitting in cells in Old Capitol Prison, Washington DC, before the sun went down that day:

Edward R. Ford, a merchant and res. of Fairfax C.H., arrested at home March 9, 1863, on the charge of being a “Spy & Disloyalty.” Sent to City Point for exchange June 10, 1863. Arrested again at Fairfax C.H., September 12, 1863, on the charge of being a “Rebel & Sympathizer.” Released on oath Sep. 1863.

Joshua C. Gunnell, a gentleman and res. of Fairfax Co., arrested March 9, 1863, on the charge of being “Disloyal and a Spy.” Sent to City Point, Va. for exchange June 10, 1863.

Thomas Lewis, a citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., arrested in Fairfax Co., March 9, 1863, on the charge of being “Spy & Disloyal.” Sent to City Point, Va. for exchange June 10, 1863.

Thomas J. Murray, a citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., arrested in Fairfax Co., March 9, 1863, on the charge of being a “Spy & Disloyal.” Willing to take the Oath.

Elisha C. Ostrander, a Citizen of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home March 9, 1863, on the charge of being a “Spy & Disloyal.” Willing to take the Oath.

Beverly M. Powell, age 24, a Citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 9, 1863, on the charge of being a “Spy & Disloyal.”

John R. Taylor, age 43, a Citizen of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 9, 1863, on the charge “Spy & Disloyal.”

Thomas W. Williams, age 50, a Citizen & Merchant and res. of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home March 9, 1863, on the charge of “Spy & Disloyal.” Sent to City Point for exchange June 10, 1863.

Later that day, when the column reached Warrenton, nearly the whole town turned out and cheered Mosby and his men. Mosby took Stoughton to the home of John Griggs, Beckham located at 37 Culpeper Street where they ate. The other Union officers and men dined at the Warren Green Hotel. Stoughton had attended West Point with Beckham’s son, Robert F. Beckham, now an artillery officer in the Confederate army. He had visited the Beckham house once before, vacationing there while attending West Point. After their meal the group mounted up again and moved on toward Culpeper.

That evening, after crossing the Rappahannock River into Culpepper County, Mosby placed the enlisted prisoners in charge of Pvt. Richard Y. Moran, my great-great-great-grandfather, with orders to meet him near Culpeper Court House the next morning. Moran then corralled his prisoners into “a little log shanty at a farm house near Hazel Creek [River],” while presumably he and his fellow generals stayed in the farm house and took turns guarding them. Mosby, accompanied by Ranger Hunter, then escorted Gen. Stoughton, the other Union officers, and the injured Pvt. Pratt, to General Fitzhugh Lee’s headquarters near Brandy Station where they spent the night. Barney Pratt recalled:


The next morning, March 10, 1863, Dick Moran met Mosby at the appointed location. Mosby then turned Stoughton and the other prisoners over to General Fitzhugh Lee. The prisoners, accompanied by 1st Lt. Henry B. McCollan, Adjutant of the 3rd Virginia Cavalry, were placed on a train to Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia, by way of Gordonsville. Fitzhugh Lee had instructed McCollan to lodge Stoughton and the other officers in Ballard’s Hotel. The instruction apparently also included the injured Pvt. Barney Pratt, who would later gratefully acknowledged Fitzhugh Lee:

“All through his request, I staid [sic] with him at Ballard’s Hotel the first night and the other prisoners were marched off to Libby Prison.”

When the enlisted prisoners arrived at Libby Prison on March 11, 1863, it was discovered that their number did not match that which accompanied them. Determined that General Stoughton would not be treated any differently than any of the other prisoners, Maj. Thomas Pratt Turner, the commandant of Libby Prison, sent a Capt. Bossieux and squad of men to Ballard’s to take charge of Stoughton and the others. The Richmond Examiner reported the incident:

“DISTINGUISHED HOTEL ARRIVALS. – On the reception at the Libby prison on Wednesday evening, of the prisoners sent from Gordonsville Wednesday evening, it was found that the list accompanying them did not tally with either their number or rank. In fact, Brigadier General Stoughton, Baron Warden, Captain Barker, and a servant, were non set, and answered no to the call of the roll. The commandant of the prison, suspecting that Lieutenant McCollan, of General Fitzhugh Lee’s cavalry, who came down in charge of the prisoners, had given the distinguished prisoners a choice of the Richmond hotels for the night, dispatched Captain Bossieux, with a file of men, to the Ballard House, where, sure enough, they were found, in bed, the distinguished prisoners occupying room No. 95, and Lieutenant McCollan No. 89, sleeping with one eye open. Captain Bossieux demanded that the prisoners at once change their quarters from the Ballard Hotel.”
They continued on and crossed Bull Run near Sudley Ford, then crossed over a portion the battlefield of Manassas. Pvt. Barney F. Pratt, Co. B, 16th Vermont Infantry and an orderly to General Stoughton, recalled his experience while crossing the old battlefield:

“As soon as we were taken prisoners we were put upon old worn out horses, with Mosby’s men on either side of us, and marched toward the rebel lines. We were huddled together with the rebels around us. We forwarded Bull Run. They compelled us to jump the rifle pits. As the horse I was riding was jumping these pits he struck his fore feet into a pit and threw me over his head. I struck on a mound of dirt and broke myself in my pouch[?] ....”

Barney Pratt had suffered a hernia. Pvt. A Chandler “Patty” Baker, also of Co. B, 16th Vermont Infantry, had been riding alongside his friend Barney Pratt at the time he was injured. Baker, too, and had been detached from the regiment as an orderly to Gen. Stoughton and was assigned to take care of the generals horses. Baker related what happened next:

“It was with great difficulty that he could walk at all. Col. Mosby ordered him to mount the horse and he could not and they helped him upon his horse. I remember he fell off his horse several times.”

After crossing the battlefield the column re-entered the Warrenton Pike at Groveton just as the sun broke over the horizon. They were greeted by Mrs. Lucinda Dogan, a 46 year-old widow, around whose house the 2nd Battle of Manassas raged the previous summer. She came out to meet them and provided them with a meager breakfast. Years later she would relate seeing General Stoughton:

“He was a pitiful looking object. He was only about half dressed and he did not have a hat on. He was riding a horse without a saddle and his legs were dangling. I think he had a shoe on one foot. I gave him some hot coffee and corn bread and he seemed thankful.”

As the column continued down the road Mosby stayed behind in the rear and periodically stopped to listen for any sound of pursuit from their rear. All he heard was the soft hooting of owls. Ahead, the column halted within a half mile of Centreville. The watch fire of a Union picket post was smoldering beside the road just ahead of them. Mosby rode forward alone to inspect. He discovered the post was recently abandoned. Mosby realized this was because dawn was approaching and with the daylight the pickets were not needed.

Rapidly, Mosby turned the column off the road to the right and headed north intending to skirt around Centreville. The cannons in their redoubts and even the sentries on the Warrenton Pike were between us, and marched toward the rebel lines. We were huddled together with the rebels around us. We forwarded Bull Run. They compelled us to jump the rifle pits. As the horse I was riding was jumping these pits he struck his fore feet into a pit and threw me over his head. I struck on a mound of dirt and breached myself in my pouch[?] ....”

Col. Stoughton saw me thrown and he asked them to leave me there at a farm house because I was so bad off, but they would not....”

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&c. lead them to believe it religiously. But I wish to elect the base slanderers upon a I have not to apologize defenseless female, now incarcerated in our national prison. I have not to apology for to make for Gen. Stoughton. He is able to vindicate himself. Many think he was remiss in his duty. The ugliest innuendo against our Provost Marshall, Lieut. L.L. Conner, needs no refutation, as all who know him know it to be a base calumny and unjust accusation. He has conducted himself in a gentlemanly, dignified and patriotic manner.

I am a Union man from the North, connected with the army, and have taken particular pains to investigate this matter, and my own personal knowledge, compels me to write the above vindication of truth.

Yours, &c.,

MOSES SWEETSER

This simple act of kindness paid a huge dividend for Moses Sweetser several months later, on June 27, 1863. After the Union army had pulled out of Fairfax Court House in pursuit of Robert E. Lee, who’s Confederate army was then invading Pennsylvania, Sweetser’s store of goods at Fairfax Court House was left unguarded and unprotected. Moses loaded up his wife, young son and four or five wagons filled with the contents of his store for the safety of Annandale, Virginia. At the home of Elijah Heath, located on the s.e. corner of Ravensworth Road and Little River Turnpike, they were intercepted by the Confederate Cavalry brigade of General Fitzhugh Lee. Sweetser and his family were rounded up. Moses Sweetser was placed under arrest. Mrs. Sweetser pleaded directly with General Col. Wyndham was politely relieved of his brigade command by order of General Heintzelman and returned to regimental command of the 1st New Jersey Cavalry, his old regiment.

“Headquarters, DEPARTMENT OF WASHINGTON, MARCH 21st, 1863. Special Orders, No. 36

hundred Union soldiers in Fairfax, most of whom were now busy trying to hide themselves rather than offer any organized resistance. Others, like Lt. Prentiss, who had been captured, were able to slip quietly away in the darkness. Mosby would later quip, “he left us in the dark, and never even said good-night.”

Having been in Fairfax for about an hour and a half, Mosby now ordered the swollen column down the Chain Bridge Road intending to return by the same route they had come in. As they approached the home of Joshua C. Gunnell on their left, a home they had not searched, a window opened and the occupant called out demanding to know “What is the matter? That is that?” the unknown occupant added, “Halt! The horses need rest. I will not allow them to be taken out. What the devil is the matter?” Receiving no reply other than the laughter of several of the rangers, the Union officer bellowed, “I am the commander of this post and this must be stopped.” Mosby knew that only a high ranking Union officer would make such a challenge. He halted the column and dispatched Rangers Hatcher and Nelson. The laughter of Mosby’s men had, most likely, alerted the officer, 37 year-old, Lt. Col. Robert Johnstone, of the 5th New York Cavalry, that something was wrong. Lt. Col. Johnstone was quartered in the Gunnell House with his wife and two children, Charles, age 6 and Lizzie, age 4. Nelson and Hatcher ran up the steps and forced their way through the front door. They were met in the hallway by 49 year-old, Emma Livingston Johnstone, Lt. Col. Johnstone’s wife. She fought them like a lioness and delayed them just long enough for Col. Johnstone to affect his escape. Johnstone ran out the back of the house and hid under “a place it is not necessary to describe” – the outhouse. A thorough search of the house and grounds ensued but proved fruitless. As a consolation Johnstone’s hat and uniforms were taken by Pvt. Nelson.

Mosby again ordered the column to advance, in order to confuse any potential pursers he turned east leaving Fairfax Court House by way the stables of Judge Thomas, Colonel Wyndham’s headquarters.22 He reemerged on Chain Bridge Road and continued south out of Fairfax Court House. In another feint to cover their retreat, he doubled back a half mile then turned off the road and headed west into the thick belt of woods bordered by the Chain Bridge Road, Braddock’s Road, and the Warrenton Pike. His deception apparently worked because Lt. Col. Johnstone was later reported to have started his pursuit in the wrong direction.

In spite of having several men riding in rear and beside the column as flankers the raiders lost a good many prisoners and horses in the darkness of the dense woods. Pvt. Zimri Messinger, of Co. E, 16th Vermont Infantry, a carpenter from Springfield, Vermont, was detached from his company and detailed as an Orderly in the Telegraph Office at Fairfax Court House. He assisted the brigade telegraphers, Robert Weibree and Richard Power, delivering messages as they arrived at headquarters. Zimri related what happened to him after he was captured at the Gunnell House:

“I was taken prisoner with Col. Stoughton and Staff, March 9th 1863 about two o’clock in the morning by Mosby’s Guerrillas. [I] was allowed only three minutes by our captors to prepare to march [and] was taken several miles. By changing position a number of times in the ranks, it being dark, I managed to wheel from the main line and escape, falling into the rear guard of the enemy. I was obliged to dismount and protect myself in the best way possible, which I did by hiding under a log where I laid on the damp ground until nearly daylight then started back for Headquarters reaching there in the afternoon.”

Unlike most of the captives, Zimri was riding a saddled horse. During his escape the saddle girth broke and he was thrown from the horse and injured. He lay next in the wet woods all night as it rained on him. Without proper clothing he suffered from exposure. In the morning:

“...he heard the reveille bugle call of some regiment when he tried to make his way toward it. After a while he fell in with a cavalryman who assisted him back to camp when he reported to our regt. headquarters and was sent to the hospital.”

Many of the horses Mosby had captured were also lost in the dense woods. One such animal was Black Dick, a Morgan raised in Essex County, New York and ridden by Pvt. George Black, Co. H, 5th New York Cavalry. Black Dick had been acquired for the regiment at the beginning of the war. He assisted the bonny young animal,” with “a fine glossy coat. Over time though, Dick became gentle and thoroughly broken. He would kneel for his rider to mount him, and they often slept together, his bridle rein buckled around his rider’s wrist, and his body a pillow...
desertion. On seeing Ames, Gus Barker lowered his head and gave up without further protest.

In the meantime, Mosby and his party had arrived at the Gunnell house. Mosby knocked loudly on the door. An upstairs window flew open and Lt. Samuel F. Prentiss, an Aide de Camp to General Stoughton, stuck his head out and asked who was there. Mosby replied, “Fifth New York Cavalry with dispatches for general Stoughton.” Prentiss ran downstairs and opened the door. Mosby grabbed him by his collar, identified himself, and demanded Prentiss take him to General Stoughton’s room. Prentiss complied. Leaving Rangers Hatcher and Whitecarrider to guard the horses, Mosby and the rest of the rangers went upstairs. When they entered Stoughton’s room, they found him fast asleep, lying on his side, in bed snoring loudly. It was obvious that there had been a party from empty champagne bottles.

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Mosby then sat, “Certainly, but I am in a hurry, dress quick.”

Stoughton was usually fastidious about his dress. He dressed rapidly, but did so before a full length mirror. The party then retreated down the stairs with Stoughton and Prentiss in tow. Outside they discovered that Hatcher and Whitecarrider had rounded up an additional six prisoners. These men, Stoughton’s Headquarters Guard, were taken while slumbering in their tents in the rear of the Gunnell house. Hatcher and Whitecarrider had also located several fine horses, belonging to the General, in the stables in the rear of the house. General Stoughton was placed on an unsaddled horse. The horse was not one of his own, but one of inferior quality. Stoughton was also not permitted to hold the reins of his mount. Mosby assigned Ranger William Hunter to hold the bridle of Stoughton’s horse. Hunter was instructed to hold onto the General no matter what happened.

In their haste to leave, Mosby and his men failed to thoroughly search the other rooms of the Gunnell house. They left 1st Lt. George White Hooker, Co. E, 4th Vermont Infantry, Acting Assistant Adjutant General of the 2nd Vermont Brigade, fast asleep in his room. The party then returned to the rendezvous point.

The other squad was also returning with their captives including Ames, whom Mosby had sent in search of Wyndham. Ames informed Mosby that Wyndham was not in town. However, he proudly presented Mosby with Wyndham’s uniform, personal effects, and several of his horses as a consolation. Ames also introduced his two captives, 25 year old, Austrian nobleman, Baron Rupolphil de Wardener, a foreign observer and friend of Col. Wyndham, and 20 year old, Augustus James Barker. Ames practically beamed when he presented Barker to Mosby.

By now nearly 100 horses and men were crowded into the street between the hotel and the courthouse. Rangers were intermingled with Union prisoners and horses. Many of the of the Union captives sat astride unsaddled horses of inferior quality. Union Pvt. Robert C. Bigelow Co. C, 15th Vermont Infantry recalled the experience:

“I was obliged to ride on an ambulance horse, bareback, to near Culpeper and we were compelled to ride fast.”

In the near total darkness it was impossible for the Union soldiers to see that they likely outnumbered their captors by more than three to one. The situation was very confusing. By Mosby’s estimate there had been several
Corps. He declined the request of the board to be examined, stating:

“I am under charges that involve so great delinquency, that their existence cannot but have a tendency to prejudice the board, and to be dismissed while those charges are untried, would injure my character through life. I beg leave to submit, that an officer should have an opportunity to disprove before a Court Martial, charges, from which he is under arrest, before it is attempted to dismiss him from the service by a collateral proceeding.”96

Johnstone, a lawyer, wanted his day in court. Although, he made it known that if was found innocent he intended to resign his commission. This was not enough for his enemies. The army needed their scapegoat.

Although under arrest, and stripped of both command and his arms, as an officer and gentleman, he was not placed in confinement. On the contrary, Johnstone remained present with the 5th New York, and even participated in the Battle of Brandy Station using a borrowed a sword. After the battle, when the 5th New York Cavalry returned to Centreville, Lt. Col. Johnstone’s horse apparently became lame and he straggled from the regiment. This was precisely what General Davis had been waiting for. Johnstone was the subject of a drum head Court-Martial held at Stephensburg, Culpeper County, Virginia, November 19, 1863. He was formally charged with Breach of Arrest and for being Absent Without Leave. Ultimately, Johnstone pled guilty to both charges. During his trial, in a long and often rambling statement, he attempted to explain his how his horse became lame and he could not follow his regiment after which he went to Washington, DC.

Johnstone correctly assumed there was a vendetta against him. He was found guilty on all charges and for being absent from duty, I desire to have the stigma to be removed as it reflects on me and my children forever.”97

Dension wrote to the Adjutant General to ascertain the facts, but apparently did nothing afterwards. That wasn’t the end of it. In 1867, the District Attorney for King County, New York, attempted to have Johnstone disbarred in consequence of the sentence of the court-martial. This did not occur. However, tragedy continued to dog him. In the early 1880’s Johnstone was briefly considered for public office in New York. It is likely the old stain on his record resurfaced and his name was withdrawn. Finally, his daughter, who was present with him in Fairfax Court House during the raid, committed suicide. Grief stricken, Robert Johnstone had to identify her body.98 Robert Johnstone died in 1891 and is buried in Green-Wood Cemetery, Brooklyn, NY. His grave has only recently been marked.

Fairfax County Citizens Arrested After the Raid on Fairfax C.H.

H. Adams99 was arrested at home in Fairfax Co., March 25, 1863 on the charge of being a “spy & traitor”. Charles A. Arundell100 was arrested in Fairfax Co., March 12, 1863 on the charge of being a “notorious secessionist”. He was released on the oath of allegiance December 12, 1863.101

W.H. Beach was arrested at home in Fairfax Co., March 14, 1863 on the charge of being a “supposed spy”. Almond Birch of Loudoun Co., was arrested in Fairfax Co., March 25, 1863 on the charge of being a “Spy & Smuggler.” He was “willing to take the oath.”102

G.M. Corman, a citizen res. in Fairfax Co., was arrested at home March 27, 1863, on the charge of being a “Spy & Traitor” “Willing to take the oath.”103

David P. Conrad,104 a citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home March 29, 1863, on the charge of “Dissoluty.”105

Enoch Cook, a railroad hand res. in Alexandria was arrested at Bull Run, March 15, 1863.106

James L. Cross,107 a citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 29, 1863, on the charge of “Dissoluty.”108

Samuel N. Daniels,109 a citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 28, 1863, on the charge of being a “Rebel. Willing to take oath.”110

Mosby accompanied the squad that went to the home of Thomas J. & Frances A. Murray. Thomas Murray, was an attorney in Fairfax and a staunch secessionist. He readily informed Mosby that Wyndham’s headquarters were located at the other end of town in the home of Henry W. Thomas. While Mosby was at the Murray house, Pvt. Joseph Nelson, guided by the light of a candle burning from inside a tent nearby, went to investigate and captured Robert F. Weitbree and Richard Power, Jr. the brigade telegraph operators. They two were asleep in their tent which was located in the yard of the home of Fairfax physician, Dr. William Presley Gunnell. Before he left, Nelson smashed Weitbree’s telegraph to bits ensuring there would be no signal to Fairfax Station for assistance. Weitbree would later write of the incident:

“Then one of them whittled my telegraph instrument up into junk saying he didn’t want the incident to get into the morning papers or something like that.

I was taken out and mounted on a horse without saddle or bridle and away we went on the wildest devil’s ride that ever human beings took.”111

Nelson also captured a solitary Union soldier, who was asleep in an adjoining tent. Mosby then returned to the rendezvous point and was preparing to go to the Thomas house in search of Wyndham, when Nelson showed up with his three prisoners. The lone soldier taken by Nelson identified himself as an orderly to Gen. Stoughton. Hearing this, Mosby then sent Ames and several other rangers to the Thomas house after Wyndham. Mosby then, accompanied by Rangers Joe Nelson, William Hunter, George Whitescarver, Welt Hatcher, and Frank Williams, went to the Gunnell House to see about Stoughton. As much as Mosby wanted Wyndham, the lure of capturing a Union General now outweighed all other concerns.

At the Thomas house, Ames party found that Wyndham had left Fairfax for a visit to Washington on the afternoon train. A thorough search of the house revealed two other occupants. As they were pulled from their beds, both insisted they were civilians. One protested that he was not a citizen of the United States at all, while the other, occupying Wyndham’s bedroom, stated he was merely a “common sutler”.112 However, when Ames saw the two men he instantly recognized the common sutler as Captain Augustus James Barber, of the 5th New York Cavalry, the commander of Ames’ very own company before his...
Old Ox Road were the cuts and fills of unfinished line of Manassas Gap Railroad. These too, are still visible in this vicinity. Near here Mosby again turned east and continued on through thick woods. It was here that a portion of Mosby's column became separated. Mosby was forced to double back and search for them. After a significant delay the missing men were located and the column reformed. At last they reached the road that connected Fairfax Court House to Fairfax Station (now Chain Bridge Road).

It was approximately 2 AM on the morning of March 9, 1863 when Mosby and twenty-eight well armed Confederate horsemen rode quietly into Fairfax Court House. The town was completely dark with not a sole was in sight. No dogs barked. All was silent. As they approached the familiar courthouse, those of Mosby's command who had not yet figured it out were stunned to realize they were in Fairfax Court House, deep behind Union lines by at least five miles, and surrounded by thousands of enemy soldiers.

Opposite the courthouse, on Main Street, stood the venerable old Wilcoxon Hotel (aka Union Hotel). Here, the 2nd Vermont Brigade had established a branch of Green Mountain Post Hospital, which they called the Brick Hotel Hospital. Speaking only in whispers, Mosby established this location as their rendezvous point and ordered Ames and Pvt. Walter Frankland to dismount and remain at the hotel as lookouts. He then divided his force into three squads. Two squads were assigned to search the town for Union officers, while a third was given instructions to search the town for all available horses. As officers were known to ride only the best horses, these horses were made a priority. There were large stables located immediately behind the courthouse and the hotel. It is likely the men began their search here. Although there were substantial sutler and government stores cached all over Fairfax Court House, Mosby did not have the time or the means to carry them off or even destroy them. Therefore, Mosby's orders were clear, take Union officers and their horses only.

After the rangers had silently fanned out, a solitary Union sentry walked up Main Street to Ames and Frankland. The sentry challenged them. Ames calmly replied, “I belong to the 5th New York Cavalry. I am waiting here by order of Major White, whom I am expecting any moment.” As there really was a Major Amos H. White, of the 5th New York Cavalry, the sentry, satisfied, returned to his beat. As he passed by, Ames leaned forward and pressed his pistol to the man’s head and said, “If you utter a sound you are a dead man.” The astonished sentry quickly surrendered. Such was the case with every other Union soldier encountered by Mosby’s men. Deep within the safety of their own lines, they assumed all were friendly.

The squad sent to retrieve horses accomplished their task. Several mounted Union pickets posted around the town and their horses were also captured. The surviving regimental books of the 18th Pennsylvania and 5th New York Cavalry include the following interesting notations:

Morning Report, March 1863, Co. I, 18th Pennsylvania Cavalry Remarks: “March 8th  Enemy captured three horses at Fairfax Court House.”


A.H. Darnes, a citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 13, 1863, on the charge of “Giving information to the enemy.” He was sent to City Point for exchange May 19, 1863.

Peter Dyer, a citizen of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 27, 1863, on the charge of being a “Spy & Traitor.” Willing to take the oath.

Charles Follin, a citizen of Fairfax Co., arrested at home March 26, 1863, on the charge of being a “Spy” Willing to take the oath.

Charles Follin, a citizen of Fairfax Co., arrested at home, March 28, 1863, on the charge of being “Disloyal.” Sent to City Point for exchange May 19, 1863.

James Follin, a citizen of Fairfax Co., arrested in Fairfax Co., March 27, 1863, on the charge of being a “Spy & Traitor.”

Edward R. Ford, a merchant and res. of Fairfax C.H., arrested at home March 9, 1863, on the charge of being a “Spy & Disloyalty.” Sent to City Point for exchange June 10, 1863. Arrested again at Fairfax C.H., September 12, 1863, on the charge of being a “Rebel & Sympathizer.” Released on oath Sep. 1863.

Miss Antonia Ford, a Female res. of Fairfax Co., arrested in Fairfax Co., March 13, 1863, on the charge of being a “Rebel Spy.” Sent to City Point, Va. for exchange May 20, 1863.

John Fox, a citizen of Fairfax Co., arrested at home, March 26, 1863, on the charge of being a “Noted Spy.” Willing to take the oath. Sent to City Point, Va. for exchange June 10, 1863.

William Fox, “arrested as suspicious characters” a citizen of Fairfax Co., arrested at home March 23, 1863, on the charge of being a “Suppose Spy” Willing to take the oath.

Albert Gunnell

Arthur Gunnell

Joshua C. Gunnell, a Gentleman and res. of Fairfax Co., arrested March 9, 1863, on the charge of being “Disloyal and a Spy.” Sent to City Point, Va. for exchange June 10, 1863.

Joseph Hanon, a Citizen of Canada, arrested Centreville, Va., March 10, 1863, on the charge of “Aiding the enemy.” Willing to take the oath.

J.C. Harrison, a Citizen of Fairfax Co., arrested at home, March 30, 1863, on the charge of “Disloyalty.” Willing to take the oath.

Joseph C. Harrison, a Farmer and res. of Fairfax Co., arrested in Fairfax Co., March 29, 1863, on the charge of being “Disloyal.” Sent to City Point, Va. for exchange June 10, 1863.

Thomas Harrison, a Citizen of Fairfax Co., arrested at home, March 16, 1863, on the charge of being an “Old Spy.” Willing to take the oath.

Lewis Johnson, a Citizen of Fairfax Co., arrested at home March 26, 1863, on the charge of being a “Spy.” Willing to take the oath.

Richard Johnson, “acting as rebel videttes” a Citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., arrested at home March 14, 1863, on the charge of being a “Rabid Secesh.”

James Keyes, a Citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., arrested on Potomac, March 29, 1863, on charge of being “Disloyal.”

William Kidwell, a Citizen of Fairfax Co., arrested near Washington, DC, March 13, 1863, on the charge of “Giving information to the enemy.” Sent to City Point, Va. to be exchanged May 19, 1863.

William C. Kidwell, a Citizen of Fairfax Co., arrested at home March 26, 1863, on the charge of being a “Rebel dispatch & mail carrier. Willing to take oath.”

Thomas Lewis

Thomas R. Love

Samuel Mateer, a Citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., arrested at home, March 28, 1863, on charge of “Disloyalty.”

Leroy Mayhew, a Citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., arrested in Fairfax Co., March 23, 1863, on charge of being “Suppose Spy.” Willing to take oath.

William McDaniel, a Farmer and res. of Fairfax Co., arrested in Fairfax Co., March 13, 1864, on charge of “Disloyalty. Released on Oath of AllLeg. By order War Dep. April 1, 1864.”

Thomas J. Murray, a Citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., arrested in Fairfax Co., March 9, 1863, on charge of being a “Spy & Disloyal.” Sent to City Point, Va. for exchange June 10, 1863.

Elisha C. Ostrander, a Citizen of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home March 9, 1863, on the charge of being a “Spy & Disloyal.” Willing to take the oath.

James T. Padgett, age 28, a Citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., arrested at home, March 29, 1863, on charge of being “Disloyal.”

Lewis Washington Pettif, age 23, “arrested as suspicious characters” a Citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home March 23, 1863, on the charge of being a “Suppose Spy.” Willing to take Oath.

Albert Powell, age 27, a Citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., arrested at home, March 29, 1863, on the charge “Disloyal.”
William Vautiers, a Citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 26, 1863, on the charge “Rebel & Spy.”

Miss Annie Walters, a Female res. of Warrenton, was arrested in Fairfax Co., March 17, 1863, on the charge of “Rebel Mail Carrier & Contrabandist.” Sent to City Point for exchange June 10, 1863.

Thomas W. Williams, age 50, a Citizen & Merchant and res. of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home March 9, 1863, on the charge “Rebel & rebel sympathizer.” Released on oath Sept. 1863.

Elliot Wilson, a Citizen of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 26, 1863, on the charge “Disloyal.” Sent to City Point, Va. for exchange May 19, 1863.

Augustus Wrenn, age 57, a Citizen of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 13, 1863, on the charge “Giving information to the enemy.”

Endnotes

Caledonia, December 26, 1862, p. 2, c. 4.


Bruzzi, Philip Alexander, L.L.D., "Brave Deeds of Confederate Soldiers," © 1916, p. 173, age 41, b. Ireland, a Citizen of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 26, 1863, on the charge “Spy & Disloyal.”

John R. Taylor, age 43, a Citizen of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 9, 1863, on the charge “Spy & Disloyal.”


The position of Second Auditor was created by the Virginia General Assembly in 1823 to ease the burden of Auditor of Public Accounts.

Letters of Charles Cummins to his wife, January 29, 1863 & March 6, 1863.

Cummins was Provost Marshal of Fairfax Co. from Dec. 162 to June 163, immediately preceding L.L. O'Connor. While as Fairfax C.H. Cummins, boarded at the home Spencer & Mary Jackson, Vermont Historical Society.

Spencer & Mary A. (Richardson) Jackson operated the Virginia (Williams) Hotel at Fairfax Court House from 1841 to 1850. Mary 's father, William Pierpont Richardson also operated the tavern in the 1820's.

Rand, John C., "Biographies of One Thousand Representative men of Massachusetts." p. 599, © 1860, First national Publishing Company, Boston. "In 1863-64 Mr. Samuel died at Fairfax Court House, in northern Virginia, where he witnessed many exciting events of the war."


Col. Sir Percy Wyndham, Wyndham's Brigade

Mosby's intended target, March 9, 1863. Note the Military Order of Sons of Union Veterans given him by King Victor Emmanuel of Italy.

Source: Library of Congress

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Willing to take the Oath. Died in Wash., DC, November 20, 1919, age 83.

Amos Fox, located on the S.E. cor. of Main & Payne (Chain arrest at home, March 29, 1863, on the charge of being a “Spy & Disloyal.”

Dallas E. Powell, age 20, a Farmer and res. of Fairfax Co., was arrested in Fairfax Co., September 8, 1863, on the charge “Arrested under suspicious circumstances. Released on oath Sept. 63.” Purchased the Main St. bar room of Amos Fox, located on the S.E. cor. of Main & Payne (Chain Bridge Rd.) Streets, in February 1873.

George Calvin Powell, age 30, a Citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 26, 1863, on the charge “Spy.’ Willing to take Oath.”

Robert N. Power, a Citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 29, 1863, on the charge “Disloyal.” Willing to take Oath.”

John J. Rockford, age 41, b. Ireland, a Citizen of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 27, 1863 on charge of being a “Spy and Traitor. Willing to take the oath.”

Reverend Samuel Trott, Baptist minister and a Citizen of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 28, 1863, on the charge “Rebel.” Willing to take Oath.”

Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 26, 1863, on the charge “Giving information to the enemy.”

William Henry Utterback, a Citizen of Prussia, was arrested at home, March 27, 1863 on charge of “disloyalty.”

John W. Saffer, a Citizen of Prussia, was arrested at home, March 26, 1863, on the charge “Arrested under suspicious circumstances. Released on oath Sept/1863.”


Bruzzi, Philip Alexander, L.L.D., "Brave Deeds of Confederate Soldiers," © 1916, p. 173, age 41, b. Ireland, a Citizen of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 26, 1863, on the charge “Spy & Disloyal.”

Daniel Scanland, a Citizen of Fairfax Co., was arrested March 13, 1863 in Fairfax Co. on charge of “violating blockade.”

John R. Taylor, age 43, a Citizen of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 9, 1863, on the charge “Spy & Disloyal.”

John Terrett, a Citizen of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 25, 1863, on the charge “Late Rebel Soldier.”

Sent to City Point, Va. for exchange May 19, 1863.

S.A. Thompson, a Citizen of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 28, 1863, on the charge “Rebel.” Willing to take Oath.”

Rev. Samuel Trott, age 78, b. New Hampshire, “an aged Baptist minister” and a Citizen of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 28, 1863, on the charge “Rebel.”

Benjamin F(D.) Utterback, age 54, a Citizen and res. of Fairfax Co., was arrested at home, March 13, 1863, on the charge “Giving information to the enemy.”

As they rode along Mosby shared his plan with Ames. Nearly all of Mosby’s men were familiar with the roads around northern Virginia. Men like Ranger John Thomas, the son of Virginia State Senator Henry W. Thomas, was actually raised in Fairfax Court House and consequently knew it well. However, while these men were useful, Big Yankee Ames, as he came to be known, was the key to the success of this raid because of his familiarity with the Union troop strength and their routines in and around Fairfax Court House. Also, because of Ames and Frankland’s adventure, Mosby was aware of the gaps which existed in the Union lines. Some of these gaps existed between Centreville and Chantilly.

As Mosby approached Chantilly, he turned his column south to avoid the Federal cavalry pickets posted there, passing between them and the infantry posted at Centreville. The meager light was fading fast with the setting sun. Ironically, there was a full moon, which would have been visible except for the fact that it was completely obscured by the rain and heavy mist. Pitchy darkness reigned and enveloped everything. The men wore black rubber ponchos over their uniforms to protect themselves from the rain, further obscuring them from view. The snow on the ground muffled the sound of the horses as they stealthily crossed through pine thickets and fields.

The column traveled overland southeast crossing over the road to Frying Pan Church (now West Ox Road) just south of the battlefield at Ox Hill. At about midnight, they entered the Warrenton Pike (now Lee Highway) between Fairfax Court House and Centreville and again turned east. They stopped long enough to cut the telegraph wires strung along the side of the road which connected Fairfax Court House and Centreville. As they rode further east several men began to realize where they were and Mosby found it necessary to bring these men into his confidence. As they approached Germantown, the fires of Wyndham’s cavalry camp became visible on their left. They then turned right, and headed south, leaving the road for the shelter of the woods. Near here, the Old Ox Road (now Rust Road) ran south through the farm of Newman Burke and beyond to Braddock’s Road and Pope’s Head Road. In the woods a remnant of this road can still be seen today. Bisceting the
Washington, D.C. Wyndham was quartered in the home of Henry W. and Julia M. Thomas. Henry Thomas was a member of the Austrian Lancers. Lt. Col. Robert Johnstone, the commander of the Forty-Thirty Battalion of Virginia Cavalry, was captured. The Union army was even said to have pulled up the boards across the Chain Bridge into being captured. The identity of mysterious Captain referenced by...
Endnotes continued from p. 21
3 The 1st West Virginia was detailed elsewhere, while Wolf Run Shoals and Union Mills did not. It seems Stoughton preferred the comfort of a fine brick home, which Fairfax Court House had in abundance, not having seen much service, and when I tell you that his brother, only 19 years old, commands his former regiment, you may rest assured he has friends high in authority. He commands Vermont regiments, his native state.

“General Stoughton is elegantly quartered, has a large modern house, with many pieces of handsome furniture.”

This was the home of Fairfax physician, Dr. William Presley Gunnell, which is now the Rectory for Truro Episcopal Church.

“Of course the dinner was good, but the band was the finest I have ever heard. Twenty performers on German silver instruments. After dinner we went to the ‘Court House’, a small brick building, the bricks are red and black, alternate. The inside is entirely destroyed and is used for commissary stores. We then crossed over to the court and registers’ offices, and there, in the greatest confusion lay masses of old papers and books. I picked up some, dating back as far as 1740, and a book of ‘Stray Animals’ of Fairfax County for 1786. I will take them home as souvenirs.”

Some of the one hundred or so troops quartered in Fairfax Court House were the members of the 2nd Vermont Brigade Band. This band “of 17 pieces ... for dress parades and special occasions.” Sgt. J. Hudson Kibbe, Co. C, 13th Vermont Infantry “staid with the company until sometime in December, when he was detailed into the Regimental [Brigade] Band. He was stationed at Fairfax Court House a great part of the winter of ‘62 and ‘63.”

General Stoughton was fond of the good life generally, and the orders in particular, which included being entertained by the 2nd Vermont Brigade Band while at Fairfax Court House.

However, Stoughton was not the only Union officer who preferred the comforts of a brick house in Fairfax Court House to a tent in the field. Col. Percy Wyndham, a British professional soldier, who had been knighted for his service in the Italian War of Independence, was a cavalry brigade commander. His brigade was present near Fairfax Court House as part of the screen for the outer defenses of Union Mills.

175 Alexandria Gazette, March 10, 1863, p. 3, c. 1.
177 Daily National Republican, April 3, 1863, p. 3, c. 1 & 2
178 Alexander Gazette, May 17, 1863, p. 17, NARA, Wash., DC.
179 Selected Records of the War Dept. Relating to Confederate POWs, Rec. Grp. 109, M598, p. 57, NARA, Wash., DC.
180 Selected Records of the War Dept. Relating to Confederate POWs, Rec. Grp. 109, M598, p. 45, NARA, Wash., DC.
181 Daily National Republican, April 3, 1863, p. 3, c. 1 & 2
182 Selected Records of the War Dept. Relating to Confederate POWs, Rec. Grp. 109, M598, p. 42, NARA, Wash., DC.
184 Daily National Republican, April 3, 1863, p. 3, c. 1 & 2
185 Selected Records of the War Dept. Relating to Confederate POWs, Rec. Grp. 109, M598, p. 57, NARA, Wash., DC.
186 Daily National Republican, April 3, 1863, p. 3, c. 1 & 2
187 Selected Records of the War Dept. Relating to Confederate POWs, Rec. Grp. 109, M598, p. 57, NARA, Wash., DC.
188 Selected Records of the War Dept. Relating to Confederate POWs, Rec. Grp. 109, M598, p. 58, NARA, Wash., DC.
189 Alexander Gazette, March 10, 1863, p. 3, c. 1.
190 Selected Records of the War Dept. Relating to Confederate POWs, Rec. Grp. 109, M598, p. 83, NARA, Wash., DC.
191 Selected Records of the War Dept. Relating to Confederate POWs, Rec. Grp. 109, M598, p. 83, NARA, Wash., DC.
Faithful, Virginia, March 2013

Message from the President

I hope that you have all have a successful start to the New Year. HFCI is looking forward to another full year of events. The first big event will be Mosby’s Raid and Reenactment and Commemoration being held on March 9th. This event organized by the City of Fairfax Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee will involve a reenactment of Mosby’s capture of Union general Stoughton, talks by Mosby scholars and screening of Mosby’s Combat Operations in Fairfax County, Virginia. The Fairfax Museum will also have a special exhibit dedicated to Mosby.

The annual Civil War Day will be held at the Blenheim Civil War Interpretive Center on April 27. This has become one of the signature events for the City’s Office of Historic Resources and HFCI. It is always a fun event for the whole family. On September 27, HFCI will be continuing this year. HFCI will be looking for information about these events as well as many others.

Please check out our new website www.historicfairfax.org for information about these events and as many others.

David L. Pumphrey

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**At the Fairfax Museum and Historic Blenheim...**

**Saturday, March 9 – 10 a.m.**


**Historic Downtown Fairfax**

**Saturday, April 27 – 10 a.m.**

13th Annual Fairfax Civil War Day – Historic Blenheim, 3610 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Living history presentations, slave life demonstration, historic house tours, military firings, musical performances, and much more!

**Historic Blenheim and The Civil War Interpretive Center, 3610 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. 703-591-0560**

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**Sunday, April 14 – 12 – 2 p.m.**

The Circus Comes to Town.

Naomi Zeavin from the Fairfax County History Commission will explore the fascinating lives of the circus families, the Baileys and the Munsons, and the area of today’s “Bailey’s Crossroads.”

**Sunday, May 12 – 12 – 2 p.m.**

Women’s Fashions of the Civil War Era. Illustrated talk and “show and tell” of period clothing with Mary Doering, costume historian and professor at George Mason University. (Note: This is a joint program with Historic Blenheim. Location: The Civil War Interpretive Center at Historic Blenheim, 3610 Old Lee Highway.)

**Sunday, June 9 – 12 – 2 p.m.**

First House: Two Centuries with Virginia’s First Families. Illustrated talk, book signing, and sale by Mary Miley Theobald, author of First House, the official bicentennial book of the Virginia Governor’s Mansion, celebrating 2013 as the “Year of the Historic House Museum.”

**Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 10209 Main Street, Fairfax. 703-385-8414**

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**Special Events**

**Saturday, March 9 – 10 a.m.**


**Historic Downtown Fairfax**

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**Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 10209 Main Street, Fairfax. 703-385-8414**

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**Faithful Court House News of 150 Years Ago**

**From Fairfax Court House,**

At 10 p.m., on the 31st ult., a detachment of the Fifth New York cavalry, without commission officers, broke into a private house on Main Street, held the occupant, and took from him his wallet, containing $41.

From thence they proceeded to the latter establishment of Mr. M. H. Sullivan. The doors were closed for the night, but the troops broke them open, overpowered the three clerks in attendance, robbed the money drawer of about $250 in cash, and took about $600 worth of goods, comprising tobacco, gauntlet gloves, etc., and perfectly demolishing the contents of the store.

Lient. Col. Charles Cummings immediately ordered his infantry guard to load, and they marched to the scene of the disturbance, when the cavalry fled to the outskirts of the town.

The matter is now undergoing investigation. — [Washington Republican]

Alexandria Gazette, January 5, 1863, p. 4, c. 1.

**Arrival of Prisoners.—The prisoners captured by Capt. Teobyl, at Fairfax Court House, arrived last night by the Central train. We hear that the Yankee Brigadier, Slaughter, was the object of especial consideration, the lady passengers bestowing upon him such marks of affection that he might have been mistaken for a friend, rather than an enemy. This is something new under the sun.**

Richmond Whig, March 13, 1863, p. 1, c. 6.

**General Stahl has returned to Fairfax County House, having visited Washington to ergently [sic] adoption of more stringent measures in reference to disloyal citizens within the lines, and of former guerrillas in the surrounding county. His propositions were promptly acceded to by General Heintzelman, and will be vigorously enforced.**

Alexandria Gazette, April 10, 1863, p. 2, c. 3.
One hundred and fifty years ago this month, during the early morning hours of March 9, 1863, John Singleton Mosby, one of the Civil War’s most celebrated and colorful characters, embarked with 29 of his men on their most daring and significant raid – Fairfax Court House.

Mosby’s object was the capture of Union Col. Sir Percy Wyndham. Wyndham, a British soldier of fortune, disapproved of Mosby’s unrefined guerilla style tactics and, in the months preceding, is alleged to have slandered Mosby by labeling him Horse Thief. Mosby was incensed and wanted Wyndham as a prize.

In December 1862, acting Brigadier General Edwin Henry Stoughton, of Bellows Falls, Vermont, the newly appointed commander of the 2nd Vermont Brigade had moved his headquarters to Fairfax Court House.

“Fairfax Court House reminded me of a hog yard, everything was so dirty! There was a few little groceries and sutler’s shops there and that is about all.”

Stoughton, had recently been nominated for Brigadier General, by President Lincoln, but had not yet been confirmed by the United States Senate. At 24, he was then the youngest Brigadier General in the Union army. The 2nd Vermont Brigade, composed of the 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th Vermont Infantry Regiments, were encamped in tents several miles to the south of Fairfax Court House along Wolf Run Shoals on the Occoquan River and Union Mills along Bull Run. In addition to his Headquarters Guard and the troops detached to the Provost Marshal of Fairfax Court House, General Stoughton

Col. John Singleton Mosby, 43rd Battalion Virginia Cavalry
Source: Library of Congress

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