

THE CAVALIER IMAGE IN THE CIVIL WAR AND THE SOUTHERN MIND

A Thesis

by

COLT BAKER ALLGOOD

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

May 2012

Major Subject: History

The Cavalier Image in the Civil War and the Southern Mind

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Chair of Committee,	Joseph G. Dawson III
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## ABSTRACT

The Cavalier Image in the Civil War and the Southern Mind. (May 2012)

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This thesis examines the methods and actions of selected Virginians who chose to adopt irregular tactics in wartime, and focuses on the reasons why they fought that way. The presence of the Cavalier image in Virginia had a direct impact on the military exploits of several cavalry officers in both the Revolutionary War and the American Civil War. The Royalist cavalry during the English Civil War gave rise to the original Cavalier image, but as migrants came to Virginia during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the image became a general term for the Southern planter. This thesis contends that selected Virginia cavalry officers attempted to adhere to an Americanized version of the Cavalier image. They either purposefully embodied aspects of the Cavalier image during their military service, or members of the Southern populace attached the Cavalier image to them in the post-war period. The Cavalier thus served as a military ideal, and some cavalry officers represented a romanticized version of the Southern martial hero.

This thesis traces the development of the Cavalier image in Virginia chronologically. It focuses on the origins of the Cavalier image and the role of the Royalist cavalry during the English Civil War. After the Royalist migration, and especially during the American

Revolution, Virginians like Henry Lee embodied aspects of the Cavalier image during their military careers. Between the end of the American Revolution and the beginning of the Civil War, some Southern authors perpetuated the image by including Cavalier figures in many of their literary works. In the Civil War, select Virginians who fought for the Confederacy personified the Cavalier hero in the minds of many white Southerners. Despite a Confederate defeat, the Cavalier image persisted in Southern culture in the post-Civil War period and into the twentieth century.

DEDICATION

To my wife

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Joseph G. Dawson, my committee chair, for his outstanding guidance and patience during this process. Thanks also to my committee members, Dr. Brooks and Dr. Clark, for helping me to become better acquainted with the Old South and reminding me that honor still exists.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION: THE ORIGINS OF THE VIRGINIA CAVALIER IMAGE

On January 24, 1863, John Singleton Mosby began his career as a partisan cavalry officer in the Confederate Army. Mosby, who up until that point had served with the regular cavalry under General J. E. B. Stuart, left the main army with a handful of men to begin operations in northern Virginia. In his memoir, Mosby stated that his purpose was to “threaten and harass the enemy on the border and in this way compel him to withdraw troops from his front to guard the line of the Potomac and Washington. This would greatly diminish his offensive power.”<sup>1</sup> At the time Mosby began his partisan operations, the Union War Department had guidelines for differentiating between partisans and guerrillas. Union General Henry Halleck appointed Francis Lieber, a law professor and former Prussian military officer, with the task of writing on the proper treatment of partisans and guerrillas in wartime. According to Lieber’s treatise, a partisan leader “commands a corps whose object is to injure the enemy by action separate from that of his own main army.” As a result, the partisan leader and his force were “part and parcel of the army, and, as such, considered entitled to the privileges of the law of war, so long as he does not transgress it.”<sup>2</sup> Mosby was arguably the most successful Confederate partisan officer of the war, but he was just one of many Southerners who adopted irregular tactics in wartime.

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This thesis follows the style of the *Journal of Southern History*

<sup>1</sup>John S. Mosby, *The Memoirs of Colonel John S. Mosby* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1917; reprint, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), 149-150.

<sup>2</sup>Francis Lieber, *Guerrilla Parties, Considered with Reference to the Laws and Usages of War* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1862), 11. Promulgated as General Orders No. 100, Section IV, Articles 81-85, by Abraham Lincoln, April 24, 1863. Courtesy of the Avalon Project, Yale University, “General Orders No. 100: The Lieber Code,” [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th\\_century/lieber.asp#sec4](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/lieber.asp#sec4) (accessed July 11, 2011).

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the methods and actions of selected Virginians who chose to adopt irregular tactics during the American Civil War, and focus on the reasons why they fought that way. In addition to Mosby, fellow Virginians including Turner Ashby, John Imboden, John Hanson McNeill, and William E. Jones all participated in irregular operations during the war, and J. E. B. Stuart, a notable Virginia cavalry general, openly supported partisan operations. They continued the American tradition of irregular warfare begun during the American War for Independence, when Henry “Light-Horse Harry” Lee III worked in conjunction with South Carolina guerrilla Francis Marion to resist British incursions in the Southern colonies by utilizing similar tactics. Lee’s son, Robert E. Lee, supported partisan units that operated in conjunction with the conventional army. Even before the American Revolution, traces of the cavalry tactics used by these men can be seen as a reflection of the tactics utilized by the Royalist cavalry under Prince Rupert of the Rhine in the 1640s. Following the Parliamentary victory in the First English Civil War, many Royalists chose to migrate to Virginia, transforming the colony into a Royalist haven. Just as the arrival of the Cavaliers influenced Virginian society, so too did the Royalist cavalry tactics influence Virginia’s cavalrymen.

This thesis contends that selected Virginia cavalry officers attempted to adhere to an Americanized version of the Cavalier image that first appeared during the English Civil War. Many of the aforementioned partisans were members of Virginia’s social elite and became adept riders at an early age. Henry Lee in particular was a member of one of the richest and most influential Virginia families, and his ancestors had direct ties

to the Royalist cause. While much has been written on how the Cavalier image influenced Southern society, few works discuss the importance of the Cavalier as a military figure.<sup>3</sup> As much as these soldiers attempted to adhere to the Cavalier image during their military careers, many post-war writings further promoted these men as Cavalier heroes. As a result, their images became more influential than their military exploits. Many former Confederates venerated these men as chivalrous Southern knights, even though their actions were at times devoid of any notions of chivalry and unequivocally brutal. The fact that many of these partisans were often defending the very areas in which they lived helped to cement their image in the white Southern mind as heroic Cavaliers.

This chapter examines the origins of the Cavalier image and the role of the Royalist cavalry during the English Civil War. It focuses in particular on Prince Rupert, King Charles' nephew and his General of Horse. Rupert's image and that of his men came to be associated with the Royalist cavalry and the supporters of King Charles in general. Rupert dressed in the court fashions of the day, and his attitude towards his Roundhead opponents reflected the attitudes of many of England's aristocracy towards

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<sup>3</sup>The scholarship on the Cavalier Myth is extensive. Some of the more notable works include David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); and Philip Bruce, *Social Life of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Unger, 1964). Some historians argue that the Cavalier Myth was unimportant and that the majority of Virginia's first families were in fact not "men of good social standing." In particular, see T.J. Wertenbaker, *Patrician and Plebian in Virginia* (Charlottesville, VA: Michie, 1910). David Hackett Fischer argues that Wertenbaker did not consult English sources until after he had written his book, and that he was often mistaken in his facts. Fischer also borrows heavily from the works of Bernard Bailyn. See in particular *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986); and *The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction* (New York: Knopf, 1986). Bailyn traced the settlement patterns of the English people as they migrated to the colonies.

members of the lower classes. Rupert was an accomplished field officer by the time the war began, and his battlefield conduct inspired his troops and gave Charles a formidable fighting force. Although the Royalists were eventually defeated, both sides recognized Rupert's skill and his ability to lead men. Post-war writings idealized Rupert's image as a dashing cavalry officer, and his career became the template for later Cavalier officers.

Chapter 2 addresses the Cavalier image as it appeared during the American Revolution. In particular, it focuses on the military career of Henry Lee and his time in the Southern Department during the war's later years. Lee was a member of one of the wealthiest and most influential Virginia families, and, like Prince Rupert, was a young, aristocratic, educated man when the war began. Lee commanded a cavalry force known as "Lee's Legion," and adopted irregular tactics in the Southern Department with Francis Marion, a notable partisan officer from South Carolina. Lee embodied the Cavalier image physically, and his legion was one of the best cavalry units in the Continental army. His post-war life was marked by financial setbacks and political conflicts, but his contemporaries revered him as a disciplined officer who successfully engaged in irregular tactics against the British. Along with Francis Marion and other officers who led irregular units, Lee helped prevent the British from establishing firm control in the Southern colonies and routinely frustrated their efforts to bring the Continental army to decisive action.

Chapter 3 analyzes the transformation of the Cavalier image in Southern literature between the end of the American Revolution and the beginning of the Civil War. Many writers used Virginia as the backdrop for their novels, and utilized male

characters that embodied the Cavalier image. Through this fictional process, the Cavalier changed from a military to a social ideal, and represented the aristocratic Southern planter rather than to cavalryman. Some of these novelists were native Virginians, while others were connected to Virginia's aristocratic families or spent considerable time among the social elite. Some of their novels were based on their personal experiences in the Old Dominion and reflected the influence of Sir Walter Scott's writings. As these novels circulated in the South, white Southerners saw Virginia as an idyllic agrarian setting even when the region was experiencing an economic decline. When the Civil War began, many Virginians were officers in the Confederate army, and pro-Confederate Southerners looked for Cavalier figures to lead their soldiers to victory.

Chapter 4 focuses on the military careers of Virginians who chose to adopt irregular tactics during the Civil War and how their images developed in the minds of white Southerners. Soldiers like John Singleton Mosby, Turner Ashby, John Imboden and others were generally young, educated men who led their troops on partisan raids against Union detachments, supply chains, and communication lines. Their actions frustrated Union efforts to move through Confederate territory. Since these men sometimes operated independently of the main armies, they had a much more intimate relationship with the local populace, and as such, many Southerners began to view them as Cavalier officers. Additionally, writers, poets, and journalists followed the Confederate forces and regularly wrote on the partisans' exploits. Their works transformed the irregular fighters into idealized heroes. The stories that reached the

Southern people were often exaggerated accounts of what actually occurred and, as a result, many people saw the partisans as chivalrous Southern Cavaliers.

Chapter 5 offers conclusions on the persistence of the Cavalier image in Southern culture as it appeared in the post-Civil War period. Some of the Confederate partisan officers survived the war and were active in rebuilding the nation. Those that died in combat were venerated in the South by proponents of the Lost Cause movement, a quasi-religious expression that emerged almost immediately after the war and persisted into the twentieth century. The Lost Cause movement helped to popularize the partisan officers as Cavalier heroes and continued the practice of exaggerating their military actions. In the twentieth century, many of the partisans received renewed attention from popular media and emerged as white Southern folk heroes who embodied aspects of the Cavalier image. The continued presence of the Cavalier image is a testament to its importance in the development of Southern culture.

The term “cavalier” was first used to describe the Royalist cavalry under King Charles I during the First English Civil War of 1642-1646. Parliamentarians used the term pejoratively because they believed that the king’s cavalry resembled the Spanish *caballeros* that had fought and plundered during the Low Country wars.<sup>4</sup> Charles chose his nephew, Prince Rupert, to lead the cavalry as his General of Horse. Rupert would come to personify the Cavalier image, but he was just one of the many loyal subjects who flocked to the king’s standard.<sup>5</sup> Most of the king’s cavalry commanders were

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<sup>4</sup>James Barbary, *Puritan & Cavalier: The English Civil War* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1977), 29.

<sup>5</sup>Among the many biographies of Prince Rupert, see Charles Spencer, *Prince Rupert: The Last Cavalier* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2007); Frank Kitson, *Prince Rupert: Portrait of a Soldier* (London: Constable, 1994); and Maurice Ashley, *Rupert of the Rhine* (London: H. Davis, MacGibbon, 1976).

young, wealthy, influential men who either had previous military experience or were appointed due to their loyalty to Charles. Their attitudes, dress, behavior, and battlefield performance all contributed to the Cavalier image and influenced future generations of American cavalry officers.

Prince Rupert may be seen as the quintessential Cavalier officer, primarily because of his position as his uncle's General of Horse. He was a giant of a man, standing 6 feet 4 inches tall with broad shoulders and a mane of curly black hair that hung down past his shoulders in the customary court fashion.<sup>6</sup> He was the son of Frederick V, Elector Palatine, and had gone to fight in the Low Countries when he was only 13. When the English Civil War began, Rupert was 22 years old, and his promotion drew the ire of some of the king's older and more experienced generals. Rupert was given the job of making an efficient cavalry out of a mixed crowd of flamboyant courtiers, fox-hunting country gentlemen, and their loyal tenantry.<sup>7</sup> Although he was still young, Rupert possessed a wealth of military experience and quickly set about organizing the Royalist horse.

During the time of the English Civil War, relatively few works existed on how to train and conduct cavalry in wartime. One of these works was John Cruso's *Militarie Instructions for the Cavallrie: or Rules and Directions for the Service of Horse, Rectified and Supplied, According to the Present Practice of the Low-Country Wars* (1632). In his introduction, Cruso mentioned the scarcity of material on the cavalry:

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<sup>6</sup>Spencer, *Prince Rupert*, xiii.

<sup>7</sup>Barbary, *Puritan & Cavalier*, 26.

“For among so many authors ancient and modern, which have written of the Art Militarie, is it not strange that hardly any hath fully handled that which concerneth the Cavallrie?”<sup>8</sup> Cruso defined the qualities necessary in a successful cavalry commander early in his work. He wrote,

“He must always aspire...to higher degrees of honour. Covetousnesse he must hate; for nothing will better continue his souldiers good affections toward him than liberalitie. Gaming he must detest. In stead of costly apparel, let him delight in good armes and horses wherein oftentimes both his life and honour consisteth. He must be continent and sober, not given to luxurie nor drunkennesse, but alwayes be as a good example to his souldiers: for otherwise he cannot have that requisite libertie to chastise them for those vices which his own conscience will accuse himself to be guiltie of.”<sup>9</sup>

Ironically, Rupert and many of the Royalist officers participated in the activities that Cruso claimed a good cavalry officer must avoid. Since many of the Cavaliers were members of the king’s court or held royal titles, they saw themselves as superior to the Royalist enlisted men and often drank heavily, gambled, and clothed themselves according to the latest court fashions.

Rupert’s appearance set the tone for the Royalist cavalry. In addition to his large frame, he also possessed great charisma and style, often wearing a plumed hat, fine leather cavalry boots, and a long scarlet cloak.<sup>10</sup> He also rode on a large black charger and travelled with his longtime companion, a white standard hunting poodle named Boy. Many Confederate cavalry officers adopted similar styles of dress during the Civil War. John Esten Cooke, who served as an aide to J. E. B. Stuart, remarked that the

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<sup>8</sup>John Cruso, *Militarie Instructions for the Cavallrie: or Rules and Directions for the Service of Horse, Rectified and Supplied, According to the Present Practice of the Low-Country Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1632), A3.

<sup>9</sup>Cruso, *Cavallrie*, 3.

<sup>10</sup>Spencer, *Prince Rupert*, 55.



Confederate officer was a “gallant figure to look at. The gray coat buttoned to the chin; the light French sabre balanced by the pistol in its black holster; the cavalry boots above the knee, and the brown hat with its black plume floating above the bearded features...”<sup>11</sup> Both Rupert and Stuart cut impressive figures, and their appearance reflected their attitudes on their positions as commanding officers.

As much as Rupert’s outward appearance contributed to his image as the quintessential Cavalier, his battlefield performance also reflected Royalist attitudes towards their Parliamentarian opponents. As his uncle’s General of Horse, Rupert was expected to actively participate in battle, so that he would be able to give direct orders to his units.<sup>12</sup> Rupert certainly had a keen grasp of the military tactics used by Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden in the 1620s, and frequently deployed his troops in the standard formations of the day. One of his soldiers, Richard Bulstrode, wrote that before the Battle of Edgehill, Rupert “Passed from one wing to the other, giving positive Orders to the Horse, to march as close as possible, keeping their Ranks with Sword in Hand, to receive the Enemy’s Shot, without firing either Carbin or Pistol, till we broke in amongst the enemy, and then to make use of our Fire-Arms as need should require.”<sup>13</sup> Similarly, John Mosby relied on pistols rather than sabers to augment his offensive power. He wrote, “I think we did more than any other body of men to give the Colt pistol its great

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<sup>11</sup>John Esten Cooke, *Wearing of the Gray* (New York: E. B. Treat, 1867), 22. For a book-length treatment of the Confederate image during and after the Civil War, see Mark Neely, et al., *The Confederate Image: Prints of the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987).

<sup>12</sup>Cruso, *Cavallrie*, 4.

<sup>13</sup>Quoted in Peter Young, *Edgehill, 1642: The Campaign and the Battle* (Kineton, England: Roundwood, 1967), 269-270. The quote is originally taken from Sir Richard Bulstrode, *Memoirs and Reflections upon the Reign and Government of King Charles the 1<sup>st</sup> and King Charles the 2<sup>nd</sup>* (London: Charles Rivington, 1721).

reputation...But, to be effective, the pistol must, of course, be used at close quarters.”<sup>14</sup>

Both Rupert’s cavalry and Mosby’s partisan rangers used pistols at close range to account for numerical inferiority.

Another standard tactic involved the capture and distribution of plunder. Cruso devoted an entire chapter to the distribution of “bootie” and wrote that “All bootie (whether it be given by occasion of defeating the enemy, or going out upon parties, &c.) is free to them that take it, whether they be prisoners, or anything else, the Lord Generall being in the field. But otherwise it is to be shared among them that were employed in the action.”<sup>15</sup> Capturing the enemy’s stores and supplies was a primary motivating factor for the Royalist cavalry, but Rupert was often unable to control his troops once they reached the Parliamentarian baggage train. The chance of capturing plunder was also a prime motivating factor for the men that rushed to join Mosby’s command centuries later. As partisans, young men believed that they had the opportunity for all of the adventure of war without the irksome duties of camp life.<sup>16</sup> Such men flocked to join Mosby, and he was soon the commander of five companies of partisan rangers, all regularly mustered into Confederate service.

Rupert’s successes became the subject of numerous propaganda campaigns in both Royalist and Parliamentarian publications. Many ballads and poems slandered Rupert and his royal lineage:

“That Plundering Rupert should keepe from Reliefe,

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<sup>14</sup>Mosby, *Memoirs*, 285-286.

<sup>15</sup>Cruso, *Cavallrie*, 20.

<sup>16</sup>Mosby, *Memoirs*, 258.

That burn'd Townes that helpt him to many a Briefe.  
 This Plague we haue though we gaue Money to Saue him  
 From the Rope that we hope One day will haue him."<sup>17</sup>

Many publications attributed Rupert's early successes to him having some sort of supernatural powers, or that his dog Boy was in fact an evil spirit that followed him on the battlefield. Following Boy's death after the Battle of Marston Moor, several Parliamentarian publications highlighted the prince's unnaturally close relationship with his pet.<sup>18</sup> Such slurs indicated how Rupert's personal myth overshadowed reality even while the war was still being fought. Rupert was a natural target for propaganda from both sides, and many peoples' opinions of the prince stemmed from the outlandish stories heard in the various ballads and read in the broadsides.

While Rupert may have been the most famous Cavalier of the age, he was certainly not the only officer who fit the Cavalier mold. King Charles had many cavalry forces in action throughout England and Scotland, and their commanding officers, like Prince Rupert, were men of high social standing and privilege. In Scotland, James Graham, the Marquis of Montrose, exemplified the Renaissance image of the complete man: a gentleman who is at once a scholar and a poet, a gallant officer and a pattern of Christian chivalry.<sup>19</sup> Montrose successfully raised forces to fight for the king in an area that was largely pro-Parliament. Several of Rupert's subordinate officers also held royal titles and enjoyed their status as members of English high society. William Cavendish,

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<sup>17</sup>George Thomason, *A satire on James I and Charles I*, April 1, 1645, taken from Hyder E. Rollins, ed., *Cavalier and Puritan: Ballads and Broadsides Illustrating the Period of the Great Rebellion, 1640-1660* (New York: New York University Press, 1923), 152.

<sup>18</sup>See Spencer, *Prince Rupert*, 127-128.

<sup>19</sup>John Barratt, *Cavalier Generals: King Charles I and his Commanders in the English Civil War, 1642-1646* (Barnsley, England: Pen & Sword Military, 2004), 191.

the First Marquis of Newcastle, was a loyal courtier who served in the cavalry under Prince Rupert. Sir Philip Warwick, Newcastle's acquaintance, described him as "a gentleman of grandeur, generosity, loyalty and forward courage...he had a tincture of a romantic spirit, and had the misfortune to have somewhat of the poet in him."<sup>20</sup> The Cavalier image thus combined aspects of martial spirit with the leisurely pursuits of the upper class.

As the war continued, the Parliamentary cavalry became increasingly effective at countering the Cavaliers' charges. Their pursuit of plunder often left the Royalist foot open to flank attacks, and many of the king's courtiers began to question Rupert's leadership skills. Following the Royalist defeat at the Battle of Naseby in 1645, Rupert's tumultuous relationship with George Digby came to a head. Digby was the Second Earl of Bristol, the king's Secretary of State, and one of the monarch's favorites at court. Digby drew up charges of treason against Rupert, and according to the Earl of Clarendon, Digby's actions were the "sole cause of revoking the Prince's Commission, and of the Order sent to him to leave the kingdom."<sup>21</sup> Rupert considered Digby's actions a slight against his honor, and rode with his retinue through large sections of enemy territory to seek a face-to-face encounter with King Charles.

Upon reaching the king at Newark, Rupert was granted a court martial which met to consider Rupert's fault in the loss of Bristol, at the time a large city and a Royalist stronghold that Rupert had abandoned to a Parliamentary siege. Although some of

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<sup>20</sup>See Sir Philip Warwick, *Memoirs of the Reign of King Charles I* (London: printed for Richard Chiswell, 1701), quote taken from Barratt, *Cavalier Generals*, 159.

<sup>21</sup>Clarendon, *History of the Rebellion*, 4:715.

Digby's men served on the council, their decision was unanimous: Rupert was declared innocent of any cowardice or treachery against the king, and would have willingly defended Bristol to the last man.<sup>22</sup> Rupert's honor, a vital element of his persona, had been restored, but his career as a Royalist cavalry officer was over. Shortly after his final encounter with King Charles, Rupert and his brother, Prince Maurice, officially left the kingdom. Although Rupert continued to support his uncle from mainland Europe and achieved military success in later wars, he is most famous for leading the Royalist horse during the English Civil War and for his image as a preeminent Cavalier officer.

Honor was another critical aspect of the Cavalier image that influenced Southerners in the Civil War. The English aristocrats that fought for King Charles saw themselves as loyal, trustworthy subjects and expected their colleagues to treat them with a high level of respect. Honor as a concept has also been firmly linked to the development of Southern culture. Historian Bertram Wyatt-Brown argues that Southern honor took its form in two distinct yet interconnected ways. The first is what he calls "primal honor," meaning physical courage and tenacity of will, or honor as valor. The second form of honor dealt with gentility, breeding, character, and good conduct, or honor as virtue.<sup>23</sup> The Cavaliers during the English Civil War were not only aristocratic gentlemen, but they also demonstrated primal honor as military officers.

Prince Rupert and several of the Cavaliers, however, exhibited certain attributes that severely undermined the Royalist war effort. As talented as Rupert was, his style as a general revealed his character as a man: focused, straightforward, and

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<sup>22</sup>Spencer, *Prince Rupert*, 167.

<sup>23</sup>Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 3-4.

uncompromising, but also exceedingly arrogant.<sup>24</sup> He detested the courtiers like Digby who worked their way into the king's favor through their own selfish interests rather than through merit attained in battle. Rupert was wholly unsuited to deal with the intricacies of court politics, and as Charles became increasingly controlled by those closest to him, Rupert saw his influence at court diminish. Many of Rupert's subordinates demonstrated similar attitudes towards those who questioned their positions as leaders. Early in the war the Marquis of Newcastle, feeling that he and the Prince's Troop should be answerable only to the king, challenged the Earl of Holland, his own General of Horse, to a duel.<sup>25</sup> Such sensitivities prevented the Cavalier officers from forming any unified command structure and kept many capable men from reaching the highest levels of command.

Several Confederate cavalry officers also displayed similar sensitivities that indicated a strict adherence to the code of honor. When Mosby was a young man he was found guilty of unlawfully shooting George Turpin, a fellow student at the University of Virginia. Mosby claimed that he shot Turpin in self-defense, and that their argument stemmed from Mosby's desire to defend the good name of a young lady who Turpin had insulted.<sup>26</sup> Turner Ashby's wartime chaplain, James B. Avirett, described his commanding officer in a similar fashion. Avirett claimed that Ashby was "ever ready to stand up in defense of the weak, or to resent an injustice done either to himself or to his

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<sup>24</sup>Spencer, *Prince Rupert*, 100.

<sup>25</sup>Barratt, *Cavalier Generals*, 161.

<sup>26</sup>Mosby, *Memoirs*, 6.

sisters or brothers.”<sup>27</sup> Such behavior indicated how strongly elite Southerners felt about the role of honor in society. Mosby, Ashby, and other Virginia officers allowed the Southern code of honor to direct their wartime careers.

In the period after the English Civil War, several Royalist publications continued to publish ballads and broadsides that espoused the Cavalier image. It was during this time that romantic themes began to appear in reference to the Cavaliers. A ballad from 1649 expresses the desires of a woman longing for her true love:

“If a royall heart he bear,  
And can love a Cavelier;  
That same promise he must make, for my noble fathers sake,  
Which lost his life and fortunes in the field,  
and to no other side my maidenhead I’le yield,  
If that he be a Cavalier, tho he be neer so poor,  
I’le love him, I’le serve him, and honour him the more.”<sup>28</sup>

The Cavalier thus became a hero and a love interest in English literature, even as England came under the control of the victorious Parliamentarians. By the middle of the seventeenth century, many Cavaliers chose to migrate to the colonies rather than live under Cromwell’s reign, as noted earlier, and several Royalists chose to make the voyage to Virginia.<sup>29</sup> Because of this migration, a notable segment of Virginia’s colonists were fiercely loyal to the king, and the Cavalier image began to take shape among the colony’s aristocracy.

Even before the outbreak of the English Civil War, thousands of the king’s loyal subjects made the journey to Virginia. Upper class gentlemen had been coming to the

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<sup>27</sup>Rev. James B. Avirett, *The Memoirs of General Turner Ashby and his Compeers* (Baltimore: Selby & Dulany, 1867), 19.

<sup>28</sup>Richard Burton, *The Fame, Wit, and glory of the West* (1649), taken from Rollins, *Cavalier and Puritan*, 258-259.

<sup>29</sup>Barbary, *Puritan & Cavalier*, 180.

colony since its founding in 1607. Due in part to the Cavalier migration, the colony's population grew from roughly 8,000 in 1640 to around 25,000 by 1660.<sup>30</sup> Virginia became a refuge for many Royalist supporters, and they brought the styles of the English court with them. Several had fought with Charles I or had rallied to support his son Charles II against the Puritan opposition. The Royalists suffered severely in this struggle, leading one man to write, "...in our unnatural wars, most of the ancient gentry were either extinct or undone. The king's side was almost all gentlemen..."<sup>31</sup> During the middle of the 1600's, the Cavalier image began to make the transition to Virginia as several aristocratic families migrated to the colony and assumed positions of power.

The Cavaliers' arrival in Virginia helped to establish a highly structured, hierarchical society in which the aristocrats expected to hold the positions of power. In 1641, Sir William Berkeley had arrived in the colony to exercise his commission as Royal governor. Berkeley epitomized the Cavalier image, dressing in a manner similar to Prince Rupert with a short cloak, deep bands, great boots, belted sword, and long hair cascading in ringlets around his patrician face.<sup>32</sup> Berkeley served as governor of the colony for more than thirty years, including almost the entire span of the English Civil War. When Parliament beheaded Charles I in 1649, Berkeley proclaimed the succession of the king's son as Charles II and warned any potential rebels against taking the occasion of the king's execution to challenge the authority of the king's government in

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<sup>30</sup>Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1975), 136.

<sup>31</sup>Francis Bamford, ed., *A Royalist's Notebook: The Commonplace Book of Sir John Oglander, Kt [1585-1655]* (London, 1931), 109. Taken from Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 213.

<sup>32</sup>Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 207.



Virginia.<sup>33</sup> Berkeley was one of many nobles who chose to leave England, and term as governor encapsulated Royalists attitudes in the colony.

By the eighteenth century, Virginia society was highly stratified, and Tidewater aristocrats often remarked on the differences between Virginia's plantation society and the plight of the lower classes. William Byrd II, a member of an extensive and powerful Virginia family, commented on the backwoods people of North Carolina during a trip to ascertain Virginia's southern dividing line in 1728. Byrd wrote, "To speak the truth, it is a thorough aversion to labor that makes people file off to North Carolina, where plenty and a warm sun confirm them in their disposition to laziness for their whole lives."<sup>34</sup>

Byrd indicated an aversion to backcountry life typical of the worldview associated with the Virginia Tidewater aristocracy and the Cavalier attitude. The majority of the Southern aristocrats settled in the eastern portions of the states, where the land was more conducive to plantation agriculture. Charles Woodmason, an Anglican preacher who spent his career proselytizing in the South Carolina back country, addressed the bewildering fashions adopted by the locals, "How would the polite people of London stare, to see the females (many very pretty) come to service in their shifts and a short petticoat only, barefooted and bare legged—without caps or handkerchiefs—dress'd only in their hair."<sup>35</sup> Significant numbers of the social elite in the eastern portions of the Southern colonies more closely resembled the English gentry than their western neighbors.

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<sup>33</sup>Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 147.

<sup>34</sup>William Byrd II, *The History of the Dividing Line in the Year 1728*, taken from Alan Galloway, ed., *Voices of the Old South: Eyewitness Accounts, 1528-1861* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1994), 125.

<sup>35</sup>Charles Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution. The Journal and Other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant*, taken from Galloway, ed., *Voices of the Old South*, 132.

By the 1700s, visitors from other colonies often remarked on Virginia's social life and the prevalence of the landed aristocracy. Philip Vickers Fithian, a New Jersey native serving as a tutor to the Carter family, kept a journal of his experiences in Virginia and how life in the South differed from his home. In a letter to a fellow tutor seeking employment in the Old Dominion, Fithian offered this advice: "any young Gentleman travelling through the Colony, as I said before, is presum'd to be acquainted with Dancing, Boxing, playing the Fiddle, & Small-Sword, & Cards."<sup>36</sup> Fithian also recalled the various social events that took place among the gentry, even after a Sunday church service. Fithian wrote that "The Balls, the Fish-Feasts, the Dancing-Schools, the Christnings, the Cock fights, the Horse-Races, the Chariots, and the Ladies Masked" all constituted parts of the Virginia social scene.<sup>37</sup> These events had been common among the English aristocracy for centuries, and by the middle of the eighteenth century, Virginia's upper class closely resembled the English gentry in their societal attitudes.

The Cavalier image first emerged in the guise of Royalist military officers like Prince Rupert of the Rhine. His courage on the battlefield, striking physical appearance and opulent dress made him the subject of numerous publications. Although Parliament dismissed the Royalist cavalry as a gang of loose-living rapists and pillagers, Rupert molded them into the most feared and effective part of King Charles' army.<sup>38</sup> Rupert succumbed to political infighting and the Royalists were ultimately defeated, but the Cavalier image had emerged as a popular theme among many common people who

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<sup>36</sup>Philip Vickers Fithian, *Journal and Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian, 1773-1774: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion*, taken from Galloway, ed., *Voices of the Old South*, 101.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 106.

<sup>38</sup>Spencer, *Prince Rupert*, xiv.

remained loyal to the crown. Even though Cromwell ruled England, the distance between the British Isles and the colonies on the Atlantic coast diminished his influence.<sup>39</sup> As former Royalists arrived in Virginia, they brought with them the Cavalier image that would come to define their social elites and continue to influence the Southern way of life into the 1860s.

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<sup>39</sup>Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 808.

## 2. COLONIAL CAVALIERS IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

The period immediately following the English Civil War was the high point of the Royalist aristocracy's migration to Virginia. Of the seventy-two families in Virginia's elite whose dates of migration are known, two-thirds arrived between 1640 and 1669.<sup>1</sup> As we have seen, these families settled in the largely flat tidal areas around the James and York rivers, areas that were the most conducive to plantation agriculture. The Virginia Cavaliers transferred many aspects of the architecture, lifestyle, and leisurely activities of the English aristocracy to the new colony. The area east of the Blue Ridge Mountains became the primary settling area for many of the colony's aristocratic families. These men sought to establish their families' reputations in an area relatively free from Oliver Cromwell's control.

Among the Royalists that migrated to Virginia during that time, Colonel Richard Lee arrived at Jamestown in 1639. Lee had very little to his name other than the patronage of the colony's first royal governor, Sir Francis Wyatt. Lee and Wyatt were fiercely loyal to the king, and following Cromwell's death in 1658, Lee proclaimed Charles II King of England, Scotland, Ireland, France, and Virginia two years before his official restoration.<sup>2</sup> By the time of his death in 1664, Lee was arguably one of the richest men in the colony. More importantly, he established one of the longest and most famous family dynasties in the state's history. The Lees helped form the backbone of Virginia society, and several of Richard Lee's progeny actively participated in state

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<sup>1</sup>David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 214.

<sup>2</sup>Henry Lee, *The Revolutionary War Memoirs of General Henry Lee* (1812; New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), 11-12.

politics.<sup>3</sup> By the eve of the American Revolution, the Lees were firmly entrenched among Virginia's elite.<sup>4</sup>

Henry Lee III was born into colonial high society on January 29, 1756, the first son of Henry Lee II and Lucy Grymes of Leesylvania, a sprawling plantation in Prince William County. One of Lee's biographers notes that, among Henry Lee's many natural gifts, the fact that he was a Lee was arguably the most important.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the young Lee benefitted from a particularly important family relationship; his parents were close to George Washington. Washington's estate at Mount Vernon was a mere 15 miles away from Leesylvania, and Lee's father served with Washington during the Seven Years' War.<sup>6</sup> Lee benefitted from such an intimate familial relationship before and during the American Revolution. The area in which he was raised was also of critical importance to his career as a cavalry officer.

Riding on horseback was both the chief recreation and the principal mode of transportation for many Southerners, and the tidelands of eastern Virginia could not have provided a more conducive atmosphere for a future cavalry officer.<sup>7</sup> Since Lee was part of an aristocratic family, he had access to horses from an early age and quickly became an adept rider. The cavalry partisans of the Civil War era also learned to ride at young

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<sup>3</sup>John W. Hartmann, *The American Partisan: Henry Lee and the Struggle for Independence 1776-1780* (Shippensburg, PA: Burd Street Press, 2000), 1-2.

<sup>4</sup>Several biographical treatments of the Lee family in Virginia exist, including Paul C. Nagel, *The Lees of Virginia: Seven Generations of an American Family* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Burton J. Hendrick, *The Lees of Virginia: Biography of a Family* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1935); and F. W. Alexander, *Stratford Hall and the Lees Connected with its History* (Oak Grove, VA: F. W. Alexander, 1912).

<sup>5</sup>Hartmann, *The American Partisan*, 1.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>7</sup>Maud Goodwin, *The Colonial Cavalier, or Southern Life before the Revolution* (New York: Lovell, Croyle & Company, 1894), 148; Hartmann, *The American Partisan*, 7.

ages. John Mosby recalled in his memoir that, “When I was ten years old I began going to school in Charlottesville; sometimes I went on horseback, and sometimes I walked.”<sup>8</sup> Members of Virginia’s aristocracy relied on horses for a number of purposes, and the fact that many partisan officers of the Revolution and the Civil War learned to ride young naturally had a direct impact on their military exploits.

Above all else, Lee aspired to be a Southern gentleman. This meant not only a strict adherence to the established code of honor, but Lee was also expected to have boisterous feelings, manly passions, a formidable will, and at the same time a stoic mastery of self.<sup>9</sup> Lee understood that, as a member of the aristocracy, he was in the top tier of a highly stratified society. Child-rearing habits in the South subjected the young to negative interpretations of shame and humiliation and the ideals of hierarchy and honor.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, Lee learned to value his honor above all else, and sought to avoid humiliation by achieving success in all his endeavors. By virtue of his familial heritage, Lee was granted access to many opportunities reserved for those of the highest social order.

Like many of the Lees who had preceded him, young Henry was urged to pursue a collegiate education. Lee’s father sent him to the College of New Jersey (now Princeton) at age 14 with the hopes of eventually making him a lawyer.<sup>11</sup> During his studies, his family kept a close watch over him and wrote frequently to inquire about his

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<sup>8</sup>John S. Mosby, *The Memoirs of Colonel John S. Mosby* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1917; reprinted, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), 5.

<sup>9</sup>Fischer, *Albion’s Seed*, 362-363.

<sup>10</sup>Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 118.

<sup>11</sup>Charles Royster, *Light-Horse Harry Lee and the Legacy of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), 16.

progress. A letter from Dr. William Shippen to Lee's cousin, Richard Henry Lee, reflected his progress and his refined aristocratic upbringing: "Your cousin Henry Lee is in college, and will be one of the first fellows in this country. He is more than strict in his morality, has a fine genius, and is diligent."<sup>12</sup> Henry graduated in 1773 and began pursuing a legal career, but he abandoned all plans with the onset of the American Revolution. Lee understood his obligation to his country, and wrote to General Charles Lee, the Continental Commander of the Southern Department, "to ask a permit to enlist under your banner in order to acquaint myself with the art of war."<sup>13</sup> By 1776 Henry Lee had a commission in the Continental Army.

The twenty-year-old Lee received a commission as a captain in the 1<sup>st</sup> Continental Light Dragoons and began to distinguish himself from the start. In writing on one of his early engagements with British forces, he revealed his opinions on the role of the cavalry. He wrote, "The fire of cavalry is at best innocent, especially in quick motion, as was then the case. The strength and activity of the horse, the precision and celerity of evolution, the adroitness of the rider, boot-top to boot-top, and the keen edge of the sabre, with fitness of ground and skill in the leader, constitute their vast power so often decisive in the day of battle."<sup>14</sup> Lee thought available versions of carbines and other firearms to be of little use to the cavalry, preferring instead to charge with sabers drawn. He emphasized the importance of having strong, conditioned horses and well-

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<sup>12</sup>Lee, *Memoirs*, 16.

<sup>13</sup>Royster, *Light-Horse Harry Lee*, 16. Charles Lee was a former British officer who served during the Seven Years War. He was one of George Washington's chief lieutenants and had more professional experience than Washington. He was of no direct relation to Henry Lee. For a brief description of Charles Lee, see Joseph J. Ellis, *His Excellency: George Washington* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 80-81.

<sup>14</sup>Lee, *Memoirs*, 91.

trained soldiers. Additionally, he knew that the role of the commanding officer was crucial, and he planned to fill that role to the best of his ability. From the start, Lee did his utmost to provide for his soldiers, and as a result, his small cavalry company became a welcome asset to the Continental Army.

One of the constant tactical preferences of the Cavalier cavalry officer was his partiality for the close-order charge against a superior force with the intent of adding shock value to the fighting qualities of his men. Writers on the Cavaliers of the English Civil War note that, although their charges were often recklessly haphazard, when compared to the organized, close-order cavalry advances of their predecessors, they were often well-timed and so dashing that they astounded the enemy.<sup>15</sup> Lee relied on shock value even more than Prince Rupert, since Lee and his troops were often vastly outnumbered. John Mosby wrote extensively on shock tactics in his memoir: “I think that my command reached the highest point of efficiency as cavalry because they were well armed with two six-shooters and their charges combined the effect of fire and shock.”<sup>16</sup> By the time Mosby began his partisan career, the use of firearms had progressed to the point where the cavalry saber was becoming less valuable as a weapon. At the right opportunity, the officer utilized a charge to confuse the enemy as a means of compensation for numerical inferiority.

In addition to Lee’s thorough knowledge of horsemanship and his understanding of the charge as a military tactic, he also possessed one of the key attributes of a

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<sup>15</sup>James Barbary, *Puritan and Cavalier: The English Civil War* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc. Publishers, 1977), 57.

<sup>16</sup>Mosby, *Memoir*, 285.



successful partisan officer. Lee succeeded, perhaps better than any Continental officer of his rank, in fostering discipline among the men he commanded.<sup>17</sup> Discipline was of critical importance to the survival of a partisan unit. Lee developed personal relationships with the men he commanded, and as a result he could always rely upon consistent performance from his troops and order them to exercise the proper restraint when necessary. Lee believed that by operating on a small scale with tested men and reliable intelligence, he could exert more control over his particular area of operations and leave fewer options for his enemies.<sup>18</sup> With this operational approach in hand, he effectively served under his family friend and fellow aristocrat George Washington in the early years of the war.

The war went poorly for Washington's men during the first years. After his troops left their winter quarters at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, in 1778, Washington called for Lee to be promoted to major and put in charge of an independent cavalry unit consisting of three troops of fifty dragoons each. In a letter to the Continental Congress on April 3, Washington stated that Lee and his men had "uniformly distinguished themselves" and that Lee's "genius" merited a promotion.<sup>19</sup> Congress approved Lee's promotion on April 7, and Lee set about forming his independent partisan unit, which later became known as "Lee's Legion." The Legion consisted of a few hundred infantry and cavalry, and were regular Continental soldiers that occasionally operated independently from Washington's army. Lee worked tirelessly to make sure his troops

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<sup>17</sup>Royster, *Light-Horse Harry Lee*, 18.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>19</sup>Letter to the President of Congress from George Washington, April 3, 1778, in John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources 1745-1799*, 39 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1931-44), 11:205-206.

were properly mounted and provisioned. He selected uniforms that resembled those worn by the British dragoons, with short coats of a dark green color with red lining. Lee's Legion was one of the few properly clad American units and remained so throughout the war.<sup>20</sup>

With his newly formed Legion, Lee actively sought combat and saw action in the field as an opportunity to achieve personal glory and secure his honor. These goals led him to decline more prestigious military positions that would have prevented him from serving as a field officer. In early 1778, Lee declined an offer to become Washington's *aide-de-camp*, one of the most prestigious posts in the entire Continental Army. Lee wrote to his commanding officer and explained that he was "wedded to my sword" and that he possessed a "most affectionate friendship for my soldiers, a fraternal love for the two officers who have served with me, a zeal for the honor of the Cavalry, and an opinion that I should render me [sic] real service to your Excellency's arms."<sup>21</sup> Lee had to be careful to not offend Washington by declining the offer, but he was committed to serving as a field officer and a small-scale partisan commander in particular.

Another feature of the Cavalier officer was the preference for independent raids against enemy troops or their supplies using limited forces. Raids had been used by the Royalist Cavaliers during the English Civil War to both frustrate the Parliamentarians and secure plunder for the troops. The Royalist cavalry based in Oxford routinely raided enemy territory throughout the war, even to the outskirts of London.<sup>22</sup> Lee willingly

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<sup>20</sup>Hartmann, *The American Partisan*, 68-70.

<sup>21</sup>Henry Lee to George Washington, March 31, 1778, George Washington Papers, Library of Congress, series 4, reel 478.

<sup>22</sup>Barbary, *Puritan and Cavalier*, 55.

chose to pursue a career as a partisan officer because he believed it gave him the opportunity to exercise independent initiative apart from routine military operations and the ordinary hierarchy of command.<sup>23</sup> Lee's status as a Virginia aristocrat led him to seek independent command rather than answer to someone he decided did not deserve to be his superior. This independence allowed Lee to fully exercise his military mind and seek action rather than wait for orders. Lee and his troops became a valuable asset to the struggling Continental Army and a constant threat to British forces in the North.

Lee's greatest achievement during his time in the North was the successful raid on a British fort in Paulus Hook, New Jersey. He adopted a tactic that would become common in partisan warfare, a night attack. Lee set out with his force against the 400-man British garrison, and launched his attack in the early morning hours.<sup>24</sup> The attack was a success, and Lee's forces managed to capture the British works, killing 50 enemy soldiers and taking 158 prisoners, including nine officers, with only two men killed and three wounded. The raid demonstrated the Legion's effectiveness in carrying out irregular operations and provided a serious boost to sagging Continental morale.<sup>25</sup>

Washington's dispatches indicated how impressed he was with Lee's performance: "The Enterprise was executed with a distinguished degree of Address, Activity and Bravery and does great honor to Major Lee and to all the officers and men under his command, who are requested to accept the General's warmest thanks."<sup>26</sup> For his actions at Paulus

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<sup>23</sup>Royster, *Light-Horse Harry Lee*, 14.

<sup>24</sup>Hartmann, *The American Partisan*, 110.

<sup>25</sup>Spencer C. Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again: The Life of Nathanael Greene* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2009), 111.

<sup>26</sup>Fitzpatrick, ed., *Writings of George Washington*, 16:149.

Hook, Lee became the only Continental officer below the rank of general to receive a gold medal from the Continental Congress.<sup>27</sup>

While “Light-Horse Harry” and his Legion were gaining fame in the North, the British began to turn their attention to the Southern Department and South Carolina in particular. One of the many aspects of British grand strategy in the colonies was the plan to exploit Loyalist sentiments to turn American opinion against the war. While they did have some success in the North, by 1780 they sought to access the large reservoir of Loyalists in the Southern colonies. On May 12, 1780, British forces seized the port of Charles Town, South Carolina. A few days later, the British dragoons under Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton massacred a colonial force at the Waxhaws settlement near the North Carolina border.<sup>28</sup> Tarleton developed a reputation for ruthlessness and many Continental soldiers began to refer to him as “Bloody Ban.” With the fall of Charles Town, the subsequent capture of Continental General Benjamin Lincoln’s army, and Tarleton’s actions at the Waxhaws, much of the Continental presence in South Carolina had disappeared. Congress called for reinforcements from the Northern Department to stem the rapid British advances in the South.

The British presence in the Southern colonies ignited a guerrilla war between Patriots and Loyalists that came to define the Revolution in the South. Thomas Sumter and Andrew Pickens, both Continental officers and state militia commanders, began to target British supply lines and undermanned British outposts in the South Carolina Low

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<sup>27</sup>Royster, *Light-Horse Harry Lee*, 21.

<sup>28</sup>Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), 25.

Country. During this time, Francis Marion also began to make his indelible mark upon the American Revolution in the South. Marion was certainly not from the same stock as Lee, and his family did not enjoy the same manner of aristocratic pedigree. He was the grandson of exiled French Huguenots who settled in St. John's Parish in 1685, and he was born in 1732 to two first-generation Carolinians.<sup>29</sup> Despite possessing only a rudimentary education and lacking the prestige and polish of men like Henry Lee, Marion contributed significantly to the irregular war effort against the British.

Aside from his lower social position, Marion also lacked other physical characteristics associated with the Cavalier image. His friend and chief lieutenant, Peter Horry, remarked that Marion possessed a diminutive figure and was often sick as a child. He wrote, "I have it from good authority, that this great soldier, at his birth, was not larger than a New England lobster, and might easily enough have been put into a quart pot."<sup>30</sup> Young Marion first learned guerrilla tactics by fighting the Cherokee Indians on the American frontier during the Seven Years' War. Accounts of Marion's behavior in combat filtered back to the leading South Carolina officials, and his immediate superior, William Moultrie, noted that Marion was "an active, brave and hardy soldier, and an excellent partisan officer."<sup>31</sup> At the outset of the American Revolution, Marion was no longer a young man, but like Prince Rupert, he was selected to be an officer over men of

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<sup>29</sup>Robert D. Bass, *Swamp Fox: The Life and Campaigns of General Francis Marion* (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1959), 5.

<sup>30</sup>Peter Horry, *The Life of Gen. Francis Marion: A Celebrated Partisan Officer in the Revolutionary War, Against the British and Tories in South Carolina and Georgia* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Company, 1855), 20.

<sup>31</sup>William Moultrie, *Memoirs of the American Revolution, so far as it Related to the States of North and South Carolina, and Georgia*, 2 vols. (New York, 1802), 2:223n., quoted in Hugh F. Rankin, *Francis Marion: The Swamp Fox* (New York: Crowell, 1973), 6-7.

higher social standing because of his previous military experience. Marion utilized the tactics used by his Indian enemies to thwart British efforts to advance into the South Carolina heartland.

Marion served well as a Continental officer and by 1780 was a lieutenant colonel. Like Lee with his Legion, Marion sought to establish discipline and improved behavior among his men. Peter Horry remarked, “The truth is, Marion wished his officers to be gentlemen. And whenever he saw one of them acting below that character, he would generously attempt his reformation.”<sup>32</sup> He understood how important discipline was in conducting partisan operations, and he wanted his soldiers to behave as well as they fought in the field. When the British invaded Charles Town, Marion avoided capture despite having suffered an ankle injury, and he and his men rode to meet Continental general Horatio Gates’ arrival. Gates reached South Carolina in July of 1780, and ordered Marion and his band to “hasten on to Santee river, and destroy every scow, boat, or canoe that could assist an Englishman in his flight to Charleston.”<sup>33</sup> After Marion’s departure, Gates set off to face the British Army under General Charles Cornwallis at Camden, South Carolina.

Camden was a disaster for the Continentals. Following his defeat, Gates retreated to reorganize his army, and Cornwallis was able to operate more freely throughout South Carolina and into southern North Carolina. Despite these setbacks, Marion, Sumter, and Pickens continued to actively participate in irregular operations. Marion conducted his operations with a force ranging between fifty and two hundred and

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<sup>32</sup>Horry, *Life of Gen. Francis Marion*, 34.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, 102-103.

fifty men, and used his intimate knowledge of the South Carolina Low Country to strike against British forces and hide out in the various swamps and recesses of the Pee Dee and Black Rivers.<sup>34</sup> Marion's men were so effective that the British decided to send Tarleton and his Green Dragoons to end his exploits. After weeks of chasing Marion through the South Carolina swamps, Tarleton remarked, "Come, my boys! Let us go back, and we will find the Gamecock [Sumter], but as for this damned old fox, the devil himself could not catch him!"<sup>35</sup> Thus Marion won the sobriquet "Swamp Fox" and continued to disrupt British operations while the Continental Army regrouped.

In October Congress gave George Washington the authority to select Gates' replacement, and he quickly chose Major General Nathanael Greene, an officer from Rhode Island who had served under Washington in the North.<sup>36</sup> Greene came from a Quaker family, and since his father shared the Quaker belief that a formal education was unnecessary and might lead to immorality and heresy, all of Nathanael's military knowledge came from his own personal reading.<sup>37</sup> Despite this inauspicious beginning, Greene proved to be one of Washington's most effective lieutenants and looked up to Washington as a father figure. In spite of the fact that Greene was a Rhode Islander, he actively pursued the opportunity to command in the Southern Department and was tired of serving as the army's Quartermaster General. Washington's choice greatly benefitted the guerrilla forces in South Carolina as Gates had a relatively low opinion of irregular

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<sup>34</sup>Lee, *Memoirs*, 203.

<sup>35</sup>Bass, *Swamp Fox* 82.

<sup>36</sup>Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 130-131.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.

warfare and militia units. Greene would come to rely extensively on the guerrilla forces in the area and made them a critical element of his strategy.

Greene realized that the military situation in the South would be markedly different from his experiences in the North. For starters, the South produced very little in the way of manufactured goods, and Greene would need all of his logistical experience as Washington's Quartermaster General in order to revitalize the Southern forces.<sup>38</sup> Greene hastily set about reorganizing the army and called out the South Carolina militia for additional support. Adding to Greene's responsibilities, Delaware and Maryland became part of the Southern Department as well. On October 31, 1780, a resolution came before Congress, which read, "That the pressing emergency of our southern affairs requiring as speedy a reinforcement of cavalry as possible, Major Lee's corps be ordered to proceed immediately on their route to join the southern army."<sup>39</sup> Congress promoted Lee to lieutenant colonel and expanded his force to approximately three hundred and fifty men. Days later, Lee's Legion began to make the trip to join Greene and the Southern partisans.

Lee's arrival in the South was met with wild enthusiasm, particularly among Marion's men. Peter Horry wrote:

The next day, colonel Lee with his legion came up, to the inexpressible joy of us all; partly on account of his cavalry, which to be sure, was the handsomest we had ever seen; but much more on account of himself, of whom we had heard that, in deep art and undaunted courage, he was a second Marion. This, our high opinion of him, was greatly exalted by his own gallant conduct...<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Theodore Thayer, *Nathanael Greene: Strategist of the American Revolution* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1960), 282.

<sup>39</sup>Congressional order, quoted in Hartmann, *The American Partisan*, 204.

<sup>40</sup>Horry, *Life of Gen. Francis Marion*, 195.



Clearly, Lee's actions in the North had not gone unnoticed among the Southern guerrillas, and Lee's appearance, personality, and the behavior of his men left a lasting impression. Surely, the South Carolina militiamen were glad to see the arrival of regular Continental soldiers who conducted partisan operations, and by the time Lee's Legion met with Marion's men, they were arguably the best cavalry unit in the entire army. Lee himself preferred the assignment, as the bulk of his military experience consisted of independent actions: the raid, the ambush, the skirmish, the rapid march, the surprise attack, the siege of an isolated enemy outpost and an ultimatum to the enemy commander.<sup>41</sup> With the addition of Lee's Legion, the guerrilla war in the South assumed a larger role in Nathanael Greene's overall strategy for the Southern Department.

Lee and Marion could not have been more different. At the time of their meeting, Lee was in his mid-twenties, a combat hero with an aristocratic pedigree, and in command of one of the finest cavalry forces the Continental Army possessed. Marion was 48, undersized, and used to riding through the swamps and rivers of the South Carolina Low Country, often with British cavalry in hot pursuit. Despite these differences, the two men benefitted from a mutual respect and a recognition of the qualities the other possessed. One of Marion's biographers captured the essence of their relationship: "The semiliterate, ragged little Huguenot looked up to the stately Virginian with superb education, polished manners, and fierce courage. The cavalier revered the Carolina Brigadier for his unyielding patriotism and his defiance of adversity."<sup>42</sup> Lee

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<sup>41</sup>Royster, *Light-Horse Harry Lee*, 23.

<sup>42</sup>Bass, *Swamp Fox*, 170.

recognized the importance of the guerrilla war, and willingly placed himself and his Legion under Marion's command. General Greene wasted little time in reorganizing his forces to combat the numerically superior British forces.

In addition to the logistical shortcomings, Greene also had to deal with the fact that he was a Northerner in command of the Southern Department. Most of the Continental regiments under Greene's command were Southern, and he found that the names of his subordinates constituted a virtual roll call of the region's aristocracy: Carrington, Lee, Washington, Howard, and Huger.<sup>43</sup> He was also facing a battle-tested force under Cornwallis, who had over 8,000 troops at his disposal in South Carolina and Georgia. Greene only had roughly 2,000 troops when he assumed command, many of them were in militia units with few Continentals save Lee's Legion. Thus far, the Continentals had been unable to stand up to the British army in pitched battle on the open field.<sup>44</sup> Greene concluded that he must rely heavily on partisan cavalry units to disrupt British incursions into South Carolina and improve the mobility and discipline of his infantry forces.<sup>45</sup> By attaining an advantage in mobility, Greene could counteract his numerical deficiency and keep Cornwallis off balance.

Greene immediately began to display his unorthodoxy as a defensive operational commander. Whereas Washington valued the principle of concentrating his forces, Greene *divided* his army into three sections in the face of superior British odds. He sent Brigadier General Daniel Morgan and six hundred men to operate around the British

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<sup>43</sup>John S. Pancake, *This Destructive War: The British Campaign in the Carolinas, 1780-1782* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1985), 48.

<sup>44</sup>Russell F. Weigley, *The Partisan War: The South Carolina Campaign of 1780-1782* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970), 4.

<sup>45</sup>Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 283.

outpost at Ninety-Six in the western part of the state, dispatched Lee and his Legion to the east to cooperate with Marion, and maintained his own position near Cheraw, South Carolina, on the Pee Dee River.<sup>46</sup> Such a risky division of forces placed a heavy burden on the eastern guerrillas. Greene expected Lee and Marion to keep the British off balance while he maneuvered his small forces into favorable positions for battle. Greene also hoped that Cornwallis would divide his forces as well, since he could not defeat the British Army in one large-scale conventional engagement. He knew that if Cornwallis did divide his forces, then the British would become more susceptible to guerrilla activities and Greene could possibly defeat a section of the army rather than risk his entire force.<sup>47</sup> As it turned out, Greene's decision to divide his forces prompted Cornwallis to follow suit, for if the British concentrated for an attack, that would allow Morgan to attack and potentially seize the British outposts at Ninety-Six or Augusta.<sup>48</sup>

Irregular warfare is particularly effective when utilized against an isolated individual military force. By targeting enemy outposts and supply lines, partisan operations force the enemy to devote increasing amounts of manpower to safeguard those positions, thus lessening its offensive power. Nearly a century later, John Mosby understood this concept and frequently wrote about his objectives. In a letter to J. E. B. Stuart on September 30, 1863, he demonstrated his knowledge of the benefits of irregular war. He wrote, "The military value of the species of warfare I have waged is not measured by the number of prisoners

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<sup>46</sup>Weigley, *American Way of War*, 29.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 142.

and material of war captured from the enemy, but by the heavy detail it has already compelled him to make, and which I hope to make him increase, in order to guard his communications and to that extent diminish his aggressive strength.”<sup>49</sup> Mosby followed the example set by Lee and Marion during their operations in the South during the American Revolution. When Mosby was a child, he read a copy of the *Life of Marion* (1814) by Peter Horry and Mason L. Weems, and he remembered how he “shouted when I read aloud in the nursery of the way the great partisan hid in the swamp and outwitted the British.”<sup>50</sup> Marion thus had an indirect impact on Mosby’s childhood, and he sought to mirror the Swamp Fox in his exploits against the Union.

As much as Marion influenced future generations of Southern partisan officers, he had a direct and immediate impact on Lee and his Legion. When Lee arrived in the South and was ordered to join Marion’s forces, he noted in his memoir that Marion “continued to intercept and harass the enemy’s posts between the Pedee and the Santee.”<sup>51</sup> Lee no doubt saw that Marion’s actions mirrored his Legion’s operations in the North, and Lee was certainly more comfortable fighting with relative freedom from the Continental Army. By joining Marion, Lee not only found a fellow officer who enjoyed fighting a guerrilla war, but he also could avoid potential slights against his honor or that of his Legion by exercising his preference to operate as an independent unit rather than attached to the regular army. The combined forces of Lee and Marion

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<sup>49</sup>Mosby, *Memoirs*, 262.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>51</sup>Lee, *Memoirs*, 223.

continued to harass Cornwallis's divided forces as the British general sought battle with Greene.

Cornwallis subscribed to the belief that significant battlefield victories were necessary to neutralize the Continental Army.<sup>52</sup> He had witnessed this firsthand in the North and sought to replicate it in the South. He eagerly dispatched Tarleton and his force to face Morgan in the west near Ninety-Six. By effectively using the militia units under his command, Morgan was able to defeat Tarleton and capture the majority of his troops at the Battle of Cowpens on January 17, 1781. In the east, Marion and Lee set out to raid Georgetown, South Carolina, and the British outpost therein. At the end of 1780, South Carolina governor John Rutledge had appointed Marion brigadier general in the state militia and placed all militia troops east of the Santee, Wateree, and Catawba rivers under his command. Governor Rutledge additionally approved Henry Lee's request that 150 troops be added to his Legion, which already numbered between 260 and 280 troops.<sup>53</sup> With a combined force of over 500 men, Marion and Lee could easily overwhelm Georgetown and various other British garrisons, which rarely exceeded 300 men per outpost.

After crossing the Pee Dee River at night, they struck the garrison after midnight the following day. Although they did not succeed in defeating the British force, they did manage to capture the British commandant of the garrison without suffering casualties. During the engagement, Lee and Marion "were singularly tender of the lives of their

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<sup>52</sup>Matthew H. Spring, *With Zeal and With Bayonets Only: The British Army on Campaign in North America, 1775-1783* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 13-14.

<sup>53</sup>Rankin, *Francis Marion*, 147, 151.

soldiers; and preferred modest success, with little loss, to the most brilliant enterprise, with the destruction of many of their troops.”<sup>54</sup> One of the necessities in conducting irregular operations is troop preservation. Like the divided Continental Army, Marion and Lee could not risk a large-scale operation that would jeopardize the lives of the bulk of their forces. If they were decisively defeated, then Cornwallis could concentrate his energies more fully upon Greene.

After the British defeat at Cowpens, Cornwallis hastily reunited his forces and set out once again to bring the Continentals to battle. During their pursuit, Tarleton commented on the Continental partisans’ actions: “During these operations, Generals Sumter and Marion endeavored to disturb the communications, and excite insurrections, in South Carolina... A body of continentals, under Colonel Lee, had met with some success on the extremity of the eastern border...”<sup>55</sup> As eager as Tarleton was to eliminate the partisan threat, he acknowledged their effectiveness at disrupting British operations. As Greene began his move northward, he hastily recalled Lee to serve with the main army in order to protect its rear. A letter from Major Ichabod Burnet to Lee indicated that Greene’s “anxiety to collect the cavalry is very great,” and that Greene “supposes everything will depend upon it.”<sup>56</sup> As Greene made his way north, Lee had several encounters with British forces and local Tories that tested the limits of his role as a Cavalier officer.

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<sup>54</sup>Lee, *Memoirs*, 225.

<sup>55</sup>Banastre Tarleton, *A History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781, in the Southern Provinces of North America* (London: T. Cadell, 1787), 230.

<sup>56</sup>Richard K. Showman, et al., eds., *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene*, 12 vols. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 7:234.

To Lee and the South Carolina partisans, Tories were as considered as much a threat to American independence as British regulars. In February of 1781, Lee's Legion fell in with a group of Tories under Colonel John Pyle, whose men mistakenly believed the Legion to be British dragoons due to their similar green uniforms. The Legion and militia under Andrew Pickens completed their surprise by suddenly turning on the Loyalists, killing over one hundred men and wounding several others.<sup>57</sup> Lee's account of the engagement reflected his attitude of the necessity of troop preservation over showing quarter to the enemy. "During this sudden recounter...the cry of mercy was heard...but no expostulation could be admitted... Humanity even forbade it, as its first injunction is to take care of your own safety, and our safety was not compatible with that of the supplicants, until disabled to offend."<sup>58</sup> Lee recognized that completely destroying the defeated enemy was preferable to subjecting one's forces to unnecessary risks. Additionally, by targeting Tories, Lee and the partisans helped to limit British recruiting of Loyalists in the Carolinas.<sup>59</sup> The only way that the Legion could help the cause was to remain intact, and Lee desired to do so at any cost.

Future partisan officers shared similar attitudes regarding the treatment of civilians and noncombatants. John Mosby's memoir indicated that he decided that civilians understood the nature of warfare and should be overtly avoided by the combatants. Naturally, Mosby frequently targeted Union supply trains that carried Federal currency, soldiers, and supplies. However, some of these trains included

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 7:355, 358.

<sup>58</sup>Lee, *Memoirs*, 258.

<sup>59</sup>Weigley, *The Partisan War*, 43.

passenger cars for civilians. Mosby wrote, “People who travel on a railroad in a country where military operations are going on take the risk of all these accidents of war. I was not conducting an insurance business on life or property.”<sup>60</sup> These officers understood that accidents occur in wartime, and that sometimes knowing which people are enemies is not always easy to determine.

One of the oft-repeated reasons used to explain the British defeat in the American Revolution was the fact that the British Army fought in unfamiliar territory against an enemy that did not always fight according to the standard tactics of the day. Some scholars see the British defeat as representative of the shortcomings of Enlightenment-era military doctrine.<sup>61</sup> Whereas the British officers practiced uniform movements and unified troop actions, Marion’s experience fighting Indians and Lee’s preference for partisan operations gave them the advantage in the South Carolina swamps and pine forests.<sup>62</sup> Greene had also managed to improve the militia’s performance in combat, something that Gates was unable to do. Even Cornwallis was forced to recognize their improvement, saying “I will not say much in praise of the militia of the southern colonies, but the list of British officers and soldiers killed and wounded by them since last June (1780) proves but too fatally that they are not wholly contemptible.”<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Mosby, *Memoirs*, 313-314.

<sup>61</sup>For a general description of British military doctrine and practices, see Don Higginbotham, *The War of American Independence: Military Attitudes, Policies, and Practice, 1763-1789* (New York: Macmillan, 1971). See also Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 12-30. Matthew Spring has adopted a revisionist stance on the idea that the British failed to think creatively, but has little new to offer concerning British grand strategy.

<sup>62</sup>Charles Heaton, “The Failure of Enlightenment Military Doctrine in Revolutionary America: The Piedmont Campaign and the Fate of the British Army in the Lower South,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 87 (April 2010), 132.

<sup>63</sup>K.G. Davies, ed., *Documents of the American Revolution*, 21 vols. (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1972-81), 20:166; Cornwallis to Clinton, June 30, 1781, quoted in Spring, *With Zeal*, 16.



Additionally, Lee, Marion, and other Continental officers often relied on the local populace for intelligence and information on the enemy's whereabouts. Since partisan officers frequently operated independent of the regular army, they developed personal relationships with civilians, and this aided in their intelligence gathering operations.

Lee and Marion also participated in some conventional battles in the Southern theater. When Lord Francis Rawdon replaced Cornwallis as the British field commander in the South, he sought to achieve what Cornwallis could not: the destruction of Greene's Continental Army. The two forces met at Eutaw Springs on September 8, 1781, but as in earlier battles, the British were only able to achieve a tactical victory with disastrous results. The Continental force at Eutaw Springs included a number of Continental officers that influenced the development of Southern cavalry, including Francis Marion, Henry Lee III, William Washington, and Wade Hampton.<sup>64</sup> Rawdon lost approximately one-fifth of his effective fighting force, and official British correspondence recognized the fighting qualities of the Continental Army and the partisans in particular. A dispatch sent to Cornwallis in Virginia on September 9 read, "I hope, my lord, when it is considered that such a handful of men, attacked by the united force of Generals Greene, Sumter, Marion, Sumner, and Pickens, and the Legions of Colonels Lee and Washington, drove them from the field of battle . . . [that they] deserve

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<sup>64</sup>Francis Marion's influence on Southern cavalry and irregular warfare is well founded. Henry Lee was equally influential and his son Robert E. Lee commanded the Army of Northern Virginia during the Civil War. William Washington was a relative of George Washington and was captured during the battle. Wade Hampton's grandson, Wade Hampton III, served as a Confederate cavalry general and later governor of South Carolina. The Hampton family was as influential in South Carolina as the Lees were in Virginia. For a description of the battle, see Rankin, *Francis Marion*, 241-251.

some merit.”<sup>65</sup> The British army’s inability to stop Greene’s operations eventually led them to abandon their operations in South Carolina. Lee’s Legion and the Carolina partisans proved to be as effective when attached to the conventional army as they were as independent units.

Throughout the Southern campaign, Lee and Marion exhibited features of the Cavalier ideal. Both men cultivated disciplined cavalry units that were comfortable conducting irregular operations against a conventional enemy. Lee and his Legion represented the physical Cavalier ideal, and Marion was envious of their discipline, smartness, and zeal.<sup>66</sup> Marion and his troops represented the moral Cavalier ideal, fighting in their home state to defend the local populace from enemy forces. Lee remarked that Marion was “Beloved by his friends, and respected by his enemies,” and that he “possesses a virtuous heart, a strong head, and a mind devoted to the common good.”<sup>67</sup> Throughout their years as military officers, both men used the Cavalier ideal as a template for their actions in command.

Following Cornwallis’ surrender to George Washington at Yorktown, Virginia, in October, Lee expected that the war would be over within a year, and he began to exhibit certain qualities common among Southern aristocrats, but unbecoming of military officers. Lee was exceedingly confident to the point of vanity, and could not tolerate personal criticism or slights against his Legion. Lee resigned while his force was still on active duty, citing among other reasons poor health, his desire to get

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<sup>65</sup>Tarleton, *History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781*, 512.

<sup>66</sup>Bass, *Swamp Fox*, 138.

<sup>67</sup>Lee, *Memoirs*, 585.

married, and a belief that General Greene had shamed him by slighting public praise of his Legion and preferred another officer in an attempt to please General Washington.<sup>68</sup> Like Lee, Marion and his command were worn down after years of conducting partisan operations in difficult terrain. Marion left his unit in the summer of 1782 and returned to the ruins of his plantation at Pond Bluff. Both Marion's and Lee's post-war lives would be nothing like their heroic days at the heads of their respective partisan bands.

Both men received the thanks of the Continental Congress and pursued other interests. Marion was promoted to the rank of colonel in the Continental Line, Lee to the rank of major general. Marion married his cousin, Mary Esther Videau, and served as commandant of Fort Johnson, South Carolina.<sup>69</sup> Lee also married a cousin, Matilda Ludwell Lee. Like many of his family members, Lee sought political office, first as a state delegate to the Continental Congress and later as governor of Virginia.<sup>70</sup> During his years in politics, Lee was always careful to remember the relationships that influenced him the most, particularly his family's ties to George Washington. When Washington died in 1799, Lee was present to deliver a eulogy, stating that he was "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."<sup>71</sup> Lee's pedigree provided him with several important advantages, and he understood that his relationship with Washington was crucial to his success as a cavalry officer.

At the time of Washington's death, however, Lee's life was in a state of decline. His friend and compatriot, Francis Marion, had died at Pond Bluff in 1795, and Lee was

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<sup>68</sup>Royster, *Light-Horse Harry Lee*, 48.

<sup>69</sup>Bass, *Swamp Fox*, 239-245.

<sup>70</sup>Hartmann, *The American Partisan*, 205.

<sup>71</sup>Taken from Ellis, *His Excellency*, 270.

constantly involved in land speculations and other ventures that eventually drove him to bankruptcy. After serving in debtor's prison and finishing his *Memoirs*, Lee came out in opposition to the War of 1812. Due to his political beliefs, a mob in Baltimore, Maryland, assaulted him, and Lee sustained several injuries. Broken and bankrupt, Lee spent the last few years of his life in exile in the West Indies. Years later, he returned to Dungeness, a plantation on Cumberland Island, Georgia, that belonged to the family of his old commanding officer, Nathanael Greene. Lee stayed at the plantation under the care of Greene's family, and died on March 25, 1818.<sup>72</sup>

Greene was at least partially responsible for Lee and Marion's success because he allowed them to operate independently of the Southern army and counted on their actions as part of his larger overall strategy. He understood that using conventional forces associated with a coordinated guerrilla campaign, or mobile war, greatly increased his ability to take the fight to his enemy while having the illusory effect of making his weak force appear larger.<sup>73</sup> Although he was a Northerner and opposed to slavery, Greene was able to win the confidence of the Southern militia troops through his disciplinary actions and his desire to make sure his troops were properly cared for. Lee and Marion responded to Greene's command style by working well together despite their various differences. Greene, however, never lost sight of the fact that he was fighting a political war. He wrote, "There is no mortal more fond of enterprise [partisan warfare] than myself; but this is not the basis on which the fate of this country depends.

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<sup>72</sup>Royster, *Light-Horse Harry Lee*, 3-7, 231-247.

<sup>73</sup>John M. Dederer, "Making Bricks without Straw: Nathanael Greene's Southern Campaigns and Mao Tse-Tung's Mobile War," *Military Affairs* 47:3 (October 1983), 119.

It is not a war of posts, but a contest for states dependent on public opinion.”<sup>74</sup> Greene’s ability to carry out an unorthodox military strategy while keeping mindful of the overall Continental goals allowed him to be successful in the Southern Department.

Henry Lee III was in many ways a product of his heritage. His life was shaped to fit the Cavalier ideal, and his children would go on embody this ideal and support those who did. After his first wife’s death in 1790, Lee remarried in 1793 to the daughter of another prominent Virginia family, Anne Hill Carter, at Shirley, a plantation designed to resemble the English country houses.<sup>75</sup> By virtue of his first marriage, Lee was also the master of Stratford Hall, a plantation in Westmoreland County, Virginia, that first belonged to his great uncle, Colonel Richard Lee. While at Stratford, Lee and his wife produced six children, five of which survived to adulthood. On January 19, 1807, Anne gave birth to her fifth child, a son. In keeping with the Cavalier tradition of naming sons after Teutonic warriors, Frankish knights, and English kings, they named him Robert Edward Lee.<sup>76</sup>

Both Lee and Marion embodied aspects of the Cavalier ideal, although on the surface Lee appeared to have fit the image more accurately. Lee was the son of a proud Virginia family that traced its roots back to a soldier that rode with William the Conqueror.<sup>77</sup> He grew up with all of the privileges that came with being a Tidewater Cavalier. In combat, he displayed the control and poise necessary in commanding a successful independent cavalry force, and his Legion’s performance drew praise from

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<sup>74</sup>Greene to Sumter, January 8, 1781, Nathanael Greene Papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>75</sup>Fischer, *Albion’s Seed*, 267.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 307, 308 n. 4.

<sup>77</sup>Lee, *Memoirs*, 11.

the Continentals and the British alike. After the war, Lee fell victim to the Cavalier ideals he sought to uphold; he was arrogant, foolish with his money, and unwilling to bend to the will of others, even to the point of suffering physical harm on account of his principles. Even though his post-bellum life was wrought with personal failures, his performance at the head of his Legion indicated that he sought to exemplify the Cavalier in combat.

Marion is one of the most famous guerrilla fighters in American history, and although he did not descend from a prominent family, he still portrayed elements of the Cavalier ideal and sought to establish himself in South Carolina society. His friend Peter Horry praised him in the highest manner by comparing his military career with that of another Virginia aristocrat, George Washington.

They both came forward, volunteers in the service of their country; they both learned the military art in the hard and hazardous schools of Indian warfare; they were both such true soldiers in *vigilance*, that no enemy could ever surprise them; and so equal in *undaunted valor*, that nothing could even dishearten them: while as to the still nobler virtues of patience, disinterestedness, self-government, severity to themselves and generosity to their enemies, it is difficult to determine whether Marion or Washington most deserve our admiration.<sup>78</sup>

Marion was so effective as a guerrilla fighter and so confident in command that he garnered Lee's respect and admiration. Although both men came from markedly different backgrounds, they found a common ground in their preference for partisan warfare.

One of the apparent differences between the Cavaliers of the English Civil War and the partisan officers of the American Revolution was that the Royalist cavalry

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<sup>78</sup>Horry, *Life of Gen. Francis Marion*, 251.

adopted conventional military tactics while Lee, Marion, and the others conducted successful irregular operations. Prince Rupert favored a combination of Dutch and Swedish cavalry tactics that were part of an established cavalry doctrine.<sup>79</sup> Neither Lee nor Marion were familiar with the British way of war, and Marion in particular developed his fighting style from his experiences in the Seven Years' War. The cavalry forces in both the English Civil War and the American Civil War, however, shared a common belief that they were fighting to protect the local populace from outside forces. Lee believed his position as a military officer to be the fullest manifestation of courage—the willingness to sacrifice one's life for the public good. He conducted his operations by applying irregular military forces in such a way that related to the goals of the war. Marion also fought for patriotic goals, and his presence in his home state during the American Revolution ensured that his fellow South Carolinians understood his motivations. These men fought foremost to found a new nation; the concept of defending one's honor and the honor of one's country was the crux of the Cavalier ideal.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>Barratt, *Cavalier Generals*, 27-29.

<sup>80</sup>Royster, *Light-Horse Harry Lee*, 34.

### 3. THE ANTEBELLUM CAVALIER IMAGE IN SOUTHERN LITERATURE

Following the American Revolution, Virginia was prepared to assume its place as first among the newly independent states. Virginian George Washington became the first President of the United States in 1789, and received immense support from Henry Lee and other influential political and military figures. Two years after Washington ascended to the presidency, Lee became the ninth governor of Virginia, joining many of the Lee ancestors in filling a political office. At the turn of the nineteenth century, however, all was not well in the Old Dominion. Decades of tobacco agriculture had taken a brutal toll on Virginia's soil, and because of their insistence on raising tobacco as a principal cash crop, Virginia's economy was hopelessly dependent on an unreliable foreign export market.<sup>1</sup> With the establishment of the new nation's governmental system, men like Governor Lee became victims of the partisan political structure that divided the nation between Federalists and Democratic-Republicans. The early 1800's were a time of change in Virginia as a state that had served admirably in war began to adjust to more peaceful times.

During the time of Virginia's economic decline, the Cavalier image began to appear in Southern literature. These publications depicted the Cavalier as the ideal Southern gentleman rather than simply a cavalryman loyal to the English crown. Interestingly, many of the writers who contributed to the development of the Southern Cavalier image were not native Virginians. Among these early writers were George

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<sup>1</sup>Ritchie Devon Watson, Jr., *The Cavalier in Virginia Fiction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 60.



Tucker and John Pendleton Kennedy, neither of whom was born in Virginia. Their works are of interest to literary historians because of their relatively complex and partially realistic portrayal of their subjects, namely representations of the fictitious Cavalier.<sup>2</sup> The writings of Tucker and Kennedy touched off a series of works that sought to portray the Cavalier as an idealistic hero, thus evolving the Cavalier beyond his historical significance. The Cavalier became a representation of the romanticized South, and by the outset of the Civil War, he was firmly entrenched in the minds of many Southerners, including those that became Confederate partisan officers.

Henry Lee had embodied the physical Cavalier image during his service in the American Revolution, but his post-war career would not bring him similar good fortune. Lee was an ardent Federalist and repeatedly challenged Thomas Jefferson's policies. Such a conflict was indicative of the level of political strife in Virginia at the time. As a member of Virginia's aristocracy, Lee grew up learning how to ride horses, give orders, and move among powerful politicians. He always conceived of government as the counsel of eminent men for the benefit of lesser ones.<sup>3</sup> Lee and Washington shared many political principles, and Washington's Farewell Address included a section on the dangers of political parties. Washington wrote, "The very idea of the power and right of the People to establish Government presupposes the duty of every Individual to obey the established government."<sup>4</sup> Washington knew of the impending dangers of having

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 69.

<sup>3</sup>Charles Royster, *Light-Horse Harry Lee and the Legacy of the American Revolution* (1812; reprinted, New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), 118.

<sup>4</sup>Farewell Address, quoted in Joseph J. Ellis, *His Excellency: George Washington* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 36.

separate political parties acquire increasing influence and power, and Lee's decision to join the Federalists had a lasting impact on his later life.

During Lee's tenure as governor, he was a truly wealthy man. In addition to his status and his plantation holdings, Lee also bought large tracts of land in the Tidewater and Piedmont regions and was engaged in further land speculation. Lee, however, proved to be a far less successful businessman than he was a partisan officer. He fell into debt, and rather than surrender all of his property, Lee went into the Westmoreland County Jail as a debtor on April 24, 1809.<sup>5</sup> During his time in prison, which lasted for approximately two years, Lee wrote his memoirs on his service in the American Revolution, particularly during his time in the Southern Department. Lee attempted to attach a political message to his memoirs, particularly one against Thomas Jefferson, as Lee deplored his policies as President and actively sought to prevent his reelection.<sup>6</sup> Once Lee was released from prison in 1810, he again became involved in politics, only this time there would be a far more tragic outcome for the aging Virginia Cavalier.

In 1812, the same year that his memoirs were published, Lee went to Baltimore, Maryland, to help a group of Federalists defend the office of a local newspaper against assault by a group of violent supporters of America's recent declaration of war against Great Britain. The Baltimore Federalists made Lee their commander, and Lee accepted the commission and planned to revive his partisan skills against the mob.<sup>7</sup> Lee's plans proved unsuccessful, and the mob beat and killed several of the Federalists. Lee was not

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<sup>5</sup>Royster, *Light-Horse Harry Lee*, 183.

<sup>6</sup>Henry Lee, *The Revolutionary War Memoirs of General Henry Lee* (1812; reprinted, New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), vi.

<sup>7</sup>Royster, *Light-Horse Harry Lee*, 161.

the only Revolutionary War veteran to receive wounds from the attackers, and this attack on the veterans and victors of the war for American independence proved that no degree of virtue, honor, or patriotism could spare the country from the mob in politics.<sup>8</sup> The Baltimore mob ended Henry Lee's career as a revolutionary. Beaten and broken, he soon left the country in a self-imposed exile while his health slowly deteriorated.

Lee decided that a trip to the Caribbean would allow his wounds, both physical and emotional, to heal. During his time in the West Indies, he kept up regular correspondence with his son, Charles Carter Lee. In his letters home, Lee urged his son to devote himself to his studies so that he might achieve a sufficient level of knowledge necessary in a proper gentleman. A letter from Nassau in 1817 indicates Lee's desire for his son to seek after knowledge: "In every distinguished character, nature gives the turn and scope; art and study polish and spread."<sup>9</sup> In early 1818, Lee decided to return home, and set sail for Savannah, Georgia. He only made it to Cumberland Island, and found Dungeness, the home of Mrs. Shaw, daughter of his old commander, General Nathanael Greene. Henry Lee died at Dungeness on March 25, 1818, and received full military honors from the ship that had carried him from the Caribbean.<sup>10</sup>

During Lee's last years, depictions of the Cavalier image in fiction began to appear. One of the first was *The Valley of the Shenandoah*, written by George Tucker and originally published in 1824. Tucker was born on August 20, 1775, on St. George's Island in Bermuda, and was a member of the Tucker family that had inhabited the

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 166.

<sup>9</sup>General Henry Lee to C. C. Lee, February 9, 1817, reprinted in Lee, *Memoirs*, 63-66.

<sup>10</sup>Lee, *Memoirs*, 79, Royster, *Light-Horse Harry Lee*, 6-7.

British colony for over 150 years.<sup>11</sup> Tucker spent his formative years on the island until 1795, when he embarked on a journey to Philadelphia with the purpose of studying law. He instead made it to Williamsburg, the former British Royal capital that was in a state of decline. Despite the dilapidated condition of the buildings and the declining population, Tucker wrote that Williamsburg had a “very refined and intelligent society” and was a place of “really luxurious living.”<sup>12</sup> Through his family connections, the novelist soon became acquainted with members of Virginia’s aristocracy and began to study at William and Mary College.

Tucker attempted to assimilate with Virginia’s gentry as much as possible. His relatives in the colony had married women of elite status, and he married Mary Byrd Farley, a wealthy great-granddaughter of William Byrd II in 1797.<sup>13</sup> Soon after graduating from William and Mary College, he moved to Richmond to practice law, then to Lynchburg, where he served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1819 to 1825. It was during his time as a representative that he wrote *The Valley of the Shenandoah* (1824), one of the earliest attempts to depict Virginia life in fiction.<sup>14</sup> Tucker drew from his experiences with Virginia’s aristocracy in Williamsburg, Richmond, and Lynchburg to portray the Cavalier as the quintessential Southern aristocrat. As such, *The Valley of the Shenandoah* represents a foundational shift from defining the Cavalier strictly as a military figure to a more generalized Southern gentleman.

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<sup>11</sup>Robert Colin McLean, *George Tucker: Moral Philosopher and Man of Letters* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), 3.

<sup>12</sup>“Autobiography,” [1858] manuscript copy, Tucker-Harrison-Smith Papers, University of Virginia Library, 10-12, quoted in McLean, *George Tucker*, 6.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 75.

This work contains two plots of nearly equal importance that interact contrapuntally. One tells the sad story of the financial collapse of the aristocratic Grayson family, and the parallel plot follows the development of two distinct love affairs.<sup>15</sup> Tucker was inclined toward writing with a historical bent, and as such, his depictions of the Grayson family members mirror the style and attitudes of real-life aristocrats and historical figures. *The Valley of the Shenandoah* mimics the writings of Sir Walter Scott, principally those of the *Waverley* series, when Scott was concerned with recent and local history.<sup>16</sup> Tucker's portrayal of the Graysons' decline depicts the Cavalier as a doomed aristocrat, a theme that became popular in later works. Tucker was also one of the first to delineate some of the fundamental characteristics of the fictional Cavalier figure, namely courage, generosity, hospitality, high moral standards, and a capacity for charming others.<sup>17</sup> Tucker's work places the Cavalier firmly in a rural Southern setting, removes many of the military aspects associated with the original Cavaliers, and presents a romanticized, yet flawed, image to the reader.

Ironically, Cavaliers often do not appear as the central figures in many of these early works. In the plantation environment, the Southern gentleman is no longer the

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<sup>15</sup>Watson, *The Cavalier*, 72.

<sup>16</sup>McLean, *Tucker*, 79. Scott wrote the *Waverley* series from 1814 to 1831, depicting English and Scottish life during several different periods. Two of the works, *A Legend of Montrose* and *Woodstock, or the Cavalier* take place at the time of the English Civil Wars and deal extensive with Cavaliers and military figures loyal to King Charles I. For works on the *Waverley* novels, see D. D. Devlin, *The Author of Waverley: A Critical Study of Sir Walter Scott* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1971) and John Sutherland, *The Life of Walter Scott: A Critical Biography* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1995). Scott enjoyed widespread success both in Europe and the United States, and many Southern writers sought to emulate his work. See Louis D. Rubin, et al., *The History of Southern Literature* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 87-93.

<sup>17</sup>Watson, *The Cavalier*, 99.

master of his own environment, and he is frequently patronized by the novelist himself.<sup>18</sup> In *The Valley of the Shenandoah*, the family patriarch, Colonel Grayson, has already passed away. One of the major themes of Tucker's work is that the Grayson family is struggling to stay out of debt, and in the conclusion Tucker admits that his story centers on the "ruin of a once prosperous and respected family."<sup>19</sup> The Cavalier of Virginia fiction is a tragic hero, and the aristocratic way of life is slowly giving way to the initial indications of industry and urbanization.

The early works on the Cavalier in fiction draw from a number of aspects of the Cavalier of history. Many of the early aristocracy supported the necessity of an established hierarchy in which the privileged few held the majority of power. In *The Valley of the Shenandoah*, Tucker's characters describe the differences between the Germans, Scotch-Irish, and notable English settlers. According to Tucker's stereotyped characters, the Scotch-Irish are as ardent, impassioned, bold, and imaginative as the Germans are dull and slow.<sup>20</sup> Tucker is obviously bent on depicting the Virginians born of English stock as America's true aristocrats. These Virginians represented all of the ideals of an aristocratic society, including "the advantages of wealth, without parade or rivalry, learning without pedantry or awkwardness, frankness without rusticity, refinement without insincerity or affectation, luxury unattended with gaming or any excess, and a free intercourse between the sexes, with the most perfect innocence and

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<sup>18</sup>William R. Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character* (1957; Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1963), 131.

<sup>19</sup>George Tucker, *The Valley of the Shenandoah or Memoirs of the Graysons*, 2 vols. (1824; reprinted, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), 2:292.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 1:49-57.

purity of manners.”<sup>21</sup> Tucker’s Cavaliers are idealized versions of aristocratic Southerners who are devoid of any impropriety, an image that later generations of Southerners would apply to the Confederate partisans.

The decline of the Grayson family and their insistence on maintaining their way of life presents a paradox. After the American Revolution, many Americans joined Thomas Jefferson in his call to venerate the yeoman farmer while Henry Lee and other Federalists fought to maintain the established social hierarchy. As the early nineteenth century progressed and Virginia’s agriculture began to decline, there was no widespread call for agricultural innovation or an attempt to diversify Virginia’s economy. Historian T. Harry Williams suggested that, in many situations, a Southerner will “almost certainly refuse to recognize reality.”<sup>22</sup> Seemingly, Virginia’s aristocracy clung to a lifestyle that was destined to decline and eventually crumble. Studies on the subject have produced similar conclusions, notably Eugene D. Genovese’s assertion that Southerners did not actively seek to acquire new farmlands to replace deteriorating cotton and tobacco fields, forcing the Southern economy into an insoluble crisis.<sup>23</sup> The historical basis for the downfall of the Southern aristocracy adds a dramatic element to the revisionary depictions of the Cavaliers in fiction.

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 2:52.

<sup>22</sup>T. Harry Williams, *Romance and Realism in Southern Politics* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1961), 4.

<sup>23</sup>Eugene D. Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South* (1961, Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1989), 28. For information on slavery and plantation agriculture in the American economic system, see James Oakes, *Slavery and Freedom: An Interpretation of the Old South* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), 97-98, 139-152, and William A. Link, *Roots of Secession: Slavery and Politics in Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 36-43, 76.

Despite the overarching themes of economic decline and the destruction of an antiquated society in the face of progress, *The Valley of the Shenandoah* is one of the first American novels to portray the Cavalier as a romantic hero. Tucker included two distinct love affairs in his work, one between Edward Grayson, son of the deceased Colonel, and Matilda Fawkner, and between James Gildon and Edward's sister, Louisa. Edward fulfills the role of the Cavalier hero, and is described as "tall, thin, with grey eyes, light hair, and a long, thin, but very pleasing visage."<sup>24</sup> Edward is given an idealized appearance, and his courtship of Matilda becomes a central theme of the work. Tucker was one of the first to present this courtship archetype: the Cavalier best expresses his superior qualities in the pure and worshipful wooing of his interest—the equally refined, pure, and exquisite Virginia belle.<sup>25</sup> Later works portrayed Confederate cavalymen in a similar fashion, by idealizing their strong suits and minimizing their faults or eliminating them altogether.

Despite the influence of the work, *The Valley of the Shenandoah* brought Tucker limited commercial success. Tucker's personal experiences in Virginia and his ideas on social history certainly made him capable of writing about life in the Old Dominion, but his critics claimed that this work demonstrated his inexperience as a writer and his lack of creativity.<sup>26</sup> Tucker presented largely stock characters, which failed to hold the readers' interest throughout. Nevertheless, Tucker made important contributions to the field of Southern literature with *The Valley of the Shenandoah*. His study of Virginia

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<sup>24</sup>Tucker, *Valley of the Shenandoah*, 1:3

<sup>25</sup>McLean, *Tucker*, 77.

<sup>26</sup>Watson, *The Cavalier*, 79.



life in the 1790's rested on the assumption that the laws, which controlled the progress of society, were unalterable and personal, and those that resisted the slow forward march of progress were doomed to destruction.<sup>27</sup> Ironically, Tucker died two days before the shelling of Fort Sumter, and was unable to witness the final destruction of antebellum Southern society.

In 1832, eight years after Tucker published *The Valley of the Shenandoah*, John Pendleton Kennedy emerged with his depiction of Southern life in *Swallow Barn, or A Sojourn in the Old Dominion*. Like Tucker, Kennedy was not a native Virginian, having been born and raised in Baltimore, Maryland. Kennedy did have direct ties to Virginia, however, as he could trace his ancestry on his mother's side to Philip Pendleton, a Norwich schoolmaster who had immigrated to the colony in 1674.<sup>28</sup> His father, John Kennedy the elder, was a veteran of the American Revolution and marched in George Washington's memorial funeral procession when Baltimore celebrated the late President on January 1, 1800. The elder Kennedy had also had direct contact with Henry Lee in 1794 when he marched out under Lee's command to suppress the Whiskey Rebellion in western Pennsylvania.<sup>29</sup> As a young man, John Kennedy spent his summers among his relatives in the Shenandoah Valley, and this had a profound effect on his later writing career.

For Kennedy, the most attractive home that he frequented as a youth was "Adam's Bower," a plantation in Jefferson County that belonged to his aunt and uncle.

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<sup>27</sup>McLean, *Tucker*, 85.

<sup>28</sup>Charles H. Bohner, *John Pendleton Kennedy: Gentleman from Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1961), 3. See also J. V. Ridgely, *John Pendleton Kennedy* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1966), 13-22.

<sup>29</sup>Bohner, *John Pendleton Kennedy*, 2.

Kennedy remembered it as a “lively, gay establishment,” and it is likely that the plantation served as the model for “Swallow Barn,” the fictional plantation in Kennedy’s novel.”<sup>30</sup> *Swallow Barn* is not a narrative novel in the usual sense, but rather a collection of loosely connected essays written under Kennedy’s *nom de plume*, Mark Littleton. Like *The Valley of the Shenandoah*, multiple plots develop throughout the novel, in particular a boundary dispute between the Meriwether and Hazard families and a love affair between Ned Hazard and the sprightly Bel Tracy.<sup>31</sup> Kennedy begins by taking a mocking attitude towards plantation life in the Old Dominion, but periodically develops a more nostalgic picture of the antiquated practices of the fictitious aristocrats. The work is thus both a satire of Southern life and a fond recollection of personal experiences translated into literature.

Kennedy certainly had fond memories of his time in Virginia as a youth, and he gave a very favorable description of life in the Old Dominion in his introduction to *Swallow Barn*. He remembered, “The mellow, bland, and sunny luxuriance of her old-time society—its good fellowship, its hearty and constitutional *companionableness*, the thriftless gaiety of the people, their dogged but amiable invincibility of opinion, and that overflowing hospitality which knew no ebb.”<sup>32</sup> *Swallow Barn* attempted to address the lasting impact of English society in post-Revolutionary America. An important aspect of the Southern planter was his similarities to the English country squire, and historian William R. Taylor argues that John Pendleton Kennedy, more than anyone else,

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>31</sup>Watson, *The Cavalier*, 81.

<sup>32</sup>John Pendleton Kennedy, *Swallow Barn, or a Sojourn in the Old Dominion* (1832; Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), 8.

succeeded in transporting the squire to America through fiction.<sup>33</sup> Rather than attempt to deal with the importance of English influences on a country that had recently fought so hard to free itself from English control, Kennedy's leading characters become American Cavaliers, independent of England but adopting English customs and lifestyles.

*Swallow Barn*, however, does not contain a stoic Cavalier figure like Edward Grayson in *The Valley of the Shenandoah*. The Meriwether family patriarch, Frank, perhaps Kennedy's best attempt at developing a Cavalier character, is painted as a Virginian of magisterial presence who stands at the meridian of his age. Frank, however, is totally devoted to the genius of Virginia and considers Richmond to be the "centre of civilization."<sup>34</sup> In addition to Frank Meriwether, Ned Hazard emerges as a Cavalier figure, though only in a satirical fashion. Ned desperately attempts to win the hand of Bel Tracy, a Virginia beauty hopelessly obsessed with the chivalric lore of medieval times. After fighting with a local ruffian in the most un-Cavalier fashion—with fists rather than dueling pistols—Ned remarked, "If I had encountered an unknown ruffian in the woods, with sword and lance on horseback...that would be romance for her...But to be pommelled black and blue, with that plebian instrument a fist...she will turn up her nose at that with a magnificent disdain."<sup>35</sup> Kennedy repeatedly shifts between sentimentality and satire in his portrayal of Southern life in a time of economic and social change, balancing his personal experiences in the idyllic Shenandoah Valley and the burgeoning cosmopolitan atmosphere of Baltimore.

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<sup>33</sup>Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee*, 160.

<sup>34</sup>Kennedy, *Swallow Barn*, 34, Watson, *The Cavalier*, 83-84.

<sup>35</sup>Kennedy, *Swallow Barn*, 370.

*Swallow Barn* was critically accepted and gathered widespread attention throughout the country. Edgar Allan Poe wrote in the *Southern Literary Messenger* that the “rich simplicity of diction, the manliness of tone, the admirable traits of Virginian manners, and the striking pictures of still life found in *Swallow Barn* should be praised.”<sup>36</sup> With such high praise from a fellow writer, Kennedy sought to write a follow-up to *Swallow Barn*, and published *Horse-Shoe Robinson* in 1835. This second work had a more direct connection to the American Revolution, and was set in South Carolina in 1780 after the British had seized Charleston Harbor. Rather than focusing on plantation life and the remnants of the English gentry, Kennedy attempted to find a compromise between the extremes of aristocratic chivalry and uncivilized frontier brutality.<sup>37</sup> What emerges is a work that more completely captures the revitalized Cavalier ideal in the character of Galbraith “Horse-Shoe” Robinson than was present in either leading male character in *Swallow Barn*.

*Horse-Shoe Robinson* presents a Cavalier figure that reflects two separate dimensions of Southern life: the aristocratic planter and the frontier yeoman. By the 1830s, the image of the rugged frontiersman was beginning to replace that of the country gentleman as the representative image of America. After all, the wealthy aristocrats were a minority, and the majority of Americans owned no slaves.<sup>38</sup> *Horse-Shoe*

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<sup>36</sup>Edgar Allan Poe quoted in Bohner, *John Pendleton Kennedy*, 87.

<sup>37</sup>Watson, *The Cavalier*, 92.

<sup>38</sup>Several works cover the role of the yeomen in the antebellum South. Among the most influential are Lacy K. Ford Jr., *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), Grady McWhiney, *Cracker Culture: Celtic Ways in the Old South* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1988), and Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, & the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

*Robinson* follows Arthur Butler, a Revolutionary War officer in the South Carolina Low Country, the same area in which Francis Marion and Henry Lee operated. Kennedy centers on the guerrilla war in South Carolina, focusing on the hard-riding bands of Tory and Whig troopers.<sup>39</sup> Like earlier writers, Kennedy adopts an historical approach to fiction, placing his imagined characters in a realistic setting.

*Horse-Shoe Robinson* is modeled after an earlier work by James Fenimore Cooper entitled *The Spy*, published in 1821. Kennedy's *Robinson* mirrors Cooper's Captain Jack Lawton, a self-described "Virginian and a gentleman" who leads a troop of Virginia soldiers during the American Revolution.<sup>40</sup> Cooper, though anything but a Virginian, gives a flattering account of Lawton and the Virginia troopers throughout his work. Kennedy's "Horse-shoe" *Robinson* is obviously based on Jack Lawton, and both men exhibit Cavalier qualities despite the fact that they are not aristocrats. Lawton's death at the head of his troops anticipates the deaths of J. E. B. Stuart and Turner Ashby during the Civil War.<sup>41</sup> The Cavalier dying in battle thus took on a romantic aura.

Although *Horse-shoe Robinson* centers on Arthur Butler, it is *Robinson* that emerges as the true Cavalier. William R. Taylor describes *Robinson* as a "wholly admirable character who proves in the course of the story that he possesses many of the qualities of the Cavalier—military prowess, horsemanship, and a chivalric sense of honor."<sup>42</sup> Confederate partisans later became real-life embodiments of the Cavalier ideal present in Kennedy's *Robinson*. Throughout the changing nature of this ideal, the

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<sup>39</sup>Bohner, *John Pendleton Kennedy*, 92.

<sup>40</sup>Jay B. Hubbell, *Southern Life in Fiction* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1960), 47. See also Ridgely, *Kennedy*, 70, 72, 81-82.

<sup>41</sup>Hubbell, *Southern Life*, 47.

<sup>42</sup>Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee*, 298.

emphasis on horsemanship has always been paramount. A childhood friend of Confederate cavalryman Turner Ashby noted that he “could tame any colt too wild and vicious to be ridden by anyone else in the neighborhood, even as a boy.”<sup>43</sup> Such a skill was admirable in Southern society, and the early fictional works that sought to capture Southern life reinforced these ideas. *Horse-Shoe Robinson* was one of the first works that attempted to fuse the Tidewater aristocrat with the frontier yeomen in a single character. Later works would take a decidedly different approach to placing the fictitious Cavaliers in their proper historical context.

In 1836, Virginian Nathaniel Beverley Tucker published *The Partisan Leader: A Tale of the Future*. Tucker was born in Williamsburg, Virginia in 1784 and studied law at the College of William and Mary under his father, the noted law professor and judge St. George Tucker. The Tucker family was one of the most influential in Virginia, and Nathaniel was a distant relative of George Tucker, author of *The Valley of the Shenandoah*. *The Partisan Leader* is set in 1849, at a time when the United States has been fictitiously fractured to create an independent Southern Confederacy consisting of all of the slave states save Virginia, and the Northern Union led by President Martin Van Buren. In the introduction to 1971 reprint, C. Hugh Holman indicated that Tucker described Virginia’s situation as, “suffering the fate of indecision and being caught between a powerful and successful independent Southern Confederacy, burgeoning with the economic fruits of bloodless secession, and a North ruled by the petty potentate Van

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<sup>43</sup>Paul Christopher Anderson, *Blood Image: Turner Ashby in the Civil War and the Southern Mind* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002), 19.

Buren, in his third term and preparing to seek his fourth in 1849. . .”<sup>44</sup> Tucker’s work is influential for its remarkable similarities to the historical events that occurred before the Civil War almost twenty-five years after the novel was first published.

Tucker’s Cavalier figure is Douglas Trevor, a man who begins the novel as a soldier in the Union Army, only to leave the service when he realizes how the Northern forces are oppressing the Southern people. Douglas is depicted as a steadfast Southern man who refuses to compromise his principles, and Tucker notes that “In any dress, in any company, under any circumstances, Douglas Trevor would have been recognized as a gentleman.”<sup>45</sup> Douglas leaves the army and embarks on a partisan campaign against Union forces in the western Virginia mountains. The actions Tucker describes in the novel are remarkably similar to partisan operations that Confederate forces carried out in the Civil War. He wrote that “after sweeping away the enemy from the south side of the river, he [Douglas Trevor] proceeded to break up the posts in the counties on the northern bank. In the end, though the enemy were nominally in possession of all the country between James River and Roanoke, they held no higher post than Lynchburg, nor any farther south than Farmville.”<sup>46</sup> For Tucker, Douglas Trevor was the Southern Cavalier ideal: a polished aristocrat who defended his home through partisan warfare against an oppressive Union foe, thus combining elements of gentility and martial prowess.

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<sup>44</sup>Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, *The Partisan Leader: A Tale of the Future* (1836; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971), vii.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, 341.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, 270.

Tucker witnessed what he believed to be the oppressions of the North firsthand, having been a staunch supporter of South Carolina during the Nullification Crisis and a proponent of secession as the sectional conflict intensified.<sup>47</sup> He was intimately familiar with the American political landscape and utilized his legal expertise in writing *The Partisan Leader*. The work is more a political allegory than a novel, but it followed the standard fictional practice of having its leading characters represent different social or political positions and mating or separating them accordingly.<sup>48</sup> It reflected the growing sectional tension between the free and slaveholding states, and Tucker's take on the future proved to be remarkably accurate. Given the seemingly prophetic nature of *The Partisan Leader*, the work received increased attention in the years leading up to the Civil War. Though it was suppressed in the North for political reasons, it was reprinted in 1861 as a "key to the disunion conspiracy" and was well known on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line when the war began.<sup>49</sup>

As sectional tensions deepened, a new set of writers turned their attention to the Virginia Cavalier. Unlike Tucker and Kennedy, these men were native Virginians, and as such their publications took a decidedly romanticized view of Virginia life. These men also wrote during a time of intense literary and social change. Southern fiction between 1830 and 1860 reflected the South's obsession with Sir Walter Scott's medieval romances and with the renewed preference for dueling as an instrument for the

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<sup>47</sup>Chad Vanderford, "The Divided Legacy of a Founding Father: Henry and Beverley Tucker Confront Nullification and Secession," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 119 (2011): 233.

<sup>48</sup>Rubin, et al., *Southern Literature*, 96.

<sup>49</sup>Louise Manly, *Southern Literature from 1579-1895: A Comprehensive Review, with Copious Extracts and Criticisms* (1895; Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint Company, 1973), 168.



maintenance of a gentleman's personal honor.<sup>50</sup> The Cavalier heroes of the late antebellum period reflected these changing attitudes and grafted elements of the bygone medieval culture onto the original image of the English Cavaliers. In another attempt to reconnect the Cavaliers to an earlier historical period, many of these later works were set before or during the American Revolution, with some going back as far as the early years at Jamestown. These works represented the height of the romanticized Cavalier image in the South, and many Southerners applied elements of this Cavalier image to Confederate partisan fighters.

The man credited with being the first true "Chronicler of the Cavaliers" was William Alexander Caruthers, who was born in Lexington, Virginia, in 1802.<sup>51</sup> Caruthers wrote three influential novels, but the latter two focus more intensely on Cavalier figures. These works are *A Kentuckian in New-York; or, The Adventures of Three Southerns* (1834), *The Cavaliers of Virginia* (1834), and *The Knights of the Golden Horse-shoe* (1845). Caruthers attempted to place the Cavaliers *before* the American Revolution, when the displaced English Royalists held positions of power in Virginia society. In the opening page of *The Cavaliers of Virginia*, Caruthers reveals his position on the importance of the Royalist migration to the colony: "First came the Cavaliers who fled hither after the decapitation of their royal master and the dispersion of his army, many of whom became permanent settlers in the town or colony, and ever afterwards influenced the character of the state."<sup>52</sup> Caruthers' Cavaliers were the

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<sup>50</sup>Watson, *The Cavalier*, 110 and Hubbell, *Southern Life in Fiction*, 8.

<sup>51</sup>Watson, *The Cavalier*, 112-113.

<sup>52</sup>William Alexander Caruthers, *The Cavaliers of Virginia* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1834), 3.

founders of the first influential Virginian families, and *The Cavaliers of Virginia* includes historical figures like Governor William Berkeley and Nathaniel Bacon.

The novel is not meant to be a direct historical retelling of true events, but it is set in 1676, the year of Bacon's historical uprising against Governor Berkeley. The work contains three plot segments: a conflict between the displaced Cavaliers and a group of Roundhead insurgents; the developing tension between Bacon and Berkeley over the suppression of hostile Indian tribes; and the developing love affair between Bacon and Virginia Fairfax.<sup>53</sup> The historical Bacon was born in 1647 to an eminent East Anglian family, a family that supported Oliver Cromwell, and in Virginia Bacon's fellow colonists called him "General" for heading a volunteer army against the Native Americans. In the novel, ironically, Bacon emerges as a true Cavalier, standing in contrast to the overbearing Governor Berkeley, who was in fact an aristocratic supporter of King Charles II. Their relationship represents the degree to which the original Cavalier image has been manipulated into something else entirely. Caruthers' Cavalier is no longer simply a relocated English Royalist; Bacon represents a truly *American* Cavalier, one that possessed aspects of both the English lord and the frontier yeoman. This Cavalier image reflected American attitudes towards the British after the American Revolution and the War of 1812. The same attitudes that caused the Baltimore mob to assault Henry Lee are present in the fictitious Nathaniel Bacon's relationship to Governor Berkeley's domineering attitude.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Watson, *The Cavalier*, 114.

<sup>54</sup>See Stephen Saunders Webb, *1676: The End of American Independence* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 32-36.

In addition to retaining other Cavalier features, Nathaniel Bacon is also involved in a love affair with aristocratic Virginia Fairfax, a hallmark of the Cavalier. The Cavalier as a romantic hero appeared as early as the English Civil War, and Walter Scott's medieval romances often included a knightly hero and his fair maiden. Much of Bacon's dialogue with Virginia reflects the attitudes associated with both medieval chivalry and Cavalier notions of honor. The fictional Bacon willingly surrenders his affections to Virginia: "'Tis yours, Virginia, wholly yours; soul, mind and heart, all yours...I swear never to profane the shrine of this first and only love by offering them up to any other."<sup>55</sup> During the Civil War, many of Virginia's ladies petitioned partisan officers to provide soldiers for their protection from the invading Union armies. In 1861, for example, 53 women from Shepherd's Town, Virginia, signed a letter to Col. Turner Ashby asking him to "station here one of more of his companies for our defense and protection."<sup>56</sup> Southern women who supported the Confederacy expected the soldiers to actively defend them, and hoped that the partisan leaders would become real-life versions of the Cavaliers of fiction.

Caruthers' last novel, *The Knights of the Golden Horse-shoe*, was published in 1845. Due to a financial panic in 1838, Harper's chose not to promote this work as it had *The Cavaliers of Virginia*, and as a result the novel received limited distribution and critical reception when it appeared through a Savannah magazine entitled *The Magnolia* three years later.<sup>57</sup> The work is a fictional retelling of an historical event that included

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<sup>55</sup>Caruthers, *The Cavaliers of Virginia*, 164.

<sup>56</sup>"Letter to Col. Ashby from the Ladies of Shepherd's Town, Jefferson County, VA," after June 16, 1861, Turner Ashby Papers, Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA.

<sup>57</sup>Watson, *The Cavalier*, 123.

Virginia Governor Alexander Spotswood and a group of men who set out to explore the area beyond the Blue Ridge Mountains in 1716. Although Spotswood is perhaps best known for overseeing the execution of many of Blackbeard's pirates in Williamsburg, he conducted this expedition with the intention of securing the western portions of the colony for eventual settlement. Spotswood dubbed the sixty-three men who accompanied him "The Knights of the Golden Horse-shoe," and presented each of them with a miniature horseshoe embedded with jewels as a symbol of the expedition.<sup>58</sup> Caruthers' version of the event is one in which the Cavalier motif is present throughout, and Spotswood and his "knights" represent the flower of Southern chivalry.

Caruthers' choice to write a fictitious account of Spotswood's expedition reflects a trend away from reconciling the differences between Tidewater aristocrats and rustic frontiersmen. Rather than combine elements of both ideas in a single character as in *Horse-Shoe Robinson* or even *The Cavaliers of Virginia*, Spotswood and his travelers are seeking to subdue the wild frontier and claim it for their own. The names of the men who accompany Spotswood are also names associated with the First Families of Virginia, including Lee, Page, Randolph, Byrd, Carter, Wythe, Washington, Pendleton, Beverly, Bland, Fitzhugh, Dandridge, and Ludwell.<sup>59</sup> Caruthers dealt with the issue of

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<sup>58</sup>William Alexander Caruthers, *The Knights of the Golden Horse-shoe: A Traditionary Tale of the Cocked Hat Gentry in the Old Dominion* (1841; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), xix. The exact date of the expedition is disputed, but sources agree that it took place in August and September of 1716. Governor Spotswood personally led 63 men in an attempt to find a navigable pass through the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Shenandoah Valley. They reached what is now Swift Run Gap on September 5. For a more detailed account of the expedition, see Leonidas Dodson, *Alexander Spotswood: Governor of Colonial Virginia, 1710-1722* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1932), 238-240, and Walter Havinghurst, *Alexander Spotswood: Portrait of a Governor* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), 68-72.

<sup>59</sup>Watson, *The Cavalier*, 128. See also the list of the last names of Virginia's First Families in David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press,

Manifest Destiny, namely that it was an inevitability that the Virginia settlers would eventually replace the native Indians as the inhabitants of the Western lands. This sentiment is reflected in Spotswood's dialogue, "Just as sure as the sun shines tomorrow, I tell you, Dr. Blair, that I will lead an expedition over yonder blue mountains, and I will triumph over the French—the Indians, and the Devil, if he chooses to join forces with them."<sup>60</sup> In *The Knights of the Golden Horse-Shoe*, the reader witnesses the return to prominence of the original Cavaliers. Spotswood and his cohort are not a Tidewater-frontier amalgam, but these men are of the same mold as the Royalists who fled to the colonies after the English Civil War.

In addition to Caruthers, John Esten Cooke is credited with being a preeminent novelist whose characters were created in the Cavalier image. Cooke was a native Virginian, and was born in Winchester in the northern Shenandoah Valley on November 3, 1830.<sup>61</sup> Cooke spent his formative years in Virginia and briefly studied law under his father before becoming a professional writer. Unlike Caruthers, Cooke actually lived to see and participate in the Civil War, and many of his post-war writings focused on his experience. He served on J. E. B. Stuart's staff and was a relative of Stuart through marriage.<sup>62</sup> Cooke published articles, novels, and poems before the war began, and two of his works in particular, *The Virginia Comedians* (1854) and *Henry St. John* (1859)

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1989), 216 n.8. Havinghurst's biography claims that the party included "a dozen or more Virginia gentlemen," but mentions only John Fontaine, Robert Beverley, Captain Austin Smith, and Captain Jeremiah Clouder by name. The inclusion of so many influential Virginia gentlemen in one expedition is most likely Caruthers' use of artistic license.

<sup>60</sup>Caruthers, *Knights of the Golden Horse-shoe*, 28-29.

<sup>61</sup>John O. Beaty, *John Esten Cooke, Virginian* (1922; Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1965), 1. See also Manly, *Southern Literature*, 350-351, and Rubin, et al., *Southern Literature*, 93-99 and Emory M. Thomas, *Bold Dragoon: The Life of J. E. B. Stuart* (1986, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 94-95.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 75.

represented the culmination of his literary career. Both works feature Cavalier figures and focus on Virginian life before the American Revolution. Through Cooke's writings, the Cavalier reached his apotheosis as a flawed hero that is simultaneously mocked and praised.

*The Virginia Comedians* comprises the first two thirds of Cooke's Cavalier trilogy, being published in two volumes. Like many of the writers who came before him, Cooke struggles with deciding whether to romanticize Virginia's aristocracy or mock them. Cooke often took a nostalgic view of what he deemed to be Virginia's "golden age," but he claimed that *The Virginia Comedians* was meant to be an attack on the aristocracy.<sup>63</sup> Cooke's Cavalier figure in this novel is Champ Effingham, who is not necessarily the hero of the work but the character that most thoroughly encapsulates the attitudes of Virginia's gentry. His opinions are captured early on as he comments on the possibility of educating servants and slaves: "I now feel the truth of Will Shakespeare's words, that 'the age had grown so picked, the toe of the peasant comes near the heel of the courtier and galls his kibe,' ...follow these doctrines, and where will be our gentlemen?"<sup>64</sup> Effingham obviously sees the need to maintain a social hierarchy, which had allowed the gentry to assume positions of power. In this respect, *The Virginia Comedians* provides an accurate social commentary on the limits of the Cavalier lifestyle.

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<sup>63</sup>Watson, *The Cavalier*, 133.

<sup>64</sup>John Esten Cooke, *The Virginia Comedians; or, Old Days in the Old Dominion* (1854; New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1883), 35.

Cooke contrasts Effingham and the Virginia elites with enterprising men of lesser origin, another theme that appeared in earlier works. In this instance, Charlie Waters fulfills that role, as does the mysterious man in the red cloak, who is later identified to be Patrick Henry.<sup>65</sup> Waters and Henry represent the ideas of the common people, and in the years before the American Revolution, many colonists began to gather behind the plight of the common person in an attempt to build momentum that eventually became a rebellion. During the American Civil War, however, many of these “common men,” fought far away from home. The citizens of the Confederate States thus turned to the partisan officers who were embodying the Cavalier image in their dress, attitudes, and personalities, the Confederate partisans also had the support of the local populace who were often of a lower social status. The fact that Confederate citizens saw the partisans as their personal defenders overshadowed many of the social tensions present in antebellum Cavalier literature.

As much as Cooke claimed that *The Virginia Comedians* was a satire on the state’s aristocracy, it is clear that his primary focus was on developing the Cavalier characters in his novel. According to his biographer, the lower class characters are either “meagerly sketched, lacking the appearance of reality, or are portrayed merely in a subordinate relation to some superior person.”<sup>66</sup> Cooke had firsthand experience of the aristocratic way of life, and was intimately connected with some of the wealthiest families of the state. He believed that the period before the American Revolution was

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<sup>65</sup>Watson, *The Cavalier*, 134. See also Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee*, 137-138, 304, and Rubin, et al., *Southern Literature*, 98.

<sup>66</sup>Beaty, *John Esten Cooke*, 41.

the high point of Virginia's development, and he saw in the past fine ideals that were no longer existent in the 1850s.<sup>67</sup> Through his writing, Cooke perpetuated a standard that promoted Virginia as the preeminent state in the country, a state that had produced many of the nation's finest individuals, including many Founding Fathers and America's first president. As sectional tensions deepened, many Southerners who read Cooke did not necessarily believe in the Cavalier, but they realized the need for such a romanticized figure.<sup>68</sup>

Cooke's final pre-war novel, *Henry St. John*, served as the conclusion to his Cavalier trilogy. Published in 1859, it features many of the characters from *The Virginia Comedians*, including Champ Effingham and Patrick Henry. Henry St. John is the quintessential aristocrat, and comes across as the noblest manifestation of the Cavalier in all of Cooke's novels.<sup>69</sup> Henry St. John more closely resembles the Cavaliers of the English Civil War and the American Revolution in that he possesses a definite desire to display his martial prowess. By the end of the novel, Henry willingly joins the struggle for independence, exclaiming, "I'll myself cheerfully brace on my sword, and strike as hard blows as I'm able in the contest against this detestable tyranny."<sup>70</sup> Henry bridges the gap between the aristocracy and the yeomanry. Although he is clearly a gentleman, he readily joins the yeomen to resist a tyrant whose oppression crosses social lines.

Cooke also presents Charlie Waters as a fitting counterpart to Henry St. John.

Waters is a plebian democrat who accurately predicted that the political depredations of

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 33.

<sup>68</sup>Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee*, 304.

<sup>69</sup>Watson, *The Cavalier*, 141.

<sup>70</sup>John Esten Cooke, *Henry St. John, Gentlemen, of "Flower of Hundreds," in the County of Prince George, Virginia: A Tale of 1774-'75* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1859), 92.



the English government would eventually unite the yeomen and the Cavaliers into a formidable force for independence.<sup>71</sup> In *Henry St. John*, Cooke presents two separate characters united in a common cause rather than combining elements of aristocratic and frontier elements into a single character. In the years after the War of 1812, many Americans still viewed the social elites as representations of the British gentry. As the North became more industrialized, workers actively sought social improvement, including promoting public schools so their children could advance socially and stay out of the labor market.<sup>72</sup> Since much of the Southern economy was based on agricultural exports farmed by slaves, there were fewer opportunities to improve one's social position. Many slaveholding Southerners began to feel that the North, rather than the British, posed the greatest threat to their way of life. The unification of the Southern planters with the yeomen is encapsulated in the relationship between Charlie Waters and Henry St. John.

Cooke actively participated in many aspects of Southern aristocratic life. He was connected to some of the most influential Virginia families, and was a distant relative of author John Pendleton Kennedy through his mother, Maria Pendleton.<sup>73</sup> He recognized the aristocratic tradition of marriage between first cousins, which often occurred for purely social reasons. In Tidewater Virginia, many of the planter estates were so widely scattered that the only mutually marriageable young persons were likely to be relatives. In both *The Virginia Comedians* and *Henry St. John*, the male and female love interests

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<sup>71</sup>Watson, *The Cavalier*, 141.

<sup>72</sup>Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 542-543.

<sup>73</sup>Beaty, *John Esten Cooke*, 5.

are first cousins.<sup>74</sup> Cooke had firsthand experience with Virginia's elite, and as a result, his work captured the essence of the Cavalier attitude in a more complete way.

All of these authors attempted to highlight the Cavalier at a given point in time. Taken as a whole, their work traces how the Cavalier image changed over the course of the nineteenth century. In George Tucker's *The Valley of the Shenandoah*, the Cavalier is a figure who must cope with the fact that his way of life is slowly giving way to industrial, economic, and social change. This depiction reflected American attitudes toward the British in the wake of the War of 1812. John Pendleton Kennedy's works also addressed the dichotomy between the agrarian Cavaliers and the rise of industry, and Kennedy sought to combine elements of the Cavalier of English heritage with a frontier element in an attempt to create a kind of home-grown Cavalier. This frontier element was intended to make many American readers feel that they too shared in the Cavalier ideal, not simply the wealthy planters.

The later works of William Alexander Caruthers and John Esten Cooke represent what literary scholar Ritchie Devon Watson calls the "Apotheosis of the Cavalier."<sup>75</sup> Both writers set their works in earlier periods, either before or during the American Revolution. As a result, their Cavalier figures more closely resembled the original English Royalists and bore the names of historical figures. As the sectional crisis intensified, Southern planters understood that they needed the yeomanry's support to be able to challenge what they perceived to be a rising Northern political hegemony. By banding together, the aristocracy and the yeomanry could mutually defend their

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 71. For a discussion of cousin marriages, see Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 212-225.

<sup>75</sup>Watson, *The Cavalier*, 103.

collective honor against Northern oppression.<sup>76</sup> Caruthers and Cooke were both native Virginians, and both were in direct contact with many Southern aristocrats during the antebellum period. Southerners turned their attention to the North, and during the Civil War they made serious attempts to get the British to join the war on the side of the Confederacy. The Cavalier figure at the outset of the war was more closely linked to the British Royalists during the English Civil War, but it also represented the idealized aristocratic Southern planter.<sup>77</sup>

Through these fictitious works, Southerners were able to develop their version of the Cavalier hero. During the Civil War, while the main Confederate armies were off on distant battlefields, pro-Confederate Virginians turned to the Confederate partisans for their immediate protection. The Confederate partisan presence among white, pro-Confederate Southern civilians bolstered morale and helped sustain the Confederate war effort at home. Men like J. E. B. Stuart, John Singleton Mosby, Turner Ashby, John Imboden, and others were for many Virginians realized versions of the Cavalier ideal. Through their military exploits, they helped build an image that in many cases far exceeded their actual accomplishments. The presence of many writers, poets, and scholars among Union and Confederate forces ensured that the partisan image would be preserved in the post-bellum period as a version of the Cavalier image that arose in antebellum Southern literature.

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<sup>76</sup>Historian Bertram Wyatt-Brown argues that Southerners of all social classes developed a unified sense of honor in their whiteness. With the rise of the Republican Party and the abolitionist movement, Southerners began to resist “Black Republicanism” and those who promoted racial equality. See Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 66.

<sup>77</sup>Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 225.

#### 4. VIRGINIA CAVALIERS IN THE CIVIL WAR

With the firing on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, the Civil War officially began. Until that point, Virginia had not yet seceded from the Union. Despite repeated efforts from the Confederate states to convince the Old Dominion to join their cause, Virginia would not secede until it felt a direct threat from the North. Not even an impassioned speech by John Smith Preston, a secession commissioner from South Carolina and one of the South's premier orators, could persuade Virginia to break her ties with the Union.<sup>1</sup> Only after President Abraham Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 volunteer troops to suppress the rebellion in the South did Virginia decide to join the Confederate cause. The Virginia state legislature issued the ordinance of secession on April 17, 1861, and Governor John Letcher argued that Lincoln's actions were unconstitutional and summoned all of Virginia's volunteer regiments or companies to stand by for immediate action.<sup>2</sup> Across the state, men began to take up arms to defend their native soil from a foreign invader once more.

Notable soldiers who went on to establish themselves as successful partisan officers in the war were from the higher levels of Virginia society when the war began. Turner Ashby and the Ashby family in general considered themselves "exactly in the first class" in Fauquier County, Virginia, and emphasized an aristocratic lineage with a claim to Norman and Cavalier heritage.<sup>3</sup> Born in 1828, Turner did not particularly care

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<sup>1</sup>Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001), 73.

<sup>2</sup>William A. Link, *Roots of Secession: Slavery and Politics in Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 240.

<sup>3</sup>Paul Christopher Anderson, *Blood Image: Turner Ashby in the Civil War and the Southern Mind* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002), 27.

for formal schooling, having only completed a rudimentary education, but his sisters attended some of the best finishing schools in the state and his brother, Richard Ashby, spent a year at the prestigious Virginia Military Institute. With his father's death in 1835, however, the family experienced financial problems and Turner had to adopt a more prominent role as head of the household. By 1861, Turner had purchased his own house, but he remained heavily involved in his family's finances. A letter from Turner to his sister, Dora Ashby Moncure, indicated his responsibility for buying and selling the family slaves: "You mention the fact in your letter of Louisa, not yet having been taken off of Mas hands it certainly ought to be done at once, and I give you full authority to sign my name to any paper that the rest may agree upon guaranteeing her to any one of the Partys who may buy her at whatever price they fix upon...."<sup>4</sup> Turner understood his obligation to serve his state, but he continued to manage his family's estate during his service in the Confederate army.

Turner Ashby's actions reflected the presence of the Cavalier tradition in the South in the mid-nineteenth century. Many Southerners read the literature glorifying the Cavalier as a Southern aristocrat and sought to project that image onto the men who rushed to join the Confederate army.<sup>5</sup> As European immigrants flooded Northern cities and industrialization began to flourish, Southerners increasingly saw themselves as

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<sup>4</sup>Turner Ashby to Dora Moncure, January 14, 1861, Turner Ashby Papers, Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA.

<sup>5</sup>Historian Mark A. Weitz offers a differing contention on the origins of wartime Southern chivalry in his article "Shoot Them All: Chivalry, Honour, and the Confederate Army Officer Corps." He claims that Southern chivalry was more a "code for men of the upper class in civilian life" than a representation of British notions of chivalry associated with the Cavaliers. He defends this position by citing the massive loss of life that the many Confederate officers permitted. Weitz, however, does not go into detail regarding how Southern civilians reacted to these officers and how they cast them as chivalrous knights as a part of their public memory. See Weitz's article in D. J. B. Trim, ed., *The Chivalric Ethos and the Development of Military Professionalism* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2003), 321-347.

representative of an agrarian ideal that was slipping into the background despite the fact that much of the country relied on Southern crops. The Southern Cavalier was infinitely more poised than his competitor in social imagery, the grasping Yankee, and the Cavalier managed to resist the centrifugal explosion of modernization.<sup>6</sup> Several authors, most notably John Esten Cooke, rode along with the Confederate cavalry and chronicled their exploits in newspaper publications and poems while those who rode with Northern forces as noncombatants like Herman Melville and Walt Whitman wrote of their experiences combatting Confederate forces. After the Civil War, Cooke, Melville, Margaret Junkin Preston, William Gilmore Simms, Henry James and others cast “Southerners” and “veterans of the Confederate Army” in sympathetic roles in their publications.<sup>7</sup> It seemed almost inevitable that Southerners would develop a romanticized image of the war as poets, authors, and journalists rode side by side with the men they would later glorify.

Some of the Confederate cavalymen actively pursued their personal glorification by presenting an idealized Cavalier image in their dress and behavior. In 1861, Colonel J. E. B. Stuart embodied the physical image of the Cavalier officer. While on duty, Stuart wore a blue “undress” coat from his former army, brown velveteen pants faded from service in the saddle, a gray vest, a cravat, high cavalry boots, yellow gauntlets,

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<sup>6</sup>Anderson, *Blood Image*, 32. For an overview of the Cavalier’s developing image in the South, see William R. Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character* (1957; reprinted, Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1963), 67-176. For Virginia in particular, see Daniel W. Crofts, “Late Antebellum Virginia Reconsidered,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 107 (Summer 1999), 253-286.

<sup>7</sup>Ritchie Devon Watson, *The Cavalier in Virginia Fiction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 159, and Richard B. Harwell, “John Esten Cooke: Civil War Correspondent,” *Journal of Southern History* 19 (November 1953), 501-516.

French saber, Zouave cap, and revolver pistol.<sup>8</sup> Some Confederate partisans had entire companies of men devoted to presenting the Cavalier image. The men of Company D of John S. Mosby's Partisan Rangers were known as the "Dandies" for their elaborate dress and the quality of their horses.<sup>9</sup> The aristocratic equestrian defending his homeland was an endearing image to many white Southerners, an image shaped by antiquated practices and centered on a culture that revered horses and horsemanship.

The area of Virginia extending north from Charlottesville to the Maryland border and east of the Appalachian Mountains is known as "Hunt Country," and by the Civil War this area had a reputation for producing the finest horses and riders in the state.

Turner Ashby, a native of Fauquier County in the heart of Hunt Country, quickly became an expert rider and trainer of young horses, and his contemporaries knew him as the most daring and graceful horseman of his section.<sup>10</sup> Ashby participated in fox hunts and the knightly "tournament." The tournament was designed to reinforce the chivalric nature of horsemanship, and when young Turner emerged victorious he was given the opportunity to crown a young girl as "Queen of Love and Beauty."<sup>11</sup> Holding such romanticized events allowed Ashby and other Southern men to display their riding skills, and the tournament was an integral part of Southern military and societal culture.

Although a man could be chivalrous on his feet, he was always more imposing, more

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<sup>8</sup>Emory M. Thomas, *Bold Dragoon: The Life of J. E. B. Stuart* (1986; reprinted, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 84.

<sup>9</sup>James Ramage, *Gray Ghost: The Life of Col. John Singleton Mosby* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1999), 147, and Jeffrey D. Wert, *Mosby's Rangers: The True Adventures of the Most Famous Command of the Civil War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 257.

<sup>10</sup>Thomas A. Ashby, *Life of Turner Ashby* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), 32.

<sup>11</sup>This stands in direct opposition to Weitz's claim that Southern chivalry did not possess aspects of British chivalry. The tournament was an important event in Virginia society for centuries by the time the Civil War began. See Weitz, "Shoot Them All," 322-323.

picturesque, more graceful, more effective—and more representative of the *forces* of chivalry—on horseback.<sup>12</sup>

Southerners noted the differences between their horsemanship and that of Northerners even before the Civil War began. According to historian Emory Thomas, after only a few months at West Point, cadet J. E. B. Stuart had “disparaging things to say about the appearance and manners of Yankee women, the ludicrous performance of Yankee cadets on horseback, and the taint of free-soil-Yankeedom.”<sup>13</sup> Stuart was a native of Patrick County, Virginia, in the southwestern portion of the state, and learned to ride at a young age over expansive distances and through rough terrain. By the time the Civil War began, Stuart was a superb rider, and John Munson, one of Mosby’s men, wrote in his memoir that “There was no more picturesque, romantic nor gallant cavalry leader; no more typical, courageous soldier on horseback in either army, than ‘Jeb’ Stuart.”<sup>14</sup> Stuart, Mosby, Ashby, John D. Imboden, and a host of other young Southern men learned to ride young out of both privilege and necessity. Wealthier families were able to afford more and better horses, and these animals were the chief mode of transportation for day-to-day activities. People rode to the post office to get mail, to the still to get a drink, or up the road to talk politics, business, or family matters, and trips to funerals, weddings, and Sunday church were all riding events as well.<sup>15</sup> Since elite

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<sup>12</sup>Anderson, *Blood Image*, 26. For information on Ashby’s riding abilities, see James B. Avirett, *The Memoirs of General Turner Ashby and his Compeers* (Baltimore: Selby and Dulany, 1867), 22.

<sup>13</sup>Thomas, *Bold Dragoon*, 24.

<sup>14</sup>John W. Munson, *Reminiscences of a Mosby Guerrilla* (New York: Moffat, Yard and Company, 1906), 4.

<sup>15</sup>Anderson, *Blood Image*, 23-24.



white Southerners spent much of their time in the saddle, they were naturally able to form effective cavalry units with minimal formal military training.

Turner Ashby formed one of these early militia units with his brother and some of his friends in 1859. Ashby was named captain of the “Mountain Rangers,” though they were more of a social club of horse lovers than a militia cavalry unit.<sup>16</sup> During John Brown’s raid on Harper’s Ferry in October of 1859, Ashby’s Mountain Rangers rode north across three counties to join the action. Although they arrived too late to combat Brown’s force, they were assigned to guard the banks of the Potomac River until December, when Brown was executed. When Virginia seceded, Ashby and his troop left for Harper’s Ferry again to join the gathering Confederate forces.<sup>17</sup> Once they arrived, Ashby was quickly commissioned as a captain in the 7<sup>th</sup> Virginia Cavalry under colonel Angus W. McDonald.

As a Confederate cavalryman, Ashby represented the physical embodiment of the Cavalier ideal: an accomplished horse rider who combined acts of violence with chivalrous behavior in an honorable defense of his home.<sup>18</sup> In addition to his considerable riding skills, Ashby also represented another prominent feature of the Cavalier image; he was a religious man. Former Virginia governor and Confederate general Henry A. Wise remarked that Ashby and Stonewall Jackson “do all the praying

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 56.

<sup>17</sup>*War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, series 1, 53 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880), 2:861 and Ashby, *Life of Turner Ashby*, 61. John D. Imboden met Turner and Richard Ashby in Richmond on April 15, and wrote that at that time they were “commanders of volunteer companies of cavalry. See John D. Imboden, “Jackson at Harper’s Ferry in 1861,” in Robert Johnson and Clarence Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* 4 vols. (New York: Century Company, 1884), 1:111.

<sup>18</sup>In addition to Anderson’s treatment, see Frank Cunningham, *General Turner Ashby: Knight of the Confederacy* (San Antonio: Naylor, 1960).

for the whole Army of Northern Virginia.”<sup>19</sup> Jackson and Ashby were rising as archetypes of the Christian soldier. Both men combined religious adherence with a violent attitude towards the enemy, but many of Ashby’s men were quick to point out that Jackson “never blew a man’s brains out with his revolver.”<sup>20</sup> Ashby represented a sublime convergence of the idealized Southern aristocrat and the legendary gallant knight. Whether Ashby was the finest horseman in the South is irrelevant; the men who served under him thought he was. His image among Virginians and other Confederates overshadowed his war record, and his status as the “Black Knight of the Confederacy” followed him during his service and into posterity.<sup>21</sup>

At the start of the war, there was some competition between Ashby and J. E. B. Stuart. At age 32, Ashby was older than Stuart and a member of an affluent Virginia family, but Stuart had professional training from West Point and possessed requisite rank. Stonewall Jackson therefore determined to ignore the fact that Stuart’s commission was in infantry and consolidated all his cavalry companies under Stuart’s command, a decision that offended Ashby and his men.<sup>22</sup> Jackson’s decision had wounded Ashby’s pride, another mark of a Cavalier officer. Such reactions to the decisions of superior officers had also plagued Henry Lee in the American Revolution and Prince Rupert during the English Civil War. Despite Stuart’s promotion, Ashby received a consolation prize when, in July of 1861, he was promoted to lieutenant

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<sup>19</sup>Wise quoted in Cunningham, *General Turner Ashby*, 106. For religious attitudes in the Civil War period, see George Rable, *God’s Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010) and Randall M. Miller, et al., *Religion and the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>20</sup>Anderson, *Blood Image*, 14.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>22</sup>Thomas, *Bold Dragoon*, 68.

colonel of cavalry and was subordinate only to his regimental commander, colonel McDonald.

Ashby was one of the first Confederate cavalrymen to participate in partisan activities during the war, and his exploits quickly drew the attention of Southern newspapers. In 1861, his brother, Richard Ashby, was killed in action in a skirmish with Union forces near Kelly's Island, Virginia. The *New Orleans Daily Picayune* reported that Ashby's retaliation for his brother's death "was one of the most desperate engagements ever had."<sup>23</sup> Not only did the report indicate that Ashby killed several of the Union troopers personally, but the newspaper also emphasized Ashby's behavior during the fight. The article claimed that, "Captain Ashby laughed sardonically during the whole fight, shouting every few moments 'Avenge the blood of the Ashbys.'"<sup>24</sup> Ashby's apparent delight in violence and the death of his enemies helped to build his ferocious image beyond what may have actually occurred on the battlefield. Other Confederate cavalrymen received similar treatment from Southern newspapers, but Northern publications took a far more negative approach to Confederate partisan activities.

Ashby's exploits sparked a reaction in Northern newspapers that would become commonplace as the war continued. Reporting in April 1862 on the Battle of Winchester, Virginia, *Harper's Weekly* noted that Union pickets had sighted "rebel cavalry under the madcap Ashby about half a mile beyond them."<sup>25</sup> Ashby's reputation

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<sup>23</sup>"Gen. Johnston's Army. Account of its Operations," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 10, 1861.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>"The Battle of Winchester," *Harper's Weekly*, April 12, 1862.

had clearly preceded him in the North, making him a feared individual both in the Union ranks and among the Northern people. When Ashby was killed during the Battle of Port Republic two months later, Northern reports of his death indicated a sense of relief among Union reporters. A June 11<sup>th</sup> report from the *New York Times* read, “It is to be hoped that now that the force seems to be pretty well broken up, and its commander killed, we will hear no more of them or him.”<sup>26</sup> Ashby clearly represented a threat to the Union while he was alive, and the newspaper reports reflected his impact as a cavalry leader. Similar reports would follow as other Confederate cavalymen took up the role of the Cavalier hero that Ashby left behind.

Ashby’s death sent shockwaves throughout the South and the Confederate armies. Confederate general and fellow Virginia cavalry partisan John Imboden wrote that he carried the report from Stonewall Jackson indicating that Ashby had died until it was literally worn to tatters.<sup>27</sup> Even pro-Union newspapers took notice of his importance to the Confederate cause. A *San Francisco Bulletin* report of the fighting in which Ashby was involved largely focused on the encounters between Jackson’s forces and the numerically superior Federal forces in the Shenandoah Valley. The combination of Jackson’s “strong, brave, and hardy rebel force,” Ashby’s effective reconnaissance and screening movements, and the Union officers’ ability to “bunglingly keep their forces separate” led to Jackson’s successes in the Valley Campaign.<sup>28</sup> Ashby’s death is reported at the conclusion of the article, and it is clear that the Union journalists

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<sup>26</sup>“Ashby Dead at Last,” *The New York Times*, June 11, 1862.

<sup>27</sup>See John B. Imboden, “Stonewall Jackson in the Shenandoah,” in Johnson and Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 2:291-292.

<sup>28</sup>“Letters from St. Louis,” *The San Francisco Daily Bulletin*, July 21, 1862.

understood Ashby's preeminent role as a cavalryman and Confederate partisan fighter. According to the San Francisco paper, the killing of Jackson's coadjutor, "the courageous and enterprising cavalry partisan, was the heaviest blow he [Jackson] received from the Union armies."<sup>29</sup> Confederates memorialized Ashby's death in the South, and his image would remain a lasting representation of Southern manhood and chivalry.<sup>30</sup>

By the time of Ashby's death, his image was secure in the minds of many Confederates. His conduct during the war had helped to establish his reputation as one of the finest officers in the Confederate cavalry, and postwar writers reflected on his service. Reverend James B. Avirett, who served as the chaplain for Ashby's cavalry, wrote in his 1867 memoir of Ashby that he was, "of all the Southern braves who yielded up their lives, a Nation's Sacrifice, the Cavalier without fear and without reproach."<sup>31</sup> Ashby's loss was a blow to Confederate morale both in the military ranks and in the general population. Several people visited the spot where he fell near Harrisonburg, Virginia, and his funeral procession drew thousands of mourners. Jackson himself, reporting Ashby's death, said "...as a partisan officer I never knew his superior. His daring was proverbial, his tone of character heroic, his power of endurance incredible, and his sagacity almost intuitive in divining the purposes and movements of the enemy."<sup>32</sup> Ashby's success and the rise of similar partisan leaders by 1862 led Union

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Anderson, *Blood Image*, 223-233.

<sup>31</sup>Avirett, *Memoirs of General Turner Ashby*, v-viii.

<sup>32</sup>Cunningham, *General Turner Ashby*, 174.

President Abraham Lincoln to call for guidelines to distinguish between conventional cavalrymen and partisan fighters.

Following Ashby's death, both sides attempted to categorize guerrillas, partisans, and highwaymen within the rules of armed conflict. Some Southern papers began to advocate guerrilla warfare and urged the public to assist in partisan activities. For example, a reprint from the Granada, Mississippi, *Appeal* stated, "Even in the absence of an army, it is within the power of the citizens of the country, by a judicious and well-organized system of ambuscades and guerrilla warfare, to harass, terrify, and hold the enemy at bay."<sup>33</sup> Confederate goals were to turn back the Yankees or make the Union armies pay for every piece of Southern territory they occupied. Many Southerners supported this attitude of resistance both in the armed services and in the general population, and partisan and guerrilla activities served as a link between the two groups. Confederate officials attempted to find some way to codify the partisans' actions so they would be consistent with the goals of the Confederate army.<sup>34</sup>

Almost two months before Ashby's death, the Confederate government passed the Partisan Ranger Act in an attempt to harness the potential of irregular warfare for the Confederate war effort. Passed on April 21, 1862, the act stated that the president had the authority to commission officers to form bands of partisan rangers, and that these rangers, "after being regularly received in the service, shall be entitled to the same pay, rations, and quarters during the term of service, and be subject to the same regulations as

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<sup>33</sup>*Appeal* quoted in "Further Southern News," *San Francisco Daily Bulletin*, July 30, 1862.

<sup>34</sup>For a discussion on defining partisans, see Robert Mackey, *The Uncivil War: Irregular Warfare in the Upper South, 1861-1865* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 6-7.

other soldiers.”<sup>35</sup> Since Ashby was already a Confederate officer by the time the act had passed, it did not directly apply to him, but other Virginia cavalymen quickly organized partisan units under the act’s protection. One of Ashby’s subordinates, John D. Imboden, formed the first unit officially organized under the Partisan Ranger Act.<sup>36</sup> Imboden, a former legislator from Staunton, Virginia, began his Civil War service as an artillery commander, but organized his partisan rangers in order to operate more independently from Jackson’s army. While Imboden and others were forming official Confederate partisan units, the Union government was trying to establish its own guidelines for dealing with irregular warfare.

In 1863, Abraham Lincoln approved the U.S. War Department’s issue of General Orders No. 100, which provided rules and guidelines for warfare. One of its most important provisions included a section dealing with the appropriate definitions and treatment of partisans and guerrillas. According to G.O. No. 100, “Partisans are soldiers armed and wearing the uniform of their army, but belonging to a corps which acts detached from the main body for the purpose of making inroads into the territory occupied by the enemy.”<sup>37</sup> This meant that legally, partisans were members of the regular army acting as detached units. Enemies not falling under this category could be

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<sup>35</sup>“The Partisan Ranger Act,” April 21, 1862, in *War of the Rebellion*, series 4, 4 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1900), 1:1095.

<sup>36</sup>Spencer C. Tucker, *Brigadier General John D. Imboden: Confederate Commander in the Shenandoah* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003), 72.

<sup>37</sup>Francis Lieber was a law professor and former Prussian military officer who came the United States in 1827 and taught at South Carolina College (now the University of South Carolina) for 20 years. For a full transcript of the Lieber Code, see *War of the Rebellion*, series 3, 5 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1899), 2:301-309.

classified as guerrillas, highwaymen, or pirates. Those individuals were not part of the organized military and as such were not entitled to the same privileges as partisans:

“Men, or squads of men, who commit hostilities, whether by fighting, or through inroads for destruction or plunder, or by raids of any kind, without commission, without being part and portion of the organized hostile army...are not entitled to the privileges of prisoners of war, but shall be treated summarily as highway robbers or pirates.”<sup>38</sup> Many Confederate cavalymen would fall under this category as the war progressed, and their Union designation would serve to enrich their image in the South and to frustrate their Union opponents.

One of the men who obscured military identities by *combining* elements of organized partisan activity with guerrilla warfare was John Singleton Mosby. Mosby was born in Powhatan County, Virginia, in 1833 and was well educated, having attended the University of Virginia and practiced law before the war began. When he enlisted as a private in the Confederate Army, he dreamed of leading a fast-moving, hard-hitting band of partisan rangers.<sup>39</sup> Mosby began to develop his reputation as an adjutant in the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Cavalry and a scout for J. E. B. Stuart. Mosby recognized Stuart’s Cavalier image, saying that he thought Stuart looked like a Greek god or a hero from a romantic novel come to life.<sup>40</sup> Mosby helped Stuart to orchestrate his famous “Ride Around McClellan” during the Peninsula Campaign of 1862. After completing his circuit of the

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., Mackey, *The Uncivil War*, 6-9.

<sup>39</sup>Virgil Carrington Jones, *Gray Ghosts and Rebel Raiders* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1956), 48.

<sup>40</sup>John S. Mosby, “Personal Recollections of General J. E. B. Stuart,” *Munsey’s Magazine* 49(April 1913): 35-36. See also Ramage, *Gray Ghost*, 36, and Virgil Carrington Jones, *Ranger Mosby* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944). For a work on the 43<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Cavalry during the war, see Wert, *Mosby’s Rangers*.



Union army, Mosby wrote to his wife Pauline, saying, “I returned yesterday with General Stuart from the grandest scout of the war. I not only helped to execute it, but was the first one who conceived and demonstrated that it was practicable.”<sup>41</sup> Thus Mosby demonstrated his ability as a scout, and Stuart relied heavily on him for reconnaissance and scouting information.

In the winter of 1862 as Stuart was preparing for his “Dumfries Raid,” Mosby requested to stay behind with a nine-man detail. When Stuart agreed, it marked the beginning of twenty-eight months of raids, ambushes, and attacks against Union forces in a region that stretched from the outskirts of Washington, across the Blue Ridge Mountains into the Shenandoah Valley and beyond the Potomac River into Maryland.<sup>42</sup> Mosby did not originally intend to form an official partisan ranger unit, but he expressed a desire to conduct independent operations nonetheless. He wrote that, “In general my purpose was to threaten and harass the enemy on the border and in this way compel him to withdraw troops from his front to guard the line of the Potomac and Washington. This would greatly diminish his offensive power.”<sup>43</sup> Despite not having a formal military education, Mosby understood that small-scale raiding operations had the potential to equalize the North’s superior numbers by forcing the invading army to leave larger garrisons to protect supply and communication lines.

One of Mosby’s childhood heroes was Francis Marion, and Mosby had read Parson Weems’ biography of the Swamp Fox as a boy. Mosby emulated Marion’s

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<sup>41</sup>Mosby to Pauline Mosby, June 16, 1862, in John S. Mosby, *The Memoirs of Colonel John S. Mosby*. (1917; reprinted, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), 119.

<sup>42</sup>Wert, *Mosby’s Rangers*, 33-34, and John S. Mosby, “A Bit of Partisan Service,” in Johnson and Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 3:148.

<sup>43</sup>Mosby, *Memoirs*, 149-150.

actions when he formed the 43<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Cavalry in 1863, henceforward known as “Mosby’s Rangers.” He and his men became daring and effective raiders due to their ability to strike quickly and seemingly vanish into the countryside before their enemies.<sup>44</sup> Mosby wanted his troops to adopt a Cavalier image, and made a concentrated effort to get his troopers to dress appropriately. Although the Dandies of Company D best represented the Cavalier image, most of Mosby’s Rangers were young, intelligent, smart-looking soldiers with clean uniforms, ornate saddles and bridles, and splendid horses that they rode with accomplished familiarity. They wore high cavalry boots, gray or blue trousers, gray uniform jackets, and gray felt or slouch hats, some with ostrich plumes, reflecting the legendary English Cavaliers.<sup>45</sup> From the time of their first official raid on March 8, 1863, Mosby’s men quickly developed a reputation for quick and effective raids with minimal losses.

The Virginia partisans adopted similar dress styles that mirrored the Cavalier court fashions during the English Civil War. Their personal uniforms usually included a hat with an ostrich or peacock plume, embroidered jacket, high cavalry boots, dress saber, pistol or other sidearm, and sometimes a jacket or overcoat.<sup>46</sup> By wearing these elaborate uniforms, the partisan officers helped create a larger-than-life image that defined them as chivalrous knights who still fought for the common man. Many of the men added to their image by surrounding themselves with other eccentric individuals. Both J. E. B. Stuart and John Mosby had in their retinue Prussian military officers who

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<sup>44</sup>Ramage, *Gray Ghost*, 19.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>46</sup>Mosby, *Memoirs*, 337; Anderson, *Blood Image*, 120; Thomas, *Bold Dragoon*, 131.

had come to join the Confederacy as soldiers of fortune. These men represented another link between the Virginia Cavaliers and the European military landscape. Although Confederates saw themselves as separate from Europeans, they still adopted numerous facets of European military tradition.

Mosby operated primarily in northern Virginia with his partisans, and became so effective and persistent that the area of operations became known as “Mosby’s Confederacy.” It included Turner Ashby’s hometown in Fauquier County and areas often under Union control throughout the war. Historian Daniel Sutherland wrote that, in Culpeper County, Virginia, Federal pickets often stuck close to their camps, “fearful not only of Confederate pickets but of Rebel partisans, for Culpeper was part of Mosby’s domain.”<sup>47</sup> Mosby and his men began to blur the line between partisan and guerrilla, often operating in civilian clothes or stolen Union uniforms. A report from the *New York Times* in 1863 indicated that, during a raid, “these guerrillas were in full Federal uniform...and are ready at all times to take advantage of circumstances.”<sup>48</sup> Using these tactics, Mosby became a mainstay in Virginia and a constant threat to Union advances.

Mosby and his men became such a threat that many Northern newspapers resorted to publishing false obituaries in an attempt to ease Union minds and undermine Confederate morale. In Utah, the Salt Lake City *Deseret News* reported in 1863 that, “The noted guerrilla leader, Mosby, it is announced, died recently at a farm house just beyond the Bull Run Mountains, from wounds received in a late encounter with Federal

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<sup>47</sup>Daniel E. Sutherland, *Seasons of War: The Ordeal of a Confederate Community, 1861-1865* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 360.

<sup>48</sup>“The War in Virginia,” *New York Times*, December 12, 1863.

skirmishers.”<sup>49</sup> Mosby quickly became well known among the Union soldiers he and his band consistently harassed. Indeed, historian Virgil Jones asserts that, by 1864, Mosby’s name was the name most familiar to the tongues of Federal privates, and whenever the irregulars struck, the cry up and down the line was identical: “Mosby!”<sup>50</sup> This type of success had an effect on the white Southern population, and many people recognized that Mosby’s actions boosted Confederate morale and were integral to the war effort. Later in the war, many individuals thought that Mosby and the partisans could reverse the Confederacy’s fortunes single-handedly.<sup>51</sup> Mosby may have helped to create his Cavalier image, but the pro-Confederate population sustained and expanded that image as the war progressed.

Despite the prevalence of false death reports in Union newspapers, Mosby in fact survived the war. Unlike other partisan bands, Mosby did not formally surrender his unit; they simply disbanded and went back home. By the war’s end, Mosby had endeared himself to his men and many veterans looked on him fondly. John W. Munson, one of Mosby’s Rangers, echoed this sentiment in his memoirs: “No truer, braver, or better soldier in all the South, or in all the North, ever unbuckled his weapons and laid them down for peace, than John S. Mosby, Commander of the Partisan Rangers of Virginia.”<sup>52</sup> Northern publications also recognized Mosby’s position in the South during the war’s later stages. *Harper’s Weekly* reported, “this rebel Colonel has been the

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<sup>49</sup>“Items of Southern News,” *Deseret News*, September 9, 1863. See also an 1865 death report in “From Sheridan’s Army,” *New York Times*, January 1, 1865 and “From Sheridan’s Army,” *New York Times*, January 29, 1865.

<sup>50</sup>Jones, *Gray Ghosts and Rebel Raiders*, 237-8.

<sup>51</sup>Daniel E. Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict: The Decisive Role of Guerrillas in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 269.

<sup>52</sup>Munson, *Reminiscences*, 273.

centre of a great deal of fabulous romance during the war.”<sup>53</sup> By the end of the war, Mosby’s image in the Southern mind was secure, but his post-bellum life would affect this image in a different fashion.

Other native Virginians formed partisan units, though none had as much success as Mosby’s Rangers. Before Mosby rose to fame, John Imboden conducted successful operations with his 1<sup>st</sup> Partisan Rangers across Virginia and into West Virginia. His first major target was the Baltimore & Ohio (B&O) Railroad, which carried Union men and supplies into Virginia.<sup>54</sup> Railroads became a common target for Confederate partisans, as attacking them not only created logistical problems for the Union army but such strikes also allowed the rangers to confiscate Union goods and supplies. Some men chose to join partisan outfits rather than serve in the Confederate army for the chance to capture Union goods alone. Unionist Constance Woolson wrote a brief poem in 1862 that highlighted Imboden’s effectiveness,

I was awake that morning when someone came through the pass,  
Riding like mad down the road, ‘twas Farmer Snyder’s Lass;  
Bareback she rode, she had no hat, she hardly stopped to say;  
“Imboden’s men are coming, they’re marching down this way,  
I’m out to warn the neighbors, he isn’t a mile behind,  
He seizes all the horses, every horse he can find.  
Imboden, Imboden the raider, and Imboden’s terrible men,  
With Bowie knives and pistols are marching down the glen.”<sup>55</sup>

As the war went on, the Confederate army appreciated the partisans’ abilities to furnish stolen Union goods to make up for increasing supply shortages.

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<sup>53</sup>“The Rebel Colonel Mosby,” *Harper’s Weekly*, January 21, 1865.

<sup>54</sup>Tucker, *John D. Imboden*, 95.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, 106, and Harold R. Woodward, Jr., *Defender of the Valley: Brigadier General John Daniel Imboden C. S. A.* (Berryville, VA: Rockbridge Publishing Company, 1996), 66.

The partisans also needed stolen goods to maintain themselves in action. In the Confederate army, each cavalryman was expected to provide his own mount, and if his horse was killed in combat, he either had to steal another one or take one from a captured Union cavalryman. Partisan units also utilized stolen Union weapons. John Mosby remarked, “We used neither carbines nor sabers, but all the men carried a pair of Colt pistols. We did not pay for them but the U.S. Government did.”<sup>56</sup> Confederate citizens began to sensationalize the partisans’ military exploits, adding another layer to the developing Cavalier image. In one stretch with thirty men, Mosby captured at least 118 sutler and army wagons, adventures dramatized on the stage in Alexandria as “The Guerrilla; or, Mosby in Five Hundred Sutler-wagons.”<sup>57</sup> As the partisans became more successful, Union officials were forced to find new ways to successfully deal with the threat they posed to the war effort.

The partisans also had a psychological effect on their Union enemies, which manifested itself in exaggerated reports in Union newspapers. For instance, one report from the *Philadelphia Enquirer* published in the *Deseret News* claimed that the Confederates had “344,000 veterans reported in the field.”<sup>58</sup> Union reports continuously overestimated Confederate strength throughout the war, and the added partisan presence in Union-occupied territory further exaggerated the Confederate numbers. The Union began to urge occupied Southerners to combat this guerrilla threat, and many

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<sup>56</sup>Mosby, *Memoirs*, 152.

<sup>57</sup>Ramage, *Gray Ghost*, 105, and Carla Waal, “The First Original Confederate Drama: *The Guerrillas*,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 70 (October 1962): 459-467. Waal argues that the drama became so popular because it drew from many events and attitudes that were familiar to the audience.

<sup>58</sup>“Strength of the Confederate Armies: 344,000 Veterans Reported in the Field,” *Deseret News*, April 6, 1864.

newspapers reported that the common people had actually helped to reduce the guerrilla presence in parts of the South. The *Deseret News* article concluded that “There is not a single [guerrilla] squad in Kentucky, East and Middle Tennessee, Northern Alabama, or Northern Georgia” and that “The people themselves have rid the country of these infernal murderers and robbers in this section.”<sup>59</sup> The partisan presence in the South and in Union-occupied territory had reduced the Union Army to relying on the help of the common people, much as the Southern partisans relied on the same population to support the Southern war effort.

In addition to garnering popular support for combating guerrillas, Union forces also applied organized military tactics to limit the threat of irregulars in occupied territory. Early in the war, in an area of increased guerrilla activity, a punitive expedition would be launched with the intent to find the partisans or punish the local community for harboring them.<sup>60</sup> These efforts, however, rarely resulted in the reduction of the guerrilla threat, and Union forces as a result adopted more advanced strategies to combat partisans. Union troops began to conduct operations similar to those of the irregulars they were pursuing. They received orders to live off the land and destroy anything of value to the Confederate war effort, including crops, livestock, and the very homes and families of the partisans themselves. The Union troops sought satisfaction for the hardships of the campaign and revenge for the guerrilla attacks.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Mackey, *The Uncivil War*, 53.

<sup>61</sup>Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict*, 240.

Despite the Federals' best efforts, the partisan threat continued to siphon resources from the Union well into the later stages of the war.

The Union's renewed effort to eliminate the partisan threat meant reassigning additional troops away from their original army groups in order to protect supply chains and communication lines. Mosby, Ashby, Stuart, Imboden and others repeatedly tore up railway lines, stole food and supplies, captured and killed pickets, and generally harassed Union forces as they advanced southward. Union forces began relying on state and local militia units to protect nearby rail lines in an effort to stem the partisan and guerrilla attacks. A report from Chicago published in the *San Francisco Bulletin* claimed that the Ohio state militia had been called up in response to John Hunt Morgan's raids and was required to dedicate one month's service "for the purpose of garrisoning the posts and protecting the railways where guerrillas are roaming."<sup>62</sup> In disputed territory such as northern Virginia and eastern West Virginia, Mosby, Ashby, and Imboden's men repeatedly attacked areas that the Union army left lightly defended. The Union Army even formed specialized "anti-guerrilla battalions" to help combat partisan incursions. The presence of these special units indicated that the Union viewed partisans and guerrillas as separate from the conventional army.<sup>63</sup>

From a military perspective, the partisans were very innovative in how they organized their forces and conducted their raids. Matthew Forney Steele, an Alabamian and U.S. cavalryman who served in the Spanish-American War, wrote in his *American*

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<sup>62</sup>"The Eastern News: Dispatches of Saturday Night and Sunday," *San Francisco Bulletin*, April 18, 1864. Union General Benjamin F. Kelley created a combined system of blockhouses positioned along rail lines and armored trains in an effort to keep supply lines open against partisan attacks. See Mackey, *The Uncivil War*, 105-106.

<sup>63</sup>Mackey, *The Uncivil War*, 55-62.



*Campaigns* that Ashby was “the cavalry leader who first...in any war since Napoleon’s time used his squadrons right.”<sup>64</sup> The leading Virginia partisans, such as Ashby, Mosby, and Imboden, did not have formal military training, and as such they were unencumbered by the methods of thinking that accompanied a West Point education. Partisan leaders did not simply command cavalry units, but combined elements of infantry and artillery in their force as well. Turner Ashby’s kinsman, Thomas A. Ashby, wrote, “If Turner Ashby had the slightest trace of military genius, it was only shown in his methods of combining the use of artillery with cavalry in the Valley Campaign.”<sup>65</sup> The presence of artillery within the partisan units was especially advantageous in that it augmented the unit’s offensive power. John Imboden and John Mosby both utilized artillery in their respective partisan forces.<sup>66</sup> The addition of light artillery to smaller, mobile cavalry units allowed the partisans to maintain their advantage in mobility while increasing their effectiveness against superior forces.

The partisans also mirrored Native American fighting styles and justified guerrilla warfare by tapping into a prominent theme in the Southern mindset: the noble savage.<sup>67</sup> Colonists like Francis Marion had seen this fighting style firsthand, and adopted elements of Indian tactics in his campaign against the British. While many Southerners saw Indians as uncivilized, primitive brutes, others admired them for their bravery and attached notions of chivalry to the savage in combat. In the Civil War, no

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<sup>64</sup>Matthew Forney Steele, *American Campaigns*, 2 vols. (Washington: Byron S. Adams, 1909), 1:230. Taken from Questia Online, <http://www.questia.com/library/book/american-campaigns-vol-1-by-matthew-forney-steele.jsp> (Accessed May 9, 2010).

<sup>65</sup>Ashby, *Life of Turner Ashby*, 241.

<sup>66</sup>Tucker, *John D. Imboden*, 88.

<sup>67</sup>Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict*, 29.

Confederate warriors better fit this pattern than the followers of Turner Ashby. His men epitomized old-school partisan warfare, the romanticized Marion school, and Ashby's personal appearance did not seem decidedly white or Southern to his contemporaries. Many noted that Ashby had an unnaturally dark complexion, and when he competed in tournaments he often painted his face, rode an unbroken horse without bridle or saddle, and chose the name "Knight of Hiawatha."<sup>68</sup> All of these actions were certainly not features of the Cavalier image, but they did make the connection between Ashby's brand of partisan warfare and Indian fighting methods.

Some partisans bucked military tradition by discarding cavalry sabers and adopting more modern side arms. John Mosby made sure his men were outfitted with Colt pistols, saying, "I think my command reached the highest point of efficiency as cavalry because they were well armed with six-shooters, and their charges combined the effect of fire and shock."<sup>69</sup> Since the partisans were often outnumbered, they had to rely on the element of surprise and superior firepower to offset their numerical inferiority. Like the English Cavaliers before them, Mosby's men charged the enemy at full speed in a nontraditional formation that resembled a horse race or an Indian attack.<sup>70</sup> The shock of the charge, the resulting confusion, and the superior firepower in close combat often combined to win the day for the Confederate partisans. As influential and effective as these units were, they generated backlash from both Union and Confederate officers.

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid., Ashby, *Life of Turner Ashby*, 35, and Avirett, *Memoirs of General Turner Ashby*, 38.

<sup>69</sup>Mosby, *Memoirs*, xi.

<sup>70</sup>Ramage, *Gray Ghost*, 103.

In addition to increasing garrison troop numbers to guard against partisans, the Union commanders designated certain conventional army units for the purpose of hunting and capturing guerrilla bands. Colonel Charles Russell Lowell and his 2<sup>nd</sup> Massachusetts Cavalry attempted to disperse, capture, or destroy Mosby's Rangers in 1863.<sup>71</sup> Although they enjoyed some success in checking Mosby's advances, Lowell did not see this duty as glorious or even honorable. He and his men quickly became tired of chasing the Gray Ghost and yearned for some "real cavalry fighting" in the field.<sup>72</sup> Clearly Lowell and his troops did not see partisan fighting as the appropriate task for organized cavalry; they preferred instead to scout for the army's conventional units. Many Confederate officers like Braxton Bragg and Richard S. Ewell contended that the partisan cavalry would be better suited for conventional army duty rather than operating as independent forces. These men were both educated at West Point and viewed the partisan leaders as out-of-place aristocrats who would be better off watching from the sidelines while the professionals fought.<sup>73</sup> Although partisans were an important part of the Confederate war effort, Southern leaders had a difficult time deciding their proper role within the Confederate military system.

The allure of partisan warfare was beginning to drain men from the conventional Confederate armies. Robert E. Lee routinely complained to Jefferson Davis about the continued desertions that were slowly crippling the Army of Northern Virginia.<sup>74</sup> Unlike

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<sup>71</sup>James M. McPherson, *This Mighty Scourge: Perspectives on the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 151. For information on Union cavalry shortages, see Mackey, *The Uncivil War*, 143-144, 166-169.

<sup>72</sup>McPherson, *This Mighty Scourge*, 151.

<sup>73</sup>Weitz, "Shoot Them All," 325.

<sup>74</sup>Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict*, 238.

in the American Revolution, Confederate partisan and guerrilla forces often did not operate as attachments of the conventional armies and did not necessarily seek to advance the coordinated Confederate cause. Their actions against Union forces also generated a series of Union reprisals that were steadily increasing in brutality. Additionally, many felt that the image of a Confederate military force that relied on scraggly guerrillas could not but tarnish Southern ideals of honor and manhood, perhaps even damage efforts to woo European support for the war.<sup>75</sup> Beneath the layers of chivalry and nobility that white Southerners applied to their Cavalier heroes, the partisan war was often a vicious contest that frequently endangered civilians. As the war progressed, the Confederate government found the partisans to be increasingly difficult to control.

Several Confederate military and political leaders decided that the partisans did not conduct war in the proper fashion. Bragg, Ewell, Davis, and many of their fellow classically educated military officers believed that the Napoleonic tactics they had learned at West Point represented the honorable way to fight, and that guerrilla tactics were somehow cowardly or dishonorable. Toward the end of the war, Robert E. Lee echoed Bragg's sentiments and thought that the partisans should be absorbed into the Confederate army.<sup>76</sup> Under pressure from Lee and others, the Confederate Congress repealed the Partisan Ranger Act in 1864, and only two partisan groups, Mosby's

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<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 100.

<sup>76</sup>Jones, *Gray Ghosts and Rebel Raiders*, 214. Lee advocated dispatching officers from the partisan service to help organize the Southern populace to defend themselves from Union attacks, but he prohibited these officers from "receiving any absentees from the army or persons liable to enrollment in the general service." See Lee to James Seddon, August 9, 1864, in *War of the Rebellion*, series 1, 53 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1893), 43:990-991.

Rangers and McNeill's Rangers, could continue organized operations.<sup>77</sup> By 1864, however, the Confederates were under pressure from the encroaching Union armies, and many partisans refused to partake in the drudgery associated with the regular Confederate Army. Even without the endorsement of the Partisan Ranger Act, partisan bands continued to operate as they had in the past.<sup>78</sup> The partisans enjoyed the freedom of operating independently and bridging the gap between the Southern military forces and its people.<sup>79</sup>

This willingness to abandon the conventional army in favor of partisan operations contributed to high levels of desertion in several Confederate armies. On February 24, 1865, Robert E. Lee wrote to then Secretary of War John C. Breckinridge in order to call his attention to the “alarming number of desertions that are now occurring in the army.”<sup>80</sup> Lee indicated that the deserters were motivated by a desire to return home to defend their families from Union home guard units. He also claimed that the deserters “generally take their arms with them,” possibly to use in guerrilla units that operated near their homes.<sup>81</sup> As partisan officers successfully recruited men to strengthen their forces, they drew manpower away from conventional units, thereby

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<sup>77</sup>John Hanson “Hanse” McNeill was a Confederate officer from Moorfield, Virginia (now West Virginia). McNeill and his independent command served under John Imboden for much of the war, along with other partisan units under Harry Gilmor and Elijah White. McNeill died of wounds sustained in a fight near Mount Jackson, Virginia, on November 10, 1864. See Roger Delauter, *McNeill's Rangers* (Lynchburg, VA: H. E. Howard, 1986).

<sup>78</sup>Jones, *Gray Ghosts and Rebel Raiders*, 214.

<sup>79</sup>The decision to repeal the Partisan Ranger Act demonstrated a split between military and political opinions in the Confederacy. By 1864, Confederate President Jefferson Davis endorsed irregular warfare and believed it was a valuable part of the Confederate war effort. Some works that demonstrate the Confederate government's support for irregular warfare include W.B. Years, *The Confederate Congress* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1960), 75, and Mackey, *The Uncivil War*, 72, 75.

<sup>80</sup>Lee to John C. Breckinridge, February 24, 1865, in *War of the Rebellion*, series 1, 46:1254.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid. See also Mark A. Weitz, *More Damning than Slaughter: Desertion in the Confederate Army* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 280-283.

exacerbating the Confederacy's severe numerical inferiority. Additionally, since deserters were not to be treated as prisoners of war if captured, the fact that they often joined partisan units called the partisans' legitimacy into question. Although the partisans hampered the Confederate war effort in this respect, they were committed to defending their homes and fighting for what they believed to be a worthy cause.

Some Confederate cavalymen made a positive impression on foreign officers who came to witness the Civil War. Colonel Arthur James Lyon Fremantle of the British Coldstream Guards kept a journal of his three-month trip through the Confederate States in 1863, including his experience at the Battle of Gettysburg. Fremantle developed a favorable opinion of the Confederate general officers, saying that, "All the Generals—[Joseph] Johnston, Bragg, [Leonidas] Polk, [William J.] Hardee, [James] Longstreet, and Lee—are thorough soldiers, and their Staffs are composed of gentlemen of position and education, who have now been trained into excellent and zealous Staff officers."<sup>82</sup> Fremantle was particularly impressed with J. E. B. Stuart, who by this time had gained international fame for his exploits as Robert E. Lee's cavalry chief. Of Stuart, Fremantle wrote,

He is a good-looking, jovial character, exactly like his photographs. He has certainly accomplished wonders, and done excellent service in his peculiar style of warfare. He is a good and gallant soldier, though he sometimes incurs ridicule, by his harmless affectation and peculiarities. The other day he rode through a Virginian town, his horse covered with garlands of roses. He also departs considerably from the severe simplicity of dress adopted by other Confederate generals; but no one can deny that he is the right man in the right place.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>Sir Arthur James Lyon Fremantle, *Three Months in the Southern States: April-June, 1863* (New York: John Bradburn, 1864), 240-241.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, 286.

Clearly, Fremantle saw Stuart as a Cavalier figure, an image that Stuart actively nourished and the Confederate populace relished.

Apart from foreign perspectives, the Confederate Cavalier image also benefitted from the presence of poets, journalists, and newspaper editors who sought to convey the glory of warfare to the Southern people. For example, John Esten Cooke, who, as we have seen, achieved popularity before the war for works such as *The Virginia Comedians* and *Henry St. John*, rode as a member of Stuart's staff. In fact, Cooke was the first cousin of Stuart's wife, Flora Cooke Stuart, and Jeb was the subject of many of Cooke's wartime publications. Cooke wrote "The Song of the Rebel" in late 1862 as a tribute to "our band of heroes," and Stuart holds a prominent place in the Confederate pantheon, "And *Stuart* with his sabre keen/A floating plume appears, /Surrounded by his gallant band/Of Southern cavaliers."<sup>84</sup> The wartime Southern mind, in an attempt to glorify combat and fashion a new generation of martial heroes, clung to the image that Stuart, Ashby, Mosby, Imboden, and others created and carried it into the postwar years.

Other poets sought to memorialize the Confederate cavalymen during the war by romanticizing their image to fit the mold of righteous knights. Margaret Junkin Preston, a Pennsylvania native, wrote some of the most popular poems of the Civil War era, many of which appeared in post-war Southern poetry collections. She had a direct tie to the Confederate war effort; she was Stonewall Jackson's sister-in-law by virtue of his

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<sup>84</sup>John Esten Cooke, "The Song of the Rebel," December, 1862, quoted in Thomas, *Bold Dragoon*, 183-184, and Esther Parker Ellinger, *The Southern War Poetry of the Civil War* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1918), 154.

marriage to her sister, Elinor.<sup>85</sup> Among Preston's poems, several focus on Confederate officers as Cavalier heroes. Following Turner Ashby's death in 1862, she published "Dirge for Ashby," a poem that combined elements of Confederate nationalism and romanticism. Since she was Stonewall Jackson's relative, she knew that her writings were more likely to be published if they supported the Confederacy, and it was beneficial to her career to write poetry for his fallen cavalry commander.<sup>86</sup> Preston continued to publish works after the war, and her poems became a symbol of the glory of the fallen Confederacy.

Wartime Confederates and Southerners in the postwar decades had some reason to admire and appreciate partisan warfare. Many felt that it was the key to a Continental victory in the American Revolution, and many Southerners were familiar with Southern heroes like Henry "Light-Horse Harry" Lee, Francis Marion, Thomas Sumter, and Wade Hampton I.<sup>87</sup> In the Civil War, many white Southerners saw the continuation of the Continental military heritage in people like Henry Lee's son, Robert E. Lee, and Wade Hampton's grandson, Wade Hampton III. Through antebellum Southern literature, the Cavalier had shifted from a strictly military figure to a representation of the plantation aristocrat, but that did not mean that the martial element of the Cavalier had disappeared entirely. The pro-Confederate populace wanted to see the flower of Southern manhood defend their honor and the honor of their people in direct combat. The Virginia partisans became Cavalier heroes because they represented a more complete picture of the ideal

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<sup>85</sup>Stacey Jean Klein, *Margaret Junkin Preston: Poet of the Confederacy, A Literary Life* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 31-33.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>87</sup>Anderson, *Blood Image*, 125.



Southerner: a rich, young, flamboyant fighter on horseback, a nineteenth-century chivalric knight.

## 5. CONCLUSION: THE PERSISTENCE OF THE CAVALIER IMAGE

Despite the Confederate partisans' best efforts, the Civil War ended with a Union victory in 1865. The years immediately after the war, however, saw the rise of a literary and social movement that glorified Confederate military leaders and called for a return of the antebellum Southern way of life. This line of thinking developed into the Lost Cause movement and manifested itself as an authentic Southern quasi-religious and cultural expression.<sup>1</sup> In particular, Lost Cause writings gave birth to a Southern civil religion, and white Southerners attempted to reconcile their position in the reformed nation. Many Southern church denominations attached Lost Cause rhetoric to their sermons and writings, further perpetuating the Christian nature of the South and its virtuous heroes. Many former Confederate partisans evolved into righteous heroes despite failing to achieve victory, while others had their images tarnished due to their post-bellum careers.

Additionally, the Union victory in 1865 was a blow to Southern notions of honor. In the Confederacy, honor played a vital role in Southern society and permeated aspects of Southern culture, economics, and religion. Historian Bertram Wyatt-Brown observes that almost every culture in which honor has held sway reveals the same repudiation of penitence as demanded of the conquered by the victors.<sup>2</sup> Southerners could not comprehend why such honorable, virtuous people as themselves were defeated and their new government destroyed. Some began to question their faith in God as it seemed that

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 10.

<sup>2</sup>Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 28.

He at first directed the Confederate cause only to abandon it in favor of the unjust Yankees.<sup>3</sup> As members of an honor-driven society, former Confederates had to attempt to reconcile their new position in the United States. They had to comprehend not just their military defeat, but also the scale of destruction that surrounded them.

The Civil War not only resulted in Confederate defeat, but it destroyed the Southern way of life, in part *because* of partisan activities. The persistent partisan threats to Union advances brought about reprisals that increased in hostility as the war progressed. When asked how to deal with these threats, Francis Lieber was purposefully ambiguous: “The application of the laws and usages of war to wars of insurrection or rebellion, is always undefined, and depends upon relaxations of the municipal law, suggested by humanity or necessitated by the numbers engaged in the insurrection.”<sup>4</sup> Lieber left President Abraham Lincoln immense discretionary power when it came to combating the Confederate partisans. The result was a series of Union assaults that targeted Southern civilians and destroyed personal property, livestock, crops, farms, and railroads.<sup>5</sup> Since the partisans’ actions contributed in part to the severity of Union military policy, especially later in the war, it seems logical that Southerners would blame them for their post-war plight. The rise of the Lost Cause movement and the white

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<sup>3</sup>Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 13.

<sup>4</sup>Francis Lieber, *Guerrilla Parties, Considered with Reference to the Laws and Usages of War* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1862), 21. For the complete code, see *Official Records*, Series 3, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1899), 2:301-309.

<sup>5</sup>Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians, 1863-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 142-170.

Southern proclivity to romanticize warfare, however, meant instead that many former Confederates celebrated the partisans and praised them in the years after the war.

In 1867, Edward Pollard, a Richmond newspaper editor, published *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates*, one of the first book-length works that presented a romanticized version of the Civil War. Pollard wrote relatively little on the Confederate partisans, but he drew a direct comparison between J. E. B. Stuart and the English Cavaliers. Stuart was designated as the “Prince Rupert of the Confederate Army,” and Pollard devoted a lengthy footnote to describing the many positive attributes of this “*preux chvevalier*.”<sup>6</sup> Comparisons of partisan leaders to Prince Rupert were not altogether uncommon. Thomas A. Ashby wrote of his kinsman, Turner, “In his dash, daring, and audacity as a cavalry leader Ashby has been classed with such brilliant soldiers as Prince Rupert, Murat, Ney, Stuart, Forrest....”<sup>7</sup> Proponents of the Lost Cause recognized a distinct link between Confederate cavalry leaders and English Cavaliers. Prince Rupert and his men had been romantic heroes for past generations, and Southern writers sought to cast the partisans in a similar mold for their postwar audience.

Pollard was just one of several Virginians who actively participated in the Lost Cause movement. Historian Gaines M. Foster claims that Virginians like Pollard, former Confederate general Jubal Early, and other military leaders were the first group

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<sup>6</sup>Edward A. Pollard, *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates* (New York: E. B. Treat, 1867), 517-518.

<sup>7</sup>Thomas A. Ashby, *Life of Turner Ashby* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), 243. The fact that Nathan Bedford Forrest is mentioned among these Cavalier figures is interesting. While Forrest was certainly a successful cavalry officer by military standards, he was not from a prestigious family, he lacked formal education beyond grade school, and he grew up in the Tennessee backcountry, a region that still represented the American frontier in the mid-nineteenth century.

to celebrate the Confederacy in the post-war period. These men were instrumental in forming some of the first organized remembrance groups, including the Southern Historical Society and the Association of the Army of Northern Virginia (AANVA).<sup>8</sup> Early in particular glorified the lives of Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, and blamed Confederate defeat on overwhelming Union numbers and Georgian James Longstreet's tardiness in attacking on the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg.<sup>9</sup> Foster concludes that the Virginians failed to hold on to the Confederate tradition, however, because they only appealed to members of the upper class. Although later memorial organizations like the United Confederate Veterans, the Sons of Confederate Veterans, and the United Daughters of the Confederacy would go on to more lasting success, Virginians remained active in celebrating the Confederacy and glorifying its heroes.

Other Confederate officers helped the former Confederacy cope with defeat and find its place in the newly-unified nation. Daniel Harvey Hill, a native South Carolinian, edited a magazine entitled *The Land We Love* from 1866 to 1869. Hill believed the South had lost due to its false system of education and its economic dependence upon the North.<sup>10</sup> *The Land We Love* included discussions of military matters, essays on Southern agriculture, history, and literature, and routinely published poems from fellow Southerners. The magazine published works from former Confederate generals like P. G. T. Beauregard, Wade Hampton, and Joseph E. Johnston as well as Southern civilians

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<sup>8</sup>See Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 47-62.

<sup>9</sup>See Thomas L. Connelly and Barbara Bellows, *God and General Longstreet: The Lost Cause and the Southern Mind* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982).

<sup>10</sup>Ray M. Atchison, "The Land We Love: A Southern Post-Bellum Magazine," *North Carolina Historical Review* 37 (October 1960), 506.

like Robert L. Dabney and North Carolina governor Zebulon B. Vance. Southerners from across the former Confederacy actively celebrated the South's role in the war, and magazines like *The Land We Love* and *Confederate Veteran* had thousands of subscribers by the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup>

In the extensive literature that appeared during the Lost Cause period, partisan officers were often featured and their military careers were often celebrated. As noted earlier, Virginian John Esten Cooke and other prominent Southerners wrote poems, newspaper articles, and short stories praising the partisans and their military achievements. Ashby and Stuart had died in battle, and their deaths were mourned during the war and celebrated afterwards. Margaret Junkin Preston's poem "Dirge for Ashby" reflected the sorrow felt by many Confederates upon hearing of his death: "Heard ye that thrilling word, Accent of dread/Fall like a thunderbolt, Bowing each head?/Over the battle dun, Over each booming gun:/Ashby, our bravest one! Ashby is dead!"<sup>12</sup> Since Ashby was one of the first partisan officers to die in combat, he was also one of the first to be memorialized as a Southern hero. William Gilmore Simms edited a compendium of Southern poetry in 1867 that featured poems championing Ashby and other Confederate leaders. The work included poems entitled "The Mountain Partisan," "The Guerrillas," "Turner Ashby," "Ye Cavaliers of Dixie," and "The Guerrilla Martyrs."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Circulation of the *Confederate Veteran* passed 7,000 by the end of its first year and peaked at more than 20,000 by the end of the 1890s. See Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 106.

<sup>12</sup>Margaret Junkin Preston, "Dirge for Ashby," taken from Ashby, *Life of Turner Ashby*, 271.

<sup>13</sup>William Gilmore Simms, ed., *War Poetry of the South* (New York: Richardson and Company, 1867), 104-105, 146-148, 385-386, 420-422, 442-444. Simms advocated unrestrained warfare from outset of the war and tried publicly and privately to rally the South's guerrilla forces. See Daniel Sutherland, *A Savage*

Poets who rode with Union forces as noncombatants also contributed greatly to the development of the partisans' post-war images. Herman Melville composed a lengthy poem on his unit's encounters with Mosby in northern Virginia entitled "The Scout toward Aldie." The poem reflected the effects Mosby and his men had on their adversaries: "Unarmed none cared to stir abroad,/For berries beyond their forest-fence:/As glides in seas the shark,/Rides Mosby through green dark."<sup>14</sup> Mosby was one of the partisan leaders to survive the war, but he did not subscribe to the Lost Cause mythology perpetuated by many of his fellow former Confederates. After the war, Mosby returned to public life, and would probably have suffered under the vengeful radicals in Andrew Johnson's administration had not Ulysses S. Grant intervened on his behalf.<sup>15</sup> Mosby and Grant became friends, and Mosby actively supported Grant's election campaign in 1868.

Mosby's decision to become a Republican after the war and his refusal to participate in Confederate reunions and veterans' organization meetings demonized him in the eyes of many Lost Cause Southerners. They slandered him as a turncoat, calling him "the most serviceable partisan Grant has in Virginia."<sup>16</sup> Mosby was also openly critical of the Lost Cause's support for white supremacy and its endorsement of chattel slavery. Although a former slave owner himself, he viewed slavery apologists by the

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*Conflict: The Decisive Role of Guerrillas in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 184-185.

<sup>14</sup>Herman Melville, *Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1866), 187. The full version of "The Scout Toward Aldie" is 798 lines long.

<sup>15</sup>"An Appraisal of John S. Mosby," *Civil War Times Illustrated* 4 (November 1965), 54.

<sup>16</sup>Unnamed newspaper clippings, n. d., in William H. Payne Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia, quoted in David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 297. William H. Payne was a Confederate brigadier general from Fauquier County, Virginia, and actively spoke out against the North during the Lost Cause period.

1890s as the most debilitating element of the Lost Cause.<sup>17</sup> Although many Lost Cause adherents undercut Mosby's post-war image, no one could deny his invaluable contributions to the Confederate war effort. Later works on Mosby would focus on his military career as he reclaimed his status as a true partisan hero and Southern Cavalier.<sup>18</sup>

Among Northerners, Mosby was a fascinating subject after the war. When he visited Washington, D.C., in 1865, he remarked in a letter to his unit's former surgeon, Dr. Aristides Monteiro, that, "The Yankees seemed to look upon me as a sort of menagerie & I had to pay the penalty for their inordinate curiosity."<sup>19</sup> Mosby was not a physically impressive man, and those who saw him for the first time were often puzzled by the fact that such an average man was able to disturb Union operations in Northern Virginia to such a degree. Grant chronicled his first meeting with Mosby in his memoirs: "He is a different man entirely from what I had supposed. He is slender, not tall, wiry, and looks as if he could endure any amount of physical exercise."<sup>20</sup>

Northerners had grown accustomed to the Mosby myth and had developed a completely different image of the man in their minds. Southern writers sought to perpetuate this legendary image and transform these men into romantic heroes.

Perhaps the most successful chronicler of the Confederate Cavaliers in the postwar period was John Esten Cooke, who proceeded to write a number of works on

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<sup>17</sup>Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 298.

<sup>18</sup>Information on the transformation of Mosby's image in the twentieth century can be found in Paul Ashdown and Edward Caudill, *The Mosby Myth: A Confederate Hero in Life and Legend* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2002).

<sup>19</sup>Mosby to Dr. Aristides Monteiro, September 19, 1865, Letters of Colonel John Singleton Mosby, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>20</sup>Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles L. Webster, 1885), 2:142.



Confederate leaders after the war. In 1867, he published *Wearing of the Gray: Being Personal Portraits, Scenes, and Adventures of the War*. Cooke dedicated the book to “The Illustrious Memory of Major-General J. E. B. Stuart, “’Flower of Cavaliers.””<sup>21</sup> The first part of Cooke’s work focused on personal portraits of Confederate leaders, including Stuart, Mosby, and Ashby. Cooke attacked critics who sought to define Ashby and the partisans as nothing more than common guerrillas. He wrote, “I was reading a stupid book the other day in which he [Ashby] was represented as a guerrilla... Ashby a guerrilla!—that great, powerful, trained, and consummate fighter of infantry, cavalry, and artillery in the hardest fought battles of the Valley campaign! Ashby a robber and highwayman!—that soul and perfect mirror of chivalry!”<sup>22</sup> Cooke, Pollard, and others ignored the harsh nature of partisan warfare and strove to perpetuate the Cavalier image in the post-war period.

Some partisans were directly involved in the memorialization of former Confederate soldiers. In 1887, sixty-four year old John Imboden was present in Richmond, Virginia, in the pouring rain as one of twenty-two Confederate generals who gathered for the cornerstone-laying ceremony for the Robert E. Lee statue on Monument Avenue.<sup>23</sup> Members of Mosby’s Rangers also continued to attend reunions, monument dedications, and organizational meetings through the end of the nineteenth century. In 1899, the magazine *Confederate Veteran* chronicled a reunion of Mosby’s men as they

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<sup>21</sup>John Esten Cooke, *Wearing of the Gray: Being Personal Portraits, Scenes, and Adventures of the War* (New York: E. B. Treat, 1867), v.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 60.

<sup>23</sup>Spencer C. Tucker, *Brigadier General John. D. Imboden: Confederate Commander in the Shenandoah* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003), 306.

dedicated a statue in Front Royal, Virginia.<sup>24</sup> Although Mosby himself rarely attended such gatherings, by the turn of the twentieth century his romanticized image in the Southern mind was secure.

Partisan leaders were also active in helping to rebuild Virginia's shattered economy. John Imboden became heavily involved in researching Virginia's natural coal and iron deposits in the western mountains, and in 1872 he published a twenty-eight page pamphlet based on his findings. Entitled *The Coal and Iron Resources of Virginia*, it was for many years regarded as a primary reference source on the subject.<sup>25</sup> Imboden envisioned a new "steel city" that would represent the future of Virginia's economic destiny. Imboden helped found the city of Damascus, Virginia, and it was there that he died in 1895. Like Mosby, Imboden believed that it was better for Virginians to find their place in the newly reformed nation rather than pine for a return to antebellum society. Proponents of the Lost Cause rejected their opinions, and it would take until the end of the nineteenth century before Southerners had the chance to restore their honor.

In 1898, the United States entered the Spanish-American War, and Southerners had a new opportunity to prove their martial prowess to themselves and their Northern counterparts. Southerners responded with customary impetuosity, and the upsurge of national spirit that accompanied the war trumped sectional grievances.<sup>26</sup> The war generated a more lasting sectional reconciliation as the South was able to prove itself, and the North offered symbolic testimony to Southern heroism and nobility. Lost Cause

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<sup>24</sup>Anonymous, "Mosby and his Men," *Confederate Veteran* 7 (1899), 388-389.

<sup>25</sup>Tucker, *John D. Imboden*, 294.

<sup>26</sup>C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 369.

proponents championed the Spanish-American War as a testament to Southern manhood, and their honor was once again restored on the battlefield.<sup>27</sup> At the turn of the twentieth century, though the Lost Cause movement persisted until the 1920s, Southerners were beginning to memorialize the Civil War in the context of a national, rather than a sectional, identity,

Lost Cause adherents lauded the Confederate partisan leaders not only for their battlefield prowess, but also for their religious beliefs and roles as defenders of the common people. A writer in *Confederate Veteran* magazine praised Mosby as a “fit representative of the highest type of Southern chivalry.”<sup>28</sup> Another contributor made a point of mentioning that some of Mosby’s men were in fact former preachers who thought they could “best serve God by serving their country.” This same writer also underscored the Gray Ghost’s presence among the Confederate populace. She wrote, “The mountains were infested with horse thieves and robbers...so the Rangers performed the duties of police while Mosby, acting as military ruler and judge, kept down the lawless element without fear or favor.”<sup>29</sup> Such writings contributed to Mosby’s image in the twentieth century as a righteous knight who represented the ideal of Southern manhood.

Aside from the Lost Cause writings and other pro-Confederate contributions, the positive partisan image persisted because of the way they conducted war. The Civil War is often described as the first total war, and the partisans’ tactics defied the practice of

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<sup>27</sup>Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 145-159, Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, 161-163.

<sup>28</sup>H. M. Doak, “Mosby as a Soldier,” *Confederate Veteran* 12 (1904): 286.

<sup>29</sup>M. C. F. Coats, “Mosby’s Rangers,” *Confederate Veteran* 40 (1932): 100-102.

nineteenth-century conventional warfare. The Union's hard-war policy and the Confederacy's acceptance of guerrilla tactics via the Partisan Ranger Act indicated that both sides were descending into an ethical gray area.<sup>30</sup> Even though the partisans did not fight according to the tactics taught at West Point, their presence on the Confederate home front endeared them to many members of the local populace. The Union recognized that the partisans were a legitimate threat to their forces and adopted tactics designed to target the Confederacy's morale in addition to their regular armies. The Confederate partisans were indicators that the Civil War was in fact a total war, and their presence among the Confederate populace meant that they served as physical symbols of Confederate resistance.<sup>31</sup>

The Confederate partisans' military importance stemmed from their innovative tactics and unit formation. Mosby, Ashby, and Imboden all operated at times with a combined force of cavalry, infantry, and artillery throughout the war. By adding at least one horse-drawn cannon to their units, the partisans were able to greatly increase their offensive firepower, and Mosby's preference for pistols over cavalry sabers increased their attack potential exponentially. Their numbers also fluctuated throughout the war; when Mosby began his independent command in 1863 he only had 29 men, but when

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<sup>30</sup>Harry S. Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the American Civil War* (New York: Viking Press, 2006), 260.

<sup>31</sup>The scholarship on the Civil War as a total war is vast. Some notable works include Charles Royster, *The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, and the Americans* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991); Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy towards Southern Civilians, 1861-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); and Mark E. Neely, Jr., *The Civil War and the Limits of Destruction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007). For works on Confederate guerrilla activity and Union countermeasures, see Clay Mountcastle, *Punitive War: Confederate Guerrillas and Union Reprisals* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2009); Daniel E. Sutherland, ed., *Guerrillas, Unionists, and Violence on the Confederate Home Front* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1999); and Albert Castel, *Frontier State at War: Kansas, 1861-1865* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1958)

John Imboden conducted his extensive raid into West Virginia that same year he had approximately 3,500.<sup>32</sup> Partisan units were organized into companies, but these companies rarely achieved the full 100-man standard and the units rarely numbered above 500 men in total. Due to their smaller size, they were not only more mobile, but they also developed greater unit cohesion and were better able to maintain order in battle. These partisans continued the practices pioneered by Francis Marion and Henry Lee and helped to develop the operational usefulness of guerrilla warfare.

Future generations of soldiers replicated the Confederate partisans' tactics in later wars. A young Winston Churchill wrote in 1899 about his experiences during the Mahdist War, saying that he survived the Battle of Omdurman by following Mosby's advice to fight with a revolver rather than a sword, and he explained in his book the efficacy of Mosby's cavalry tactics.<sup>33</sup> When Mosby's *Memoirs* were published in 1917 they gave U. S. troops in World War I a timely look at partisan warfare. The army later used the memoir as a guidebook for fighting a guerrilla war, even in an age of trench warfare.<sup>34</sup> Mosby even lived long enough to become an early mentor for a young George S. Patton, Jr., who went on to international military fame as a field general

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<sup>32</sup>John S. Mosby, *The Memoirs of Colonel John S. Mosby* (1917; reprinted, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), 172, and Tucker, *John D. Imboden*, 119.

<sup>33</sup>Winston S. Churchill, *The River War, An Historical Account of the Reconquest of the Soudan*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1899), 1:349-350.

<sup>34</sup>Ashdown and Caudill, *The Mosby Myth*, 166-167. During the Battle of Soissons (1918), U. S. General Hunter Liggett sent cavalry forward during the enemy's retreat in order to "at the proper time... intercept and disorganize the enemy's communications. While these orders were based on the spirit of the army's aggressive prewar doctrine, they demonstrated how out of touch the senior officers were with the realities of battle as cavalry were becoming obsolete in the face of mechanization. See Mark Ethan Grotelueschen, *The AEF Way of War: The American Army and Combat in World War I* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 168.

during World War II.<sup>35</sup> Even though some conventional officers looked down on irregular tactics during the Civil War, the Confederate partisans' tactics transcended generations of warfare and continued to shape the American way of war into the twentieth century.

Not only did the partisans resist the military strictures of conventional warfare advocated by their West Point contemporaries, they often differed on issues regarding general military behavior. One of Mosby's superior officers, General Fitzhugh Lee, was a nephew of Robert E. Lee with a West Point education, and the two men disliked each other intensely. One story repeated in several sources is that, while Mosby was still an adjutant, he rode up to Fitzhugh Lee and said, "Colonel, the horn has blowed for dress parade," to which Lee replied, "Sir, if I ever again hear you call that bugle a horn, I will put you under arrest."<sup>36</sup> Mosby harbored his resentment towards Fitz Lee into the postwar period. In a letter to his friend Dr. Aristedes Monteiro, he wrote, "He [Fitz Lee] has never been a friend of mine—did all he could to prevent me from having a command."<sup>37</sup> Like many Cavalier officers, Mosby was a prideful man and did not react well to those who disagreed with him. Such attitudes separated Mosby from many of his peers, but he became one of the most well-known partisan figures of the twentieth century.

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<sup>35</sup>Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 40, Ladislav Farago, *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph* (New York: Ivan Obolensky, 1964), 51, and William Bancroft Mellor, *Patton: Fighting Man* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1946), 29-30.

<sup>36</sup>See James Ramage, *Gray Ghost: The Life of Col. John Singleton Mosby* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1999), 45, and Douglas Southall Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command*, 3 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), 1:279-280.

<sup>37</sup>Mosby to Dr. Aristedes Monteiro, September 14, 1894, Letters of Colonel John Singleton Mosby.

After the Spanish-American War, many Southerners felt that their honor had been restored and that the North recognized their martial prowess. Celebration of the Confederacy was not exclusive to the Virginians, but extended throughout the South. Soldiers' reunions, monument unveilings, and camp meetings were a regular practice, and remained so into the early 1900s. Even in 1890, more than 60 percent of Confederate veterans were still under 55.<sup>38</sup> Southerners also began to venerate the common soldier along with the aristocratic leaders, and many organizations adopted martial aspects to their celebrations. The United Confederate Veterans' (UCV) officers all held "rank," and during their parades, the leaders rode on horses, reinforcing the superiority that Southerners attributed to a man on horseback.<sup>39</sup> As the Lost Cause movement receded and the celebration of the Confederacy began to decline, Southerners still reinforced antebellum values well into the next century. Some Southerners, however, began to examine their society and culture more critically, reevaluating its position and influence.

A new wave of Southern literature emerged and attempted to define the South and its place in American society. Writers like Mark Twain in the nineteenth century and William Faulkner, Robert Penn Warren, and Tennessee Williams in the twentieth century often set their stories in the South and dealt with issues that developed after the Civil War. Faulkner in particular presented his characters against the backdrop of the

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<sup>38</sup>Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 112.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 139.

romanticized Southern myth of its own past.<sup>40</sup> Works like Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) and *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936) include characters in a hierarchical Southern social system where money equates to influence and a family's name and honor are closely guarded. Faulkner deals extensively with what one scholar classifies as the "Southern white male consciousness," whereby the central male character is formed based on his race and social standing.<sup>41</sup> Such works are a reflection of life in the antebellum South, and Faulkner and his fellow writers took a critical look at Southern life and brought it into view for a new audience.

The new era of Southern literature began when the Lost Cause movement was in its final stages of decline. Although the movement was largely a cultural event, the Confederate celebration was abused for political and social purposes, and this had an effect on national views of the South and its people. Ambitious unreconstructed politicians continued to rail against the North and champion the antebellum status quo, while the Ku Klux Klan evolved from a celebratory organization to an organ for white supremacy. As such, by the 1930s the region was seen as a place of poverty and suffering, in the 1950s as the home of Klansmen and rednecks.<sup>42</sup> Southerners began to seem socially and culturally undeveloped during a time when America emerged as a bona fide superpower after World War II. Even though these attitudes became more common during the mid-twentieth century and there were no more partisans living to

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<sup>40</sup>Gail L. Mortimer, *Faulkner's Rhetoric of Loss: A Study in Perception and Meaning* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), 118.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 113. Interestingly, Faulkner's great-grandfather, William C. Faulkner, organized a regiment of partisan rangers near Tippah County, Mississippi, in 1862. See Daniel Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict: The Decisive Role of Guerrillas in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 110-111.

<sup>42</sup>Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 198.



defend themselves, the Cavalier image persisted and the Confederate soldiers continued to hold a place in the popular imagination.

On October 10, 1957, only six days after *Sputnik* was launched, and with the Little Rock school integration crisis still on the front pages, *The Gray Ghost* made its network television debut.<sup>43</sup> Starring Tod Andrews, *The Gray Ghost* was the first television series to focus on the military aspects of the Civil War. The show depicted Mosby as a dapper, gentlemanly Southern patriot, cunning but never ruthless. By June 1958 it was the third most popular syndicated television program, based on a weighted survey of the top twenty-two national markets. Mosby's military exploits, however, did not lend themselves well to television, since shows required simple plotlines in order to keep the story interesting to a wide audience, and military tactics, particularly irregular tactics, possessed varying degrees of complexity.<sup>44</sup> Some claimed that the "elitist" position of depicting Mosby as the dashing Cavalier promoted white supremacy, and the release of the show in the mid-1950's in the midst of national racial tension no doubt contributed to the show's cancellation in late 1958. Still, the Cavalier image reemerged only a year later, when a young Leslie Nielsen starred as Francis Marion in a Disney television series entitled *The Swamp Fox*. Although accurately representing partisan figures and their military exploits on camera proved to be a difficult task, the presence of *The Gray Ghost* and *The Swamp Fox* indicated that the Cavalier hero still held a special place in the American mind.

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<sup>43</sup> Ashdown and Caudill, *The Mosby Myth*, 186.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 180-190.

Another film genre that rose in popularity during the twentieth century was the Western. The allure of the Wild West transferred more easily to film, and stars like John Wayne came to define a generation of classic Western films. In reality, many of the famous Western outlaws like Jesse James and Cole Younger were former guerrilla fighters from the Trans-Mississippi Theater who chose to head west rather than surrender to Union forces. James and Younger rode with William Clarke Quantrill and his guerrilla band on the Kansas-Missouri border, a region that suffered some of the most brutal fighting of the entire war.<sup>45</sup> Western authors also published stories featuring Confederate partisans in addition to novels on the Wild West. Ray Hogan, a prolific writer, published a series of books on Mosby during his career and presented the Gray Ghost to his readers as Western-style hero.<sup>46</sup> Other works featuring Mosby surfaced throughout the 1900s, and works set in the South or featuring Southern characters continued to present the Cavalier image.

One of the most important books of the twentieth century that focused on Virginia's Tidewater gentry was James Michener's *Chesapeake*. Although set in Maryland, it deals with the hierarchical, aristocratic society that defined both Maryland and Virginia during the colonial period.<sup>47</sup> At the top of Michener's social pyramid stands the Steed family, the type of aristocrats that constituted early Virginia's elites, and

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<sup>45</sup>See Duane Schultz, *Quantrill's War: The Life and Times of William Clarke Quantrill, 1837-1865* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), Michael Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri During the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), John McCorkle, *Three Years with Quantrill – A True Story* (Armstrong, MO: Armstrong Herald Printing, 1914), and Cole Younger, *The Story of Cole Younger* (Washington, DC: T. C. Younger, 1903).

<sup>46</sup>Ray Hogan was born in 1908 and wrote 8 novels in his original Mosby series from 1960 to 1966. See Ashdown and Caudill, *The Mosby Myth*, 150-158.

<sup>47</sup>Ritchie Devon Watson, *The Cavalier in Virginia Fiction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 21.

a strong-willed woman named Rosalind Janney, who married a Steed and whose family claimed a Cavalier heritage. Through Rosalind, Michener attempts to deconstruct the Cavalier image that many aristocratic Virginians felt defined their past. Rosalind's father claimed that she was "the granddaughter of a Cavalier who rode with Prince Rupert," to which she replied, "The dear bumbler never got close to [the Battle of] Marston Moor, fortunately for us, because he was undoubtedly drunk...at least I never saw him sober."<sup>48</sup> Michener, other novelists, and some historians tried to separate the Cavalier image from Virginia's history, but Virginians' attitudes toward the past reflected or claimed a more general Southern propensity to develop a romanticized image of their heritage regardless of fact.<sup>49</sup>

The Cavalier image is an integral part of Southern history and an especially prominent part of Virginia's past. A Royalist cavalryman was transformed into a model for the aristocratic Southern planter and Civil War-era folk hero. It was useful for Southerners to mold their heroes to fit the Cavalier image because it overshadowed the more undesirable aspects of Southern life and presented an idealized image to history. The reality of warfare is that it is not romantic and its combatants are rarely model citizens. Henry Lee and his men ambushed and massacred almost 300 Loyalists in an event known as the "Pyle Massacre" as part of the brutal guerrilla war in revolutionary South Carolina. John Mosby attacked trains carrying Union civilians, and wrote in his memoir that "People who travel on a railroad in a country where military operations are going on take the risk of all these accidents of war. I was not conducting an insurance

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<sup>48</sup>James Michener, *Chesapeake* (New York: Random House, 1978), 310.

<sup>49</sup>Wilbur J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941), 47.

business on life or property.”<sup>50</sup> In the face of such seemingly dishonorable actions, the fact that these men were depicted as Cavalier heroes by many in the South indicates that, as is often the case in Southern history, image often transcends fact and romanticism may transcend realism.

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<sup>50</sup>Mosby, *Memoirs*, 313-314.

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