

The Queen's Gambit, Civil War Style



A gamer studies his next move, eager to get his federal troops in motion and capture some hexagonal landscape.

Melissa A. Winn

Kim O'Connell, HistoryNet
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Oh, damn it.” Somewhere near Charlottesville, Va., Greg Gordon is scanning the expanse before him—the landscape mostly flat, a few rocky hills and groves of trees posing formidable barriers. Behind those trees, he knows, the enemy is waiting. Gordon doesn't like the hand fate has dealt him, so he has to move wisely. He positions soldiers on horseback in front of him. On his flanks, artillerymen are poised and ready. The weather is cold, gray, and drizzling, but it hardly matters. Within moments, the armies will advance.

On the other side from Gordon, Shane McBee is surveying his own options. “Don't like that,” he says, examining available tactics. “*Really* don't like that.” He pauses, considering. When he finally makes his move—a surprising one, a retreat—Gordon groans. It's thrown off his plan for an assault. Now he'll have to rethink everything. In the distance, other men murmur and grumble and occasionally cheer.

The backdrop for these contests is not a sprawling battlefield, but a DoubleTree Hotel about five miles from the University of Virginia campus, host to the annual Prezcon board gaming convention. Gordon and McBee are among dozens of players who have been playing in a tournament of the Civil War game *Battle Cry*, a popular tabletop game that hinges on both lucky die rolls and strategic maneuvers. The 2020 convention, held in late February before the pandemic closed down such things, drew hundreds of gamers for a week of tournaments. Hundreds of board games were in play, with several focused on the Civil War.



Southern troopers charge across the gameboard of Battle Cry!, powered by rolls of the dice and shrewd game-player skill. (Photo by Melissa A. Winn)

Even in this digital age, board gaming appears to be on the rise, with well-known titles such as *Settlers of Catan*, *Ticket to Ride*, and *Clue* flying off store shelves and filling online shopping carts. Board-based wargaming in particular, which became widely popular in the 1970s and '80s, has also enjoyed a resurgence in recent years, according to game sellers and enthusiasts, with games

such as *Axis & Allies*, *Churchill*, and *1775: Rebellion* routinely topping rankings. Civil War games, including such titles as *Lincoln*, *Fire and Fury*, *A House Divided*, and *Terrible Swift Sword* among many others, have maintained a loyal fan base along with them.

As with many things related to the Civil War, the devotion is deep. At his table at Prezcon, Gordon makes a decision. "I'm just going to go for the gusto," he says. "Assault on the right flank! Come on, boys!"

Casualties mount. The landscape shifts. The battle is on.

Board games of various forms have existed for thousands of years. An early version of chess dates to the 6th century in India, and other ancient games such as pachisi (popularized in the U.S. as *Parcheesi* and *Sorry!*) and backgammon are still played today as well. By the Civil War, soldiers were well versed in checkers, chess, dominoes, and card games, and travel versions of these games were often tucked into haversacks alongside sewing kits, journals, and photos from home. As an 1861 account of the Washington Artillery of New Orleans noted, "The men, when not on fatigue duty, lounge about, smoking, playing euchre, cribbage, or chess."

The outbreak of war proved especially important for an entrepreneur named Milton Bradley. In 1860, Bradley had printed thousands of commemorative portraits of then-presidential-nominee Abraham Lincoln. The portrait depicted an unbearded Lincoln as he had appeared during the campaign, but when the newly

bewhiskered president was inaugurated, Bradley's portraits were immediately obsolete. The misfire could have doomed Bradley if he hadn't channeled his energy into a new board game he called *The Checkered Game of Life*, in which players endured ups and downs based on the spins of a teetotum, a top-like spinner that is the precursor to the plastic version that the game of *Life* uses to this day. Rather than earning prestigious jobs and fancy houses as in the current game, the original game had players achieving either "happy old age" or a host of terrible outcomes including jail, "intemperance to poverty," and "gambling to ruin." Bradley quickly realized that making the game portable for Civil War soldiers was a lucrative strategy; Bradley earned a patent for the game in 1866.

The war inspired other games as well. The New York State Library has a copy of a *Chutes and Ladders*-type game dating to 1862 called *The Game of Secession, or Sketches of the Rebellion*. Based on a die roll or the spin of a teetotum, players moved along a fork-tongued serpent divided into 135 spaces, with Union victories allowing advancement and Confederate victories signaling a retreat. The playing board depicts generals, soldiers, and both Lincoln and his counterpoint Jefferson Davis, along with key army and navy scenes. Land on spot number 79, illustrating the virtuous "Mrs. Columbia" holding "little Jeff Davis," and you'll have to go back a demoralizing 44 spaces. But land on space 59 bearing the slogan "The Union: may it be preserved at any cost!" and you'll get three extra throws. (The game's publisher, Charlton & Althrop of Philadelphia, also became

known for printing pictorial envelopes depicting Union soldiers on them.)

A checkered gameboard also dating to 1862, owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, features the portraits of 31 prominent Union generals in the light squares, including Ambrose Burnside, George McClellan, Benjamin Butler, and David Hunter (in a jaunty feathered hat), along with Lincoln. The Met notes that the board, measuring about 9×9 inches, could have been used by a soldier in camp, but “its construction and pristine condition suggest it was created, sold, and reserved for patriotic use at home.” A larger, 15×15 version of this gameboard sold at auction in 2019 for \$3,500.



Milton Bradley's Lincoln portrait, left, failed to win over the public because he depicted the president without a beard. Bradley, however, took a chance on a board game he developed, The Checkered Game of Life, above. That roll of the dice paid off in spades, making a fortune for the entrepreneur and creating a long-lasting name brand. (Heritage Auctions, Dallas)

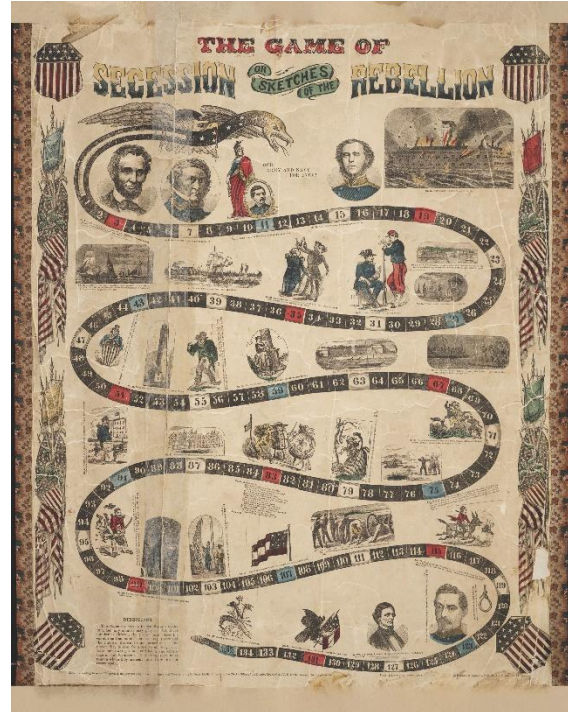
Rather than just “patriotic use at home,” by the 20th century and into the 21st, Civil War games were and are meant to be played. Board wargames arguably

entered the modern era with the 1953 release of the game *Tactics*, the first title published by well-known gamemakers Avalon Hill. In 1958, on the eve of the Civil War centennial, Avalon Hill (which still exists today in name but under different corporate ownership) published the game *Gettysburg*, no doubt spawning a generation of Civil War enthusiasts and gamers. Among them was David A. Powell, a Civil War author and former game designer who lives outside Chicago. “My dad tried to play *Gettysburg* once and he put it away,” Powell says. “I found it in his closet and asked if I could have it. I now have about 400 wargames in my collection.”

Designed by pioneering game designer Charles S. Roberts, *Gettysburg* set important precedents in that different units in the game mimicked the actual size of the units on the battlefield in July 1863, and they had to enter the gameboard from the same routes their historical counterparts used, dealing with whatever advantage or disadvantage that created. The second edition of the game incorporated a hexagonal grid, which removed diagonal distortion in game play, since moving along the diagonal in a square grid covered more distance than moving across the sides. Hexagons make movement equidistant in all directions. Today, most wargames are based on either this method, called hex-and-counter, blocks (which represent units of various types), or cards.

“One of the things that interested me about wargames is they act as living maps,” Powell says. “When you read or write military history, everybody says, ‘I wish you had more maps.’ A wargame can provide you with a living map.”

Other successful companies followed Avalon Hill, including Game Designers Workshop (GDW), Simulation Publications Inc. (SPI), and Tactical Studies Rules (TSR), which exploded in the '70s and '80s on the strength of its roleplaying game *Dungeons & Dragons*. In *A House Divided*, a GDW title first issued in 1981, the game is played on a mapboard of the 1860s United States, with boxes indicating a city, town, fort, or other military location. Rather than the simple “my roll, your roll” action of most board games, this game hinges on four actions per player turn: movement, combat, promotion, and recruitment. Restrictions exist, too: Only Union forces can move via the Potomac River, and the Confederacy doesn't automatically win if D.C. is captured, but must meet other conditions, too. (And this is one of the simpler Civil War board games.) As S. Craig Taylor wrote in the book *Hobby Games: The 100 Best*, “It seems that some wargames are intended to be admired, and some wargames are intended to be played. *A House Divided* falls squarely into the latter category.”



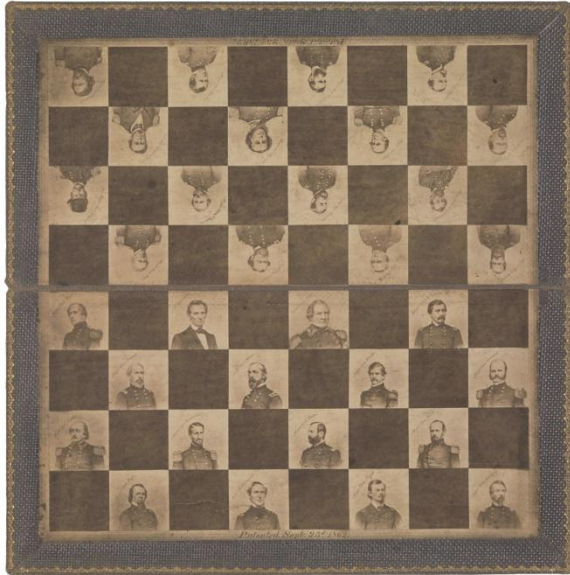
An American eagle devouring the snake of secession is among the colorful graphics on an 1862 game that is equal parts fun and Union propaganda. Players move ahead if they land on a square celebrating a Federal victory and fall behind if the square references a Confederate triumph. (Library of Congress)

Grant Dalglish, vice president of the veteran game company Columbia Games (founded by his father Tom Dalglish), says there are three types of wargamers: the competitors, the socializers, and the dreamers. “The dreamer pictures himself riding the horse,” Grant says. “My publishing style leans toward the first and second categories, but I don’t sacrifice those things that make the dreaming possible.”

Columbia’s Civil War titles include *Bobby Lee*, *Sam Grant*, *Gettysburg: Badges of Courage*, *Shenandoah: Jackson’s Valley Campaign*, and *Shiloh: April 1862*. Founded in 1972, the company pioneered the hardwood block method that is now commonplace in wargaming. Blocks

allow for the “fog of war” element many gamers desire, where players must commit their forces without knowing exactly what their opponents’ assets and strengths are. Blocks stand upright on the board facing the owning player; a number on the top edge represents the brigade’s or battalion’s strength. As they take hits, blocks are rotated so that diminishing numbers are shown, until they’re completely eliminated.

Like reenacting, Civil War board gaming allows enthusiasts to examine history in a way that feels sustained and immersive. “I’m attracted to what the hobby calls ‘monster’ games—multiple maps, days, weeks, months to game, 50- to 100-page rule books,” David Powell says. “[Those games are] an effort to make you feel how you feel when you’re reading a book about Gettysburg.”



This game board dates to 1862 and features the portraits of 31 Union leaders. Not all of them, admittedly, were skilled strategists who would serve to inspire victory. (Brian D. Caplan Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Back at Prezcon, it’s the end of a long day of gaming. Greg Gordon looks a little weary, but pleased. In addition to playing, he has served as the gamemaster for the *Battle Cry* tournament, which means he has spent hours monitoring wins and losses, answering questions, and keeping several concurrent games on track. Something like what a general officer would do on the battlefield, but on a smaller scale and with much lower stakes.

With remaining players dwindling, the contest has grown more intense. Gordon notes the people crowding around: players who have long since lost their own games; dutiful, patient spouses; gamers who’ve wandered over from other areas of the convention—all waiting for the outcome. “This game is very visual,” he says. “It adds to the whole experience.”

Something else holds them there, too—that inimitable feeling when you’ve found the people who enjoy your hobby as much as you do, the people who will sift through rulebooks and play for hours, just to claim a bit of this defining era of history for themselves. Far too soon, they know they will have to pack up their armies and move on.

Kim O’Connell is a writer based in Arlington, Va., with bylines in The New York Times, The Washington Post, Atlas Obscura, National Parks Traveler, and other national and regional publications.



Transcript of the Proclamation

January 1, 1863

A Transcription

By the President of the United States of America:

A Proclamation.

Whereas, on the twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

"That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority

thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

"That the Executive will, on the first day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof, respectively, shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any State, or the people thereof, shall on that day be, in good faith, represented in the Congress of the United States by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such State shall have participated, shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State, and the people thereof, are not then in rebellion against the United States."

Now, therefore I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief, of the Army and Navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days, from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, to wit:

Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, (except the Parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James Ascension, Assumption, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the City of New Orleans)

Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia, (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Ann, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth[]), and which excepted parts, are for the present, left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

And by virtue of the power, and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States, and parts of States, are, and henceforward shall be free; and that the Executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known, that such persons of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty three, and

of the Independence of the United States of America the eighty-seventh.

By the President: ABRAHAM LINCOLN
WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.

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The Historical Legacy of Watch Night

National Museum of African American History and Culture Dec 30, 2020

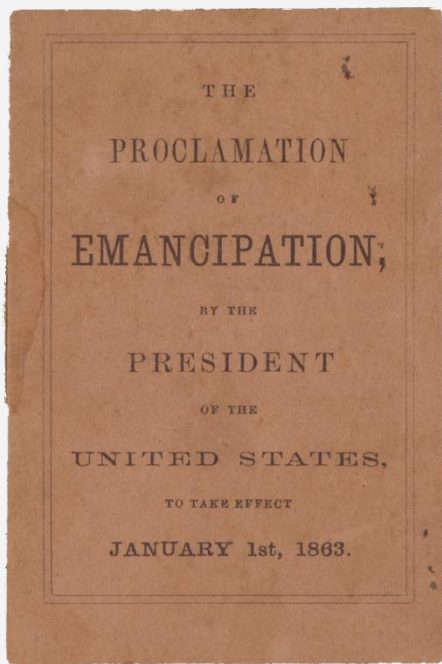


Illust. Of Black Church Ceremony; New Year [Getty Images] (Original Caption) Virginia- 'De Lord will take care ob de colored folk.' -Seeing the old year out and the new year in- Scene in the colored church at Grafton, near Yorktown, during the watch meeting

***It is a day for poetry and song, a new song.
These cloudless skies, this balmy air, this
brilliant sunshine . . . are in harmony with
the glorious morning of liberty about to
dawn up on us. Frederick
Douglass December 31, 1862***

On the night of December 31, 1862, enslaved and free African Americans gathered, many in secret, to ring in the new

year and await news that the Emancipation Proclamation had taken effect. Just a few months earlier, on September 22, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln issued the executive order that declared enslaved people in the rebelling Confederate States legally free. However, the decree would not take effect until the clock struck midnight at the start of the new year. The occasion, known as Watch Night or “Freedom's Eve,” marks when African Americans across the country watched and waited for the news of freedom. Today, Watch Night is an annual New Year’s Eve tradition that includes the memory of slavery and freedom, reflections on faith, and celebration of community and strength.



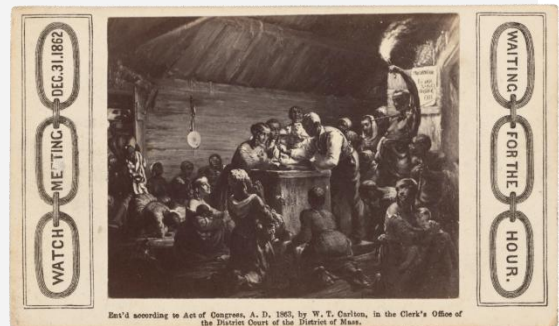
The Proclamation of Emancipation by the President of the United States, to take effect January 1st, 1863

Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture

Watch Night service is rooted in African American religious traditions. During the first Watch Night, many enslaved African

Americans gathered to pray, worship, sing, and dance. At the time, enslaved black people could find little respite from ever-present surveillance, even in practicing their faith. White enslavers feared that religion, which was often used to quell slave resistance, could incite the exact opposite if practiced without observance. They wrote laws that restricted worship and large gatherings, such as that in the 1848 Georgia Slave Code:

No person of color . . . shall be allowed to preach, to exhort, or join in any religious exercise with any persons of color, either free or slave, there being more than seven persons of color present. 1848 Georgia Slave Code



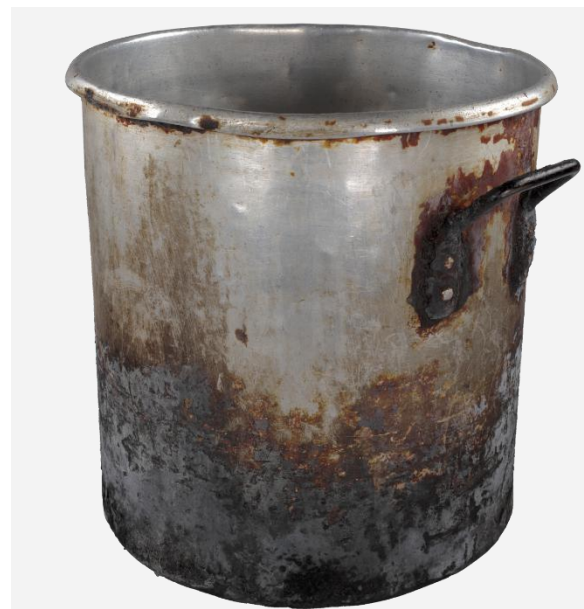
Waiting for the Hour
Carte-de-visite of an emancipation watch night meeting 1863

Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture

Despite these laws, enslaved people sought to exercise their own religious customs, including Christianity, Islam, and indigenous faith practices reflective of the homes from which they were stolen. They convened at praise houses on plantations or secretly gathered in the woods, where they practiced their faith under the protective cover of the trees and brush in what became known as “hush harbors.” As Charlotte Martin, a formerly enslaved woman from

Florida, recounted, “[The plantation owner] would not permit them to hold religious meetings or any other kinds of meetings, but they frequently met in secret to conduct religious services.” Charlotte’s own brother was beaten to death for participating in such secret worship meetings. But enslaved people persisted in their faith practices as forms of resistance and freedom.

This spirit is still visible in Watch Night services today. The Watch Night service typically begins around 7pm on December 31 and lasts through midnight, as faith leaders guide congregants in praise and worship. Many congregants across the nation bow in prayer minutes before the midnight hour as they sing out “Watchman, watchman please tell me the hour of the night.” In return the minister replies “it is three minutes to midnight”; “it is one minute before the new year”; and “it is now midnight, freedom has come,” to bless their transition into the new year.



Stockpot used to cook collard greens at the Florida Avenue Grill

Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Imar and Tasha Hutchins, Florida Avenue Grill

The occasion is customarily marked by celebrations of fellowship and a worship service, followed by a fortuitous meal on New Year’s Day. Celebratory foods include a diverse collection of culinary traditions that can be traced back to Southern superstition, influenced by beliefs across West Africa. Chief among these foodways is the practice of eating collard greens, representing the promise of prosperity, and eating black-eyed peas with rice, also known as Hoppin’ John. Traditionally, Hoppin’ John consists of black-eyed peas, rice, red peppers, and salt pork, and it is believed to bring good fortune to those who eat it. Before finding its way into American traditions, the black-eyed pea (also known as cowpea) traveled from Central Africa to the West Indies and finally to the Carolinas in the early 1700s. Many West African cultures regard the pea as lucky, and memories of its luck remained with enslaved black people in the American South and still endure today. Though Hoppin’ John is a common dish prepared for Watch Night, the foods prepared in observance of the tradition are incredibly diverse and reflective of regional, temporal, and cultural differences within the African American community. Some other common dishes include: candied yams, cornbread, potato salad, and macaroni and cheese.

Initially meant to welcome emancipation, today the Watch Night service encourages reflection on the history of slavery and freedom, as well as reflection on the past year—both its trials and triumphs—while also anticipating what the new year will have in store. It is a continuation of generations of faith that freedom and renewal lie ahead.

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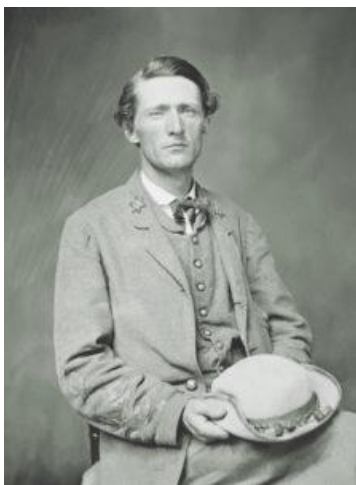
Savage Showdown: Cole's Cavalry Versus Mosby's Rangers



Calvary clashes in "Mosby's Confederacy" typically resulted in captured Union troopers left to the mercy of John Mosby and his Partisan Rangers – the vaunted 43rd Battalion. Virginia Calvary. Don Troiani (b.1949)/Bridgeman Images

Eric Buckland, HistoryNet
January 2022

Partisan Rangers, Cole's Cavalry spent early 1864 in a bitter struggle for the upper hand in "Mosby's Confederacy"



Mosby's gold pocket watch, with a stem wind. The colonel—an accomplished lawyer both before and after the war—was reputed for his punctuality. (Library of Congress)

In late December 1863, Confederate Major John Singleton Mosby and his 43rd Battalion, Virginia Cavalry were operating in and around Loudoun County in northern Virginia. At the same time, Union Major Henry A. Cole was conducting patrols and raids in the same region with his 1st Maryland Cavalry Battalion, Potomac Home Brigade, better known as "Cole's Cavalry." A clash of some sort between the two enemy units was inevitable, and, in fact, three short yet brutal engagements would occur over the first seven weeks of 1864.

The series of showdowns began December 30, as Captain Albert Hunter and about 60 members of Cole's Cavalry departed their Loudoun Heights camp near Harpers Ferry, W.Va., on a patrol toward Rectortown, Va. As his troopers advanced south into "Mosby's Confederacy"—an area encompassing Virginia's Loudoun, Fauquier, Clarke, and Warren counties—Hunter knew it was likely his adversary would soon receive reports of his venture.

Hunter's patrol spent the first night in Lovettsville, about 10 miles southeast of Loudoun Heights. The next morning as they continued to push south, the weather turned increasingly wretched. Low temperatures chilled the men—and snow, sleet, and rain soaked both them and their equipment. The men found some protection from the elements at a farm and rested New Year's Eve in tolerable comfort.

When the troopers awoke the morning of January 1, they were greeted with sunny but cold weather. Mounting, they continued heading in the direction

of Middleburg, where the New Year's Day calm was disrupted by a brief skirmish with some of Mosby's Rangers. One Union trooper, Private Jason McCullough, was wounded, but Hunter's men captured three Rebels. Hunter decided to send McCullough and the three prisoners back to Loudoun Heights with a small escort. The remainder of the detachment continued toward Rectortown, just south of Middleburg.

New Year's Day also marked a rendezvous of some of Mosby's men, and, as fortune would have it, Rectortown was their destination, too. Upon their arrival on the outskirts of town, the Rangers, commanded by Captain William "Billy" Smith, were surprised to discover the presence of Hunter's detachment. Smith ordered his men to watch their foes' activities, but to avoid an engagement.

Hunter, though, had seen the shadowy figures of the Rangers, about 30 total. Concerned their numbers might continue to grow and satisfied the mission to reach Rectortown had been completed, Hunter decided a return to the main Loudoun Heights camp would be the most prudent option. Hoping, however, to confuse his enemy of his actual destination, Hunter initially moved south toward Salem (today's Marshall) before turning north to head back to camp.

The Rangers followed Hunter's troopers and quickly saw through their deception. Smith directed his men to cut across nearby fields to get in front of the Federal force. Three Rangers comprised Smith's lead element: Richard Paul Montjoy, Henry Stribling

Ashby, and John Carter Edmonds, all eager to engage the enemy. Coming upon the rear of Hunter's formation near an intersection of five roads, known by the locals as "Five Points," they attacked. Smith heard the noise of the initial assault and hastened the rest of his command forward to join the fray.

His horse killed, Hunter would be captured early in the clash, and though the Union troopers momentarily held their ground and blunted the Rangers' initial assault, their defense soon collapsed. Realizing their leader was now out of the fight and that their revolvers wouldn't fire because of damp powder, they lost all semblance of military discipline and rode off in fear and panic.

Hard Riders in Blue Above



(Clockwise from top: Courtesy of Mark Dudrow (2); USAHEC) An ambrotype of 2nd Lt. Samuel B. Sigler, Cole's Cavalry, on his horse "Bill." Right: Henry A. Cole enjoyed a steady rise in command with the 1st Maryland Cavalry Battalion, Potomac Home Brigade, after joining as captain of Company A in August 1861. He was promoted to major when the 1st was consolidated as a battalion in August 1862

and then to colonel in February 1864. Far right: Captain Albert Hunter proved one of Cole's most dependable subordinates, serving until he mustered out in June 1865. In 1890, he would write a four-part personal history of the war.

Describing the "Five Points Fight" in a letter to the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*—published nearly 50 years later, on February 16, 1913—Ranger Thomas William Smith Lake wrote:

[O]n January 1, 1864, a detachment of Cole's Battalion, composed of a detail of twenty men from each company, numbering in all about eighty men, under command of Captain A.N. Hunter, came in a search from Harper's Ferry of Mosby's men....We had orders to meet in Rectortown that day....We got off on a hill and watched their movements when our men began to gather in. Finally, Captain Smith came in, and with about twenty men we followed in the rear to near a place called Five Points, a place where five roads converged. We had gathered there twenty-eight men. Captain Smith said, "What shall we do, fight them or not?"

Captain Hunter had time to form his men in a field that once belonged to my father; or, in other words, we were on our own dunghill and felt a good deal like fighting. Just as we reached the top of the hill in sight of their column, Captain Smith was on the left, and I on the right in the first set of twos. Captain Smith jumped his horse over a gap on the left; the enemy was on our right side. But it was not long before I had a companion brave as the bravest, John Gulick, by my side, and we made straight at them, receiving a galling fire,

and they stood till we could see the whites of their eyes, and going up to them, Gulick was shot in the shoulder. But they could not stand those Indian yells and soon broke and ran. There was a marshy place just in their rear they knew nothing about and ran into that. A good many got unhorsed and were captured there. Then we had a running fight for some six or seven miles, in which they used their drawn sabres to put more motion to their horses, a good many of which gave out and they were captured...."



*Two unidentified members of Cole's Cavalry.
(Dana B. Shoaf Collection)*

The Federal casualty count was dreadful, with at least four killed and another dozen wounded. Various reports listed 30–40 Federals captured, what was perhaps the worst defeat for "Cole's Cavalry" the entire war. (A

sobering postscript to the fate of the Union men captured that day reveals that 24 later died in Confederate captivity. Hunter was not one of them, however, as he had escaped his captors while the battle swirled around them.)

The Rangers, meanwhile, came through the New Year's fight virtually unscathed, with only two wounded. The first Mosby–Cole engagement had been a lopsided victory for the man to become known after the war as the "Gray Ghost." The tables soon turned, however.

On January 7, Confederate scout Benjamin Franklin "Frank" Stringfellow informed Mosby that he had conducted a reconnaissance of Cole's Loudoun Heights camp and that he believed a surprise raid on it was certain of success. Mosby and Stringfellow had served together earlier in the war as scouts for Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart, with the two holding an abiding trust and respect in each other. Based on Stringfellow's report and recommendation, Mosby agreed to meet him near Cole's camp on January 9 to conduct the raid.

Gathering about 100 men, Mosby left Upperville and proceeded to the northeast. The weather was frigid and the temperature continued to drop as the men headed toward their objective. Further exacerbating the already cold conditions, a brisk wind made the ride almost unbearable and the men stopped twice to warm themselves. The first respite was at "Woodgrove," home of James Heaton, whose son, Harry, rode with Mosby; the second at St. Paul's Church on the Harpers Ferry Road. The Rangers welcomed the

breaks from the cold, though any feelings of warmth were fleeting. Ranger accounts of the ride to Loudoun Heights describe men having to dismount and walk to prevent their feet from freezing. While walking, many also slipped their hands under the saddle blankets of their mounts to regain feeling in their fingers. The demanding trek clearly degraded the men's mental alertness and physical dexterity.

Despite the circumstances and punishing weather, Mosby and his men remained undetected and met with Stringfellow a few miles from Loudoun Heights. Stringfellow had gone ahead to scout the enemy camp and reported that all was quiet within. The raid appeared destined for success.

Following a route suggested by Stringfellow, Mosby circumvented Union pickets and moved closer to Cole's position. The raiders continued moving without detection, even when they had to negotiate a steep climb in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Forced to dismount and lead their horses, men slipped and fell, resulting in such nerve-wracking commotion that their stealthy approach seemed in jeopardy. Yet all remained quiet within the enemy camp site.

Finally gaining a position from which they would attack, the Rangers had literally caught Cole's Cavalry napping. In his report of the raid, Mosby would write: "On reaching this point without creating any alarm, I deemed that the crisis had passed and the capture of the entire camp of the enemy a certainty."



*'Montjoy earned his bars today!'
On February 20, 1864, during a running
duel with Ranger Richard Paul Montjoy
(right), Captain William L. Morgan (left)
would be killed. Mosby would reward
Private Montjoy with promotion to captain.
(Courtesy of Eric Buckland)*

Preparing to launch his strike, Mosby gave Stringfellow and his small band of scouts the honor of attacking the house on Loudoun Heights where Cole had his headquarters. Within minutes of Stringfellow's departure, however, everything unraveled. As Stringfellow's little detachment closed in, a shot echoed in the dark. Whoever fired that solitary round was never determined, but bedlam immediately erupted inside Cole's camp, spurring Stringfellow's men to pull away with much greater noise and recklessness than they had during their approach. Their retreat took them directly into the path of the Rangers, who had been ordered hastily forward by Mosby because of the shot. Believing they were being attacked by

Cole's men, those Rangers fired directly at Stringfellow's men, leading to a number of friendly fire casualties. Mosby's surprise and certainty of victory had vanished in an instant.

Disoriented by the commotion, Cole's troopers poured out of their tents just as Mosby's men surged into their camp. Although the half-dressed, some barefoot, and bleary-eyed Federals were at first confused, they quickly steadied themselves and unleashed a shower of carbine and revolver fire into the midst of the Rebel intruders. One quick-minded Union soldier, never identified, called to his comrades to shoot anyone who was mounted. That command and subsequent lethally accurate fire from the Union troopers was devastating. Highlighted against the dark night sky by the glow of burning tents, Mosby's men were unmistakable targets.

The snow covering the campground was quickly stained with blood. Mosby soon realized his situation was untenable, any recent thoughts of victory replaced by the knowledge that he had to promptly extract his beleaguered men to avoid further loss. He ordered a withdrawal. For a unit used to prevailing with minimal casualties in such confrontations, the Rangers soon faced the sad truth that five men had been killed and six wounded. Three of the six wounded later died from their wounds. One Ranger was captured.

Among those killed in the Loudoun Heights clash was "Billy" Smith, who only days before had performed so magnificently at Five Points. Lieutenant William Thomas "Prince

George's Tom" Turner was mortally wounded, dying a week later. Both were favorites of Mosby and highly respected and revered by their comrades. In writing about them later, Mosby cited them as "two of the noblest and bravest officers of this army, who thus sealed a life of devotion and of sacrifice to the cause they loved." Not surprising, in his report about the disastrous raid, while still pained by the deaths of Smith and Turner, Mosby wrote that his losses were "more so in worth than the number of the slain."

One of Cole's troopers, C. Armour Newcomer, recounted the Union victory in his *Cole's Cavalry; or, Three years in the Saddle in the Shenandoah Valley*:

"Colonel Mosby, their old antagonist...had crossed the mountain and fell upon the camp, and then fired a volley into the tents where Cole's men lay sleeping, many of them no doubt dreaming of their sweethearts and loved ones at home. No one who has not experienced a night attack from an enemy can form the slightest conception of the feelings of one awakened in the dead of night with the din of shots and yells coming from those thirsting for your blood. Each and every man in that attack, for the time, was an assassin. But we should remember that war means to kill; the soldier in the excitement of battle forgets what pity is, and nothing will satisfy his craving but blood.

The rude awakening brought Cole's hardy veterans out into the deep snow covering the mountain, and they promptly picked up the gauge of battle.

Long experience in border warfare had taught these gallant Marylanders to shoot at the horsemen, and not attempt to mount their own faithful chargers....

During the fight every man was for himself. There was no time to wait for orders, the cry rang out on the cold frosty air "shoot every soldier on horseback." Many of the Confederates who were killed or wounded were burned with powder, as Cole's men used their carbines. It was hand to hand, and so dark, you could not see the face of the enemy you were shooting. It was a perfect hell!....

Mosby had been badly used up; our comrades who had lost their lives on the last New Year's day, and in other engagements, where he had been defeated, were now avenged. It was difficult to tell how many had been lost until after daylight."

For the Rangers, the bitter loss at Loudoun Heights dramatically overshadowed their Five Points triumph. One engagement between the two forces remained, however. On February 20, Major Cole and 200 troopers departed Loudoun Heights on another scouting expedition into Mosby's Confederacy. Reaching Upperville, they surprised and captured 11 Rangers.

Mosby, staying a few miles away, promptly learned of the Union incursion and dispatched a few men to alert the other Rangers in the area to the threat and to order them to assemble as rapidly as possible. As Cole's men continued south to Piedmont Station (today's Delaplane),

the Rangers mounted and set off to rendezvous with their commander.

After reaching Piedmont Station, Cole decided to return to Upperville and then, ultimately, Loudoun Heights. By that time, Mosby had assumed a position where he could both maintain surveillance on Cole's element and await the arrival of more Rangers. When Cole turned his men around and began his return trip to camp, Mosby followed. Soon, small groups of Rangers had joined Mosby, and when he reached the outskirts of Upperville, the major had gathered nearly 50 men.

Seeing that Cole had stopped his men in the little town to water their horses, Mosby decided to attack. Unprepared to receive an enemy charge, the Federal troopers were quickly pushed out of the town, pressed by the Partisan Rangers. During the pursuit, Private Montjoy engaged and killed one of Cole's officers, Captain William L. Morgan, in an informal duel. "Montjoy earned his bars today!" Mosby would exclaim, officially promoting him to captain a few weeks later.

Cole tried to hold his men together as they fell back to their camp, but the Rangers' pressure was relentless. Finally, he rallied his men behind the protection of a stone wall near Blakeley's Grove School. There, the steadfast Cole hoped to make a stand and drive Mosby away. The tactic was initially successful as multiple charges were stifled. But Mosby, seeking an advantage, ordered some of his men to attack Cole's flank. Suddenly confronted by enemy from two directions, Cole and his men were forced from their position. The

Federals lost any semblance of an organized delaying action, their sole mission now an escape from the onslaught and a safe return to their camp. After harrying Cole's men for a few more miles, the Rangers broke off the chase, satisfied with their victory.

Blakeley's Grove School marked the last fight between Mosby's and Cole's men. Despite victories there and at Five Points, the painful losses Mosby suffered at Loudoun Heights could not be forgotten. Indeed, as he had stated, the loss of "quality" that day left a void never fully refilled.

Mosby, eventually promoted to colonel, continued operating in northern Virginia for the duration of the war, remaining an annoyingly persistent and painful thorn in the side of Union commanders. Cole also achieved the rank of colonel, and his 1st Maryland Cavalry Battalion grew into a regiment. After the Blakeley's Grove School fight, Cole's Cavalry commenced operations in the Shenandoah Valley as part of the greater Union effort there.

In 1895, Mosby penned a heart-felt, cordial reply to an invitation to attend a reunion of Cole's Cavalry:

"I did not receive until too late your polite Invitation to attend the reunion of Cole's Cavalry. It would have given me great pleasure to meet my old antagonists around the festive board, but it is now too late for me to make arrangements to go or to give notice to the members of my old command of your invitation to them. I give you the assurance of my best wishes."

Eric Buckland retired from the U.S. Army as a lieutenant colonel after spending the majority of his 22-year career in Special Forces. An officer of the Stuart–Mosby Historical Society in Centreville, Va., Buckland has written several books and frequently delivers presentations focused on the “men who rode with Mosby.” He can be contacted at info@mosbymen.com.

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National Register of Women's Service in the Civil War (NRWSCW): Woman of the Month Pauline Cushman, actress and spy

Born June 10, 1833 in New Orleans, Louisiana, Died December 2, 1893 in San Francisco, California. Buried in the Officer's Circle at the Presidio in the San Francisco National Cemetery



Pauline was born Harriet Wood in New Orleans, but her family relocated to Grand Rapids, Michigan when she was still young, and established a trading post there with the indigenous peoples. Not much else is known of her childhood or family, although Pauline would later claim both French and Spanish ancestry. At the age of 17 or 18, she left Michigan with dreams of becoming an actress, and took the stage name Pauline Cushman. Pursuit of her acting career would take her to New Orleans and New York.

In 1853, Pauline married a musician named Charles Dickinson, and they had two children together. Again, very little is definitively known about their life together, except that at the start of the Civil War, they were living in Cleveland, Ohio, where Charles enlisted in the 41st Ohio Infantry. He died of disease in 1862. In order to support herself, she left her children with her in-laws in Cleveland, and traveled to Louisville, Kentucky to resume acting. It is reported that neither of her children survived to adulthood.

In April 1863, while performing in the play *The Seven Sisters* in Louisville, she was approached by two Confederate officers, offering her cash to give a toast to Jefferson Davis



Photo courtesy of The National Park Service.

Suggested Reading: to learn more, check out the meticulously researched book, *Pauline Cushman: Spy of the Cumberland* (2006) by long-time SWCW supporter William Christen.



Pauline Cushman, actress and spy. Mathew Brady Studio. Modern albumen silver print from c. 1860-1870 wet collodion negative. Photo courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery.

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New book challenges Civil War's old 'myths'

Authors revisit Md.'s role in Confederacy and Dred Scott case



Charles W. Mitchell, co-editor with historian Jean H. Baker of the new book "The Civil War in Maryland Reconsidered" at his

His essay, “Border Wars,” describes how those who ran this “reverse Underground Railroad” kidnapped African Americans in the free commonwealth of Pennsylvania, brought them to Baltimore, and kept them in “pens” before selling them into enslavement in the Deep South.

Another author, Jessica Millward of the University of California, Irvine, brings to life individuals such as Charity Folks, a woman who was born into slavery in Anne Arundel County in the mid-1700s and was later freed. By describing how she gave birth to both free and enslaved children, Millward illustrates how such factors as gender could complicate the supposedly clear distinction between slavery and freedom in Maryland.

And it’s Johns Hopkins professor Martha Jones, a prominent scholar of African American history, who combs old court records to show that the Dred Scott ruling had little practical impact locally. Though it portended catastrophe for the state’s 87,000 free Blacks, Jones demonstrates that Maryland judges overwhelmingly defaulted to state laws that kept the group’s essential rights intact.

