

Perhaps no other Confederate general aroused such controversy as John Hunt Morgan. Born in Huntsville, Alabama on June 1, 1829, Morgan was raised in Lexington, Kentucky in the heart of the bluegrass country. After spending a couple of years at Transylvania College, he was suspended for dueling. Serving in the Mexican War at the Battle of Buena Vista, Morgan returned home where he lived as a successful businessman in the “Athens of the South.” His marriage to Rebecca Bruce tragically ended with her death on July 21, 1861. Later joining the Confederate service, Morgan fit the role of a dandy. In his mid-thirties, he stood exactly six feet tall, weighed 185 pounds, with a well-trimmed black mustache and imperial beard, and dark auburn hair. His keen grayish-blue eyes were “mirthful.” A well-adorned and fancy uniform with sash and exquisite pistols added to his handsome features. His horse, Black Bess, wore arguably the most decorated saddle and bridle on either side. Wherever Morgan rode, his horse had to be guarded to preserve her mane and tail from assault by women with stars in their eyes and scissors in their hands.

Morgan’s Civil War heroics persisted in his many raids on Federal property in Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio where millions of dollars of destruction were left behind. On his so-called “Great Raid,” undertaken in July of 1863, Morgan traversed through central Kentucky, southern Indiana, and into Ohio—nearly up to Youngstown. Along the way his men burned bridges, canal boats, and depots, ripped up railroad tracks, seized government funds, extorted money from millers and manufacturers, looted private retail stores, and helped themselves to food in private dwellings. In the end, however, he was captured by Federal troopers. The raid elicited much squabbling as to its success. Morgan supporters hailed the raid for its audacity and achievement. Some historians, however, labeled the raid a “wild-eyed scheme” and “a raid of utter rashness.” One noted: “This reckless adventure...deprived him of his well-earned reputation.” Braxton Bragg, whose orders Morgan had defied on this raid, stated, “Morgan never returned from a raid without his command broken and dissipated, with more lost than gained from the undertaking.”

Our speaker this month, Dr. Ralph Gordon, will settle the dispute when he presents, “John Hunt Morgan’s Indiana-Ohio Raid: Lark of Renegades or Psychological Warfare on the North?” Dr. Gordon, a member of the Kalamazoo Civil War Round Table, holds an M.D. degree from Vanderbilt as well as an M.A. in the History of Science, Wisconsin. He is an adjunct professor of history at Western Michigan University. Dr. Gordon has published numerous articles on a variety of Civil War topics and is a highly popular lecturer. He will enhance his presentation with slides showing the highlights of Morgan’s 1000-mile route.

Circle the date—**MONDAY, JUNE 24**. It promises to be a great evening.

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Our thanks to last month’s speaker, Jerry Maxwell, for his program, “John Pelham at Nicodemus Heights.” We also express our thanks to Dr. Weldon Petz for the wonderful and surprising introduction.

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ODDS & ENDS:

- FALL FIELD TRIP—Nearly 50 people signed up for the trek to Shiloh (Saturday/Sunday, October 19-20). Room is still available on the bus, so show up to place your name on the list. It should be a great trip.
- SONS OF UNION VETERANS—A new Oakland County Camp of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, the Israel B. Richardson Camp, has been formed and is seeking new members. Full membership

is given to individuals who can document a Union soldier or sailor ancestor from 1861-1865, and associate membership is available to all others. Meetings are held the last Thursday of the month in the Berkley American Legion Hall at 2079 W. Twelve Mile, between Coolidge and Woodward. This month's meeting is June 19. Contact Keith Krinn at 248-435-2023 for further details.

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QUIZ: Cavalry Raids.....

1. Which Pennsylvania town did Jeb Stuart capture in October of 1862, and which of his brigadiers did he designate as "Military Governor" of the town?
2. Which Federal general led a raid on Richmond in May of 1864, and in which battle fought six miles north of the Confederate capital did Jeb Stuart lose his life? [Extra Credit: Which Michigan soldier is credited with killing him?]
3. Which Confederate general struck William Sherman's supply depot in Tennessee in October of 1864, even capturing and commandeering enemy ships, and where did this raid take place?
4. Which two Confederate generals captured 2486 unguarded cattle in September of 1864 in the celebrated "Beefsteak Raid"?
5. Which Federal general led a raid on the railroad depot of Lovejoy's Station, Georgia in August of 1864, and which Confederate cavalry general showed up to drive them off before major damage was done?
6. Which Confederate general made a "Christmas Raid" into Kentucky in 1862 with the purpose of severing the Louisville & Nashville Railroad, William Rosecrans' lifeline? And, in retrospect, where were his troopers needed more desperately at the same time?
7. Which Confederate general led a raid to capture St. Louis with the hope of then invading Illinois in October of 1864 that ended in a fiasco for his forces? And, where was he decisively beaten?
8. Which Federal general led "one of the most successful Union cavalry operations in the Civil War" when in July of 1864 he raided Alabama and destroyed stores and railroads? And, which noted Confederate Lieutenant General failed in his pursuit?
9. During the Peninsular Campaign of June, 1862, Jeb Stuart rode his cavalry completely around George McClellan's army. Who was Stuart's only casualty, and who was Stuart's father-in-law that he bested?
10. Which two Confederate generals raided and cut the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in West Virginia in April and May of 1863?

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When Federal troops occupied Murfreesboro, Tennessee, Miss Martha "Mattie" Ready, a local belle, became famous for her defense of John Hunt Morgan, whom she had never met but much admired. A Yankee asked her name, and she stoutly replied, "It's Mattie Ready now, but by the grace of God one day I hope to call myself the wife of John Morgan." Hearing the story, Morgan made it a point to look her up, found her to be "as pretty as she was patriotic," and married her after a whirlwind courtship.

The large mansion of Colonel Charles Ready was a two-story brick house with upper and lower verandas located on East Main Street. Mr. Ready, one of middle Tennessee's most prominent lawyers and planters, had been a U.S. Congressman from 1853 to 1859. He had argued cases before the state Supreme Court and served in the ranks of the Whig Party. He and his wife had raised a son and four daughters. After the war a veteran recalled that every man would "primp for the march by [the Ready] house, and how proudly he stepped and with what perfect mien he marched....all to have the privilege of 'showing off,' and having the opportunity for a sly glance at the beautiful Queen sisters standing on the upper veranda." Mattie, the second daughter, was the "elegant model of the trim-figured Southern belle with dark brown hair, fair complexion, rosy cheeks, and gray eyes sparkling with intelligence and strength."

The wedding of John Hunt Morgan and Mattie Ready took place in her home on Sunday, December 14, 1862, one day after Morgan's promotion to brigadier general. Morgan was thirty-seven, his bride twenty-one. Bishop Leonidas Polk, with his vestments covering his general's uniform, performed the ceremony. Her brother Horace, an officer on William Hardee's staff, and Colonel George St. Leger Grenfell served as groomsmen. Generals Braxton Bragg, William Hardee, Ben Cheatham, and John Breckinridge looked on. Jefferson Davis had been at the residence to offer his congratulations, but he left before the ceremony. During an elaborate dinner, two regimental bands played outside, and one came in to play for dancing. On Main Street in front of the house, Morgan's men built bonfires and cheered the couple. A friend congratulated Mattie: "It is certainly the match of the Times—'The Belle of Tennessee & the dashing leader whose name rings throughout the civilized world.'" One of Bragg's staff officers later noted: "I never witnessed a marriage with which I was so impressed as that of John H. Morgan...General Polk, Bishop of Louisiana, performed the ceremony and gave the blessing." After dinner a group of officers were having wine in the library when someone suggested that Dr. David Yandell, a Confederate surgeon, perform his popular impersonations of senior officers. He did Polk and was finishing Hardee when Bragg was called from the room. Yandell's star piece was a caricature of crusty Bragg. "Do Bragg," they pleaded, and he began, striding to and fro, scowling, waving his arms, and rasping out jerky sentences on two of Bragg's favorite themes: lack of discipline and use of whiskey in the army. Suddenly, Bragg walked back in—Yandell stopped, his face turning pale. "Go on, Doctor," ordered Bragg, "don't let me interrupt you. It is certainly entertaining and doubtless quite accurate." Later Colonel Grenfell, who was in "a high state of delight...sang Moorish songs, with a French accent, to English airs, and was as wild and agreeable as if some one was going to be killed."

On November 28, 1863, with great difficulty Mattie gave birth to a daughter. The baby struggled to live and died the next day. Ten months later Mattie received tragic news in a telegram from Colonel Henry L. Giltner: "With deep sorrow I have to announce the sad intelligence of your husband's death. He fell by the hands of the enemy at Greeneville this morning. His remains are being brought away under flag of truce. We all mourn with you in this great affliction." Mattie, pregnant at the time of her husband's death, gave birth to a daughter, Johnnie, named for her father. After the war ended, Mattie wrote: "[Johnnie] has indeed been a blessing to me direct from God, and the only happiness I look forward to in the future is that of rearing her. She is said to be a perfect little Morgan in appearance."

Mattie eventually married Judge James Williamson of Lebanon, Tennessee, and they raised Johnnie and their own two sons and two daughters. At age 22 Johnnie cared for her mother who had become seriously ill. Mattie died in the fall of 1887 at the age of forty-six. Johnnie married a Presbyterian minister, but she died of typhoid fever about two months after the wedding—leaving no direct descendants of John Hunt Morgan.

- QUIZ ANSWERS:
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| 1. Chambersburg and Wade Hampton | 2. Phil Sheridan and Yellow Tavern [John Huff] |
| 3. Nathan Bedford Forest/Johnsonville | 4. Wade Hampton and Tom Rosser |
| 5. Judson Kilpatrick and William H. Jackson | 6. John Hunt Morgan and Stones River |
| 7. Sterling Price and Westport, Missouri | 8. Lovell Rousseau and Stephen Dill Lee |
| 9. William Latane and Philip St. George Cooke | 10. John Imboden and William "Grumble" Jones |

Make certain you attend our next meeting on **MONDAY, JUNE 24** for Dr. Ralph Gordon's presentation: "John Hunt Morgan's Indiana-Ohio Raid: Lark of Renegades or Psychological Warfare on the North?" Meeting place: Farmington Public Library at Grand River and Farmington Road. Meeting time: 7:30 P.M. See you there. And don't forget to try our website: <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt/>.