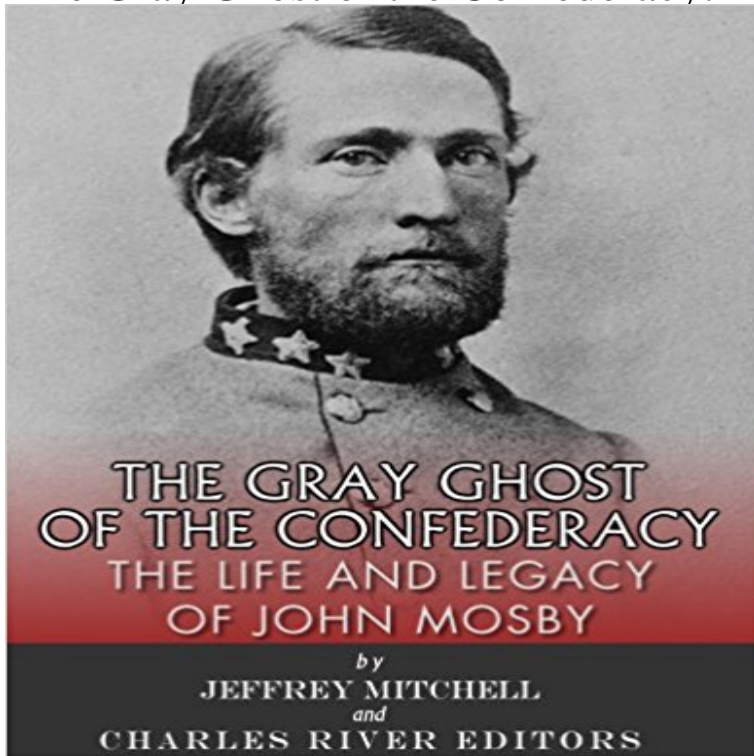


## The Gray Ghost of the Confederacy: The Life and Legacy of John Mosby



\*Includes pictures. \*Includes accounts of fighting written by Mosby and other generals. \*Includes footnotes and a bibliography for further reading. \*Includes a table of contents. Our poor country has fallen a prey to the conqueror. The noblest cause ever defended by the sword is lost. The noble dead that sleep in their shallow though honored graves are far more fortunate than their survivors. I thought I had sounded the profoundest depth of human feeling, but this is the bitterest hour of my life. John Mosby The Civil War is best remembered for the big battles and the legendary generals who fought on both sides, like Robert E. Lee facing off against Ulysses S. Grant in 1864. In kind, the Eastern theater has always drawn more interest and attention than the West. However, while massive armies marched around the country fighting each other, there were other small guerrilla groups that engaged in irregular warfare on the margins, and perhaps the most famous of them was Colonel John Mosby. Mosby, the Gray Ghost of the Confederate lore that celebrates the Lost Cause, has an image that has proven nearly impossible to corrupt or change, and time has done little good against it. Unlike the vanished 19th century code of honor that he represented, Mosby has retained the image and all its connotations; evident in the pictures taken of him in his Confederate uniform and historical portrayals of him, whether they were written just after the Civil War or much later. But that image, which he helped fashioned, was mostly an invention. Mosby styled himself a Knight of the South, as other Virginians would do during the war, branding himself as a warrior of a culture who obeyed an unspoken code of honor. He defended women and lived by his word. Even the style of combat he chose conformed to the definition of honor that Southerners held. With repeated charges into the ranks of federal cavalry,

Mosby was lionized by a culture that gloried in the acts of heroic violence. As the war dragged on, Mosby claimed to fight a style of war that was honorable, but if the Union ever entered into acts he considered uncivilized, he was never beyond revenge, including notorious summary executions of prisoners of war. He was so reviled in the North that rumors quickly spread that Mosby knew of John Wilkes Booths conspiracy to assassinate Lincoln, and that he may have even assisted in it. While the South would come to idolize Southern gentlemen as epitomized by Robert E. Lee, Mosby operated under a far different nature. Though he enlisted with the Confederate army in Virginia after Fort Sumter, he ultimately left the infantry to join J.E.B. Stuarts cavalry, and he later became infamous as an irregular scout leading a group of rangers around Virginia. Of course, the successful feats of daring that Mosby would accomplish during the war, which included capturing a Union general and riding around behind enemy lines to raid and destroy supplies, were supported by the people of Virginia, thus legitimizing his unconventional move to leave army life. Mosby not only earned the nickname Gray Ghost by being elusive, he was so successful that part of Virginia was known as Mosbys Confederacy during the war, despite the presence of massive Union armies nearby. Mosby did all this while looking the part of a diminutive man, a physical appearance that Southern culture did not generally view as masculine. In fact, his small size, just 58 and 125 pounds, might actually have provoked his aggression. Either way, Mosby overcame and looked the part as a cavalier on a horse, weathered by the elements and war but never beaten down by the enemy he looked down upon from his mount. The Gray Ghost of the Confederacy chronicles the life of Mosby, as well as his Civil War record and legacy. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about the Gray Ghost like never before, in no time at all.

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