

Hunting the Gray Ghost TOUR 4— Mosby, The End of the War, and After

Tour 4--Mosby, the End of the War, and After explores the Mosby story at the end of the Civil War, when the Rangers are disbanded and the “Gray Ghost” becomes a civilian attorney at Warrenton, Virginia. In historic Warrenton, you will see some of the finest of Virginia’s architecture amidst memories of both Mosby’s Confederacy and Mosby’s adjustment to the Postwar South. Here are reminders of a Gray Ghost actively involved in political life as a friend of President Grant and a member of the Republican party. It is here, too, that John Singleton Mosby and his family are buried in the Warrenton Cemetery.

Tour 4 is designed to be an additional tour taken at the end of Tour 2. It begins at Delaplane in 1865. Should you choose to take Tour 3 first, once you’ve completed it, head east over Ashby’s Gap on Route 50 to Route 17 south at Paris. Emmanuel Church is 7.0 miles south at Maidstone Road (Route 713) on the left (north) side of Route 17.



STOP 1—Emmanuel Church and the grave of Ranger Channing Smith.

On a raid at Burke Station in Fairfax County on April 10, 1865, Mosby and the Rangers encountered the day’s newspaper, a copy of the *Baltimore American*.

Reading the headlines of

General Lee’s surrender at Appomattox Courthouse the day before, Mosby is said to have sat down on a log and wept. He said, “I thought I had sounded the profoundest depth of human feeling, but this is the bitterest hour of my life.” Ranger Channing Smith was sent with four men to Richmond to find out just what the Rangers should do. Sneaking into the Union occupied city, Smith tracked

down General Lee at his Franklin Street home. Lee and family were sitting in darkness due to the destruction of the city gas works in the great fire that came with Richmond’s evacuation on April 2nd. Lee told Smith that he could not give advice as commander now that he had been paroled by federal forces, but added to the young Ranger, “*Channing, go home, all you boys who fought with me, and help build up the shattered fortunes of our dear old State.*” This message brought back to Mosby on April 17th led Mosby to agree to surrender negotiations with General Winfield S. Hancock’s staff at Millwood in Clarke County on April 18th and 20th. When these failed, Mosby disbanded his Ranger command on April 21st (see Stop 2). In the graveyard of this lovely 1859 Episcopal church, Ranger Channing Smith is buried, to the left of the church front, his gravestone surrounded by boxwood bushes. The church witnessed the movement of many a federal and Ranger troop during the War. *Directions:* At Delaplane, turn left (south) on Route 17, going about 1.0 mile to Maidstone Road (Route 713) on the left. Turn left here, and then almost immediately, turn left again into the Emmanuel Church parking lot.

STOP 2—The Disbandment Site at Salem (now Marshall).

On the foggy, drizzly morning of Friday April 21, 1865 some two weeks after Lee’s surrender at Appomattox, in this field just behind the village of Salem, Mosby’s command gathered for the last time. Surrender negotiations with Hancock’s staff at Millwood had failed the day before. Mosby read his famous final order thanking and disbanding the famed unit in lieu of surrendering it. He told them,

Soldiers! I have summoned you together for the last time. The vision we have cherished of a free and independent country, has vanished, and that country is now the spoil of a conqueror. I disband your organization in preference to surrendering it to our enemies. I am now no longer your commander. After association of more than two eventful years, I part from you with a just pride in the fame of your achievements, and grateful recollections of



your generous kindness to myself.

Mosby would recollect in 1895, “Life cannot offer a more bitter cup than the one I drained when we parted at Salem.” In the coming weeks, Rangers turned themselves in to Union forces to seek parole when they thought it safe. Mosby turned himself in at Lynchburg in June 1865, not far from his family home in Amherst County.



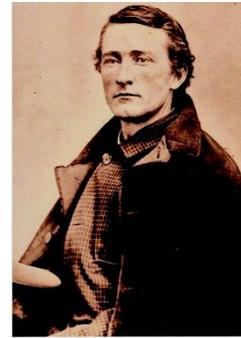
Directions: Turning right out of the Emmanuel Church parking lot, you will immediately see Grove Lane (Route F185) on your left—before you hit the big intersection with Route 17 just ahead. This is actually the old road that goes to Marshall. Turn left onto Grove Lane. Go 3.9 miles to Marshall. At Frost Street by the Marshall Branch of PNC Bank on your left, you will see a granite marker that mentions the disbandment of Mosby’s command. Turn left onto Frost and go one block to Salem Avenue on your right. At this intersection you are in the heart of the field where Mosby’s Rangers disbanded in April 1865.

STOP 3--Road Island, Mosby’s rented postwar home. In late 1865, Mosby decided not to return to his pre-war residence and law practice at Bristol in southwest Virginia. Instead, he chose to make use of his many potential Ranger clients in Fauquier, Prince William, and Loudoun counties by setting up a law practice at Warrenton. Mosby rented “Road Island” beginning in late 1865, hidden



in a grove of trees beside the familiar road that connected Warrenton to the former “Mosby’s Confederacy.” Ironically, Mosby was without a horse for part of this time at his new home. So he donned a cape—soon dusty--and walked the four miles to his Warrenton law office. He was often seen carrying a simple olive green canvas cloth around his legal

papers. As you drive to Warrenton, you will be following the route Mosby walked. He lived at Road Island from 1866-75, practicing



law on the Fauquier-Loudoun-Prince William court circuit. Mosby transitioned here to the many changes that came with life in the postwar South. Photo: 1866, Valentine Museum.

Directions: Take Salem Avenue from Frost Street to the stop sign at Route 710 by the firehouse. Turn right, go through the first light, and continue on; Route 710 becomes Route 17 heading towards Warrenton. Turn left at Blantyre Road (Route 628) some 7 miles south of Marshall. “Road Island” is the first house on the left (north) side of Blantyre Road. It is private property.

STOP 4—Brentmoor, Mosby’s postwar (1875-77) home. In



time, while practicing law as a Warrenton attorney, Mosby had sufficient funds to purchase the Judge Spilman house from James Keith at 173 Main Street Warrenton. John and Pauline Mosby loved the handsome 1859 home and its location just six blocks from Mosby’s law office. Unfortunately, Mosby’s beloved

Pauline (below) died in childbirth in May 1876 in the upstairs bedroom after living in the home just a year. Together with being shot at one night on the way from the Warrenton train station (Mosby had become unpopular as one of the few postwar Confederate Republicans), Pauline’s untimely death led Mosby to sell the house in 1877. Former Confederate General Eppa Hunton, then a Congressman and later U.S. Senator, bought the house.

Directions: To get here most easily, take no turns off Route 17 (including Bypass 17 that



goes around Warrenton). Keep on Business 17, going through the light at Bypass 29, and motor on Winchester Street into downtown Warrenton. Turn right at the stop sign and then immediately left onto Main Street by the courthouse, following the signs for the visitor center, which is next to Brentmoor. Look for Calhoun Street, which turns left off Main and takes you to parking at the Visitor Center on the right. Brentmoor, though at 173 Main Street, backs up to the Visitor Center. Staff here is helpful with questions about Brentmoor, Warrenton, and Fauquier County. The visitor center has restrooms.

STOP 5—California Building, Mosby’s law office. Mosby’s postwar law office was in this building, just across Court Street from the Fauquier County Courthouse (see STOP 6). Mosby practiced at the Fauquier county court as well as at Brentsville, where Prince William County’s court sat at the time, and at Leesburg, Loudoun’s county seat. He had many former Rangers among his clients. After his friendship with President Grant grew and he became a Republican, Mosby’s law practice dropped off from 6,000 clients in 1870 to 1100 in 1876. Few former Mosby Rangers were Republicans in the Postwar South. Republicans, as far as most white Southerners were concerned, had brought on the “War of Northern Aggression”! The California Building was funded by the California Gold Rush earnings of its builder, two-time Virginia Governor William “Extra Billy” Smith, hence the name. Smith was Governor in 1864-65, at the peak of Mosby’s Confederacy. He lived just south of town.



Directions: While the technical address of the California Building is No. 1 Wall Street, it sits on the North side of Hotel Street between Court & Culpeper Streets. From Brentmoor, walk six blocks back to the courthouse, which will be on your left. At the near side of the courthouse, turn left onto Court Street. You will see the California Building on the left as you near Hotel Street; it is on the corner. Though Mosby is long dead, the building still houses law offices.

STOP 6—The Fauquier County Courthouse where Mosby practiced law.



The original court building in which Mosby practiced law burned in 1890. This building was constructed to replicate the original. The day of John Mosby’s funeral, June 1, 1916, his body was brought in from Washington where he had died at Garfield Hospital two days before. Twenty-seven former Mosby Rangers met the train and acted as an honor guard to the Warrenton Town Hall where Mosby lay in state for four hours. They then took him to the Warrenton Cemetery where a Catholic service of

burial was performed. Afterwards, the twenty-seven Rangers present and one African-American man associated with the Ranger unit posed for a famous photograph on the steps of this courthouse. *Directions:* The Fauquier County Court House sits opposite the California Building at the corner of Court and Main Streets.

STOP 7—Mosby Monument. Erected four years after Mosby’s death on June 26, 1920, this simple, rough stone obelisk recalls Mosby’s connection to the region. The monument came at a time when Mosby’s reputation had been somewhat rejuvenated, following just four years after his death. In part, the monument proclaims, “He has left a name that will live till honor, virtue, courage all shall cease to claim the homage of the heart.”



Directions: The monument sits on the lawn on the west side of the Fauquier Courthouse in front of the 1808 Old Jail building (in background of photo above) that now serves as the museum of the Fauquier Historical Society. The Old Jail is open Tuesday through Sunday 10:00 to 4:00; you can see the monument anytime.

STOP 8--Beckham House, where General Edwin H. Stoughton was brought after his capture at Fairfax Courthouse.

The Warrenton home of John Grigsby Beckham on Culpeper Street became famous on the morning of Monday March 9, 1863 when John Singleton Mosby and his command brought General Edwin M. Stoughton to the house. The youngest general in the Union army at the time had been captured earlier that morning at Fairfax Courthouse, snatched from his bed while soundly sleeping. The Beckham's son, Robert Franklin Beckham, had been Stoughton's roommate at West Point, and had visited the Beckham residence on a pre-war school break. Breakfast was served to the prisoner, then he was taken on to General Fitzhugh Lee at Culpeper.



A short time later, the Beckham's son was cast into prominence when the commander of General J.E.B. Stuart's Horse Artillery, the "gallant" John Pelham, was killed just to the south at Kelly's Ford on March 17. Beckham succeeded in Pelham's role.

Directions: From the Mosby Monument, walk to the right around the old jail onto Ashby Street, then turn left onto Hotel Street, passing by the large columned Warren Green Hotel where General McClellan relinquished command of the Army of the Potomac to General Ambrose P. Burnside in November 1862. At Culpeper Street, turn right. The Beckham House, now the Fauquier Club with blue awnings, is just ahead across Culpeper Street at #37.



STOP 9---The Barber Shop where Mosby and a barber outwitted the federals. This is the site of the apocryphal Civil War story of Mosby in the barber's chair, most likely sometime in 1863. When Union soldiers began searching the town, a federal officer entered to question the barber as to whether Mosby had been seen. The quick-thinking barber lathered up Mosby to the point he was unrecognizable. The well-lathered figure in the barber's chair was

questioned as well, but neither he nor the barber had any idea where the famous guerilla was. One version of the story has Mrs. Pauline Mosby entering the shop during this tense moment with a package of intelligence for Mosby, but gives it to the barber instead, maintaining it was a powder for the barber's wife to make the popular Virginia drink "Shrub." When the Union officer left, Mosby was quickly shaved off, given the package, and escaped. *Directions:* The barber shop site is on the east side of Culpeper Street at #15-17. From the Beckham House, walk uphill a brief distance toward Main Street; #15-17 is on the left. Most recently, the location is painted dark green. The barber shop is no longer there, unfortunately—that's an idea for an enterprising soul!

STOP 10—Warrenton Train Depot, where Mosby's postwar unpopularity was punctuated with a shot. Mosby commuted a great deal to Washington as part of his activity in the Republican party during the 1870s. His friendship with General Ulysses S. Grant as President transferred to his successor, former Union General Rutherford B. Hayes, who had fought Mosby in the Shenandoah Valley in 1864. This unseemly friendship made Mosby especially unpopular in the days after the 1872 amnesty returned the vote to former Confederate soldiers. Ironically, Mosby had been instrumental in advising President Grant to issue such an amnesty. In 1878 the widowed Mosby had already left Brentmoor, sending his children to live with his mother in Amherst County. He was coming from Washington to Warrenton on legal business for his waning practice via the Orange & Alexandria Railroad and its 9-mile branch from Warrenton Junction (now Calverton) to Warrenton. Arriving at the depot, he began to walk towards the courthouse. Someone took a shot at him—missing, fortunately--but the incident led Mosby to ever more fervently look for an escape from his Warrenton law practice. Ultimately, he received appointment as Consul to Hong Kong from President Hayes, heading to the Far East in early 1879 as the newest employee of the United States government. An interesting piece of irony, this! At Hong Kong, the former guerilla commander annoyed the consular establishment with dogged attention to details and moralistic efforts to stamp out corruption. A pesky fellow, he!

Directions: Reverse direction on Culpeper Street and walk two blocks downhill to Beckham Street, turning left. Walk down the hill on short Beckham Street to its end at the Warrenton railroad depot.

STOP 11. Warrenton Cemetery, where Mosby lies with his family. As Warrenton was the postwar home of Mosby's daughter, Virginia Stuart Mosby Coleman (she lived at "Pelham" on Culpeper Street out beyond the Route 29 Bypass), Colonel Mosby often visited the town in his last years. After his stint as U.S. Consul to Hong Kong had ended in 1885, Mosby used his connections with a



dying General Grant to obtain a situation as a railroad attorney with Leland Stanford's Southern Pacific Railroad. Accordingly, he lived in San Francisco for many years. In 1901 he began to work for the U.S. Interior Department as a special agent in the General Land Office, and later worked until 1910 as an attorney with the U.S. Justice Department in Washington. But in the final years before his death in 1916, Colonel Mosby often visited Northern Virginia and was seen motoring nearby about the former

Mosby's Confederacy. Interestingly, his chauffeur was frequently Henry C. Stuart, the nephew of his former commander, J.E.B. Stuart. [Mosby lost his chauffeur when Stuart successfully ran for Governor of Virginia, taking office in early 1914.] Mosby died at age 82 during an operation at Garfield Hospital on Memorial Day 1916. The last person he spoke with was General Ulysses S. Grant's grandson, who promised to see to Mosby's affairs if he did not survive. His family held his funeral at Warrenton on June 1, 1916 with all due pomp and ceremony. Many surviving Rangers attended. Here at Warrenton Cemetery, John Singleton Mosby was buried with his wife and predeceased children. Rangers Richard Montjoy, Joe Nelson, John T. Waller (grandson of President John Tyler), and a number of other members of Mosby's command rest nearby. A Virginia Civil War Trails sign at the cemetery's entry gate at Lee and Chestnut Streets will help you discover what is behind the gates.

Directions: It is recommended that you first retrieve your car at the visitor center by heading uphill from the Depot on Third Street to Main Street, then turning right and walking the four short blocks back to the visitor center on Calhoun Street. Drive from there just beyond the courthouse on Main Street, turning sharp left onto Ashby Street and going two blocks to Lee Street. Turn right on Lee and go to Chestnut; the cemetery gate is at the "L" intersection on your left. Drive in this entry lane to the small brick caretaker's building and park by the side of the road. Looking right, you will see a large white obelisk that is a memorial to the Confederate war dead. As you walk towards the obelisk, Mosby's grave is just short of it on the right, three stones in, surrounded by his wife and six children. There are Confederate flags about his grave, a U.S. flag more often than not due to his federal postwar service, often flowers, and even a few pennies placed on top of the stone. While here, you may also wish to look for two other well-known Mosby Rangers. Just behind the white obelisk, Richard Montjoy and President Tyler's grandson John Tyler Waller lie. Mosby's friend Montjoy was killed in a firefight with the Loudoun Rangers on November 27, 1864 near Goresville in Loudoun County. Waller was killed at The Plains in Fauquier in March 1865 in a shootout with the 8th Illinois Cavalry while visiting his fiancée, Cornelia Foster. Yes--she saw it all.

THIS ENDS TOUR 4.

Directions to return to Route 50 or to continue on with Tour 5:

Leave the cemetery by the gate through which you entered, which will leave you on Chestnut Street. Continue out to Waterloo Street where you will turn left. Go to the stoplight at Bypass Route 29 and turn right. Go one mile to the stoplight at Route 17; turn left. Take Route 17 approximately ten miles to Marshall. You will cross I-66 and then continue one-half mile to a stoplight in the middle of town. Continue on there on Route 710, going approximately five miles towards Rectortown. You will see an elementary school on your left (Claude Thompson Elementary), which lets you know to take the next right onto Route 713, Atoka Road. This runs five miles to Atoka. At the stop sign at Atoka, turn right to go out to Route 50.



MOSBY, ca. 1915.

Colonel Mosby as an old man was seen by some as a forgotten hero, by his family as the beloved grandpa, by others, as but an old curmudgeon. He often visited what is today the Mosby Heritage Area in his last years, including a 1915 visit to the Rector House where Company A had been created, now the headquarters of the Mosby Heritage Area. That same year, his

alma mater, the University of Virginia, gave him a medal in recognition of his services to his native state.

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