

WAS THERE AN ATTEMPTED KIDNAPPING DURING THE WAR?

Well-known Confederate scout John S. Mosby attempted to kidnap the Restored Governor of Virginia Francis Pierpont. Mosby, also known as the “Gray Ghost,” led the 43rd Virginia Cavalry, called the “Mosby’s Rangers.” They were a unique army unit, utilizing tactics that would be defined today as guerilla warfare.

The Restored Government covered the Union-controlled areas of Virginia: several Northern Virginia counties, the Norfolk/Portsmouth/Hampton areas around Hampton Roads, and the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake. Alexandria was selected for its capitol.

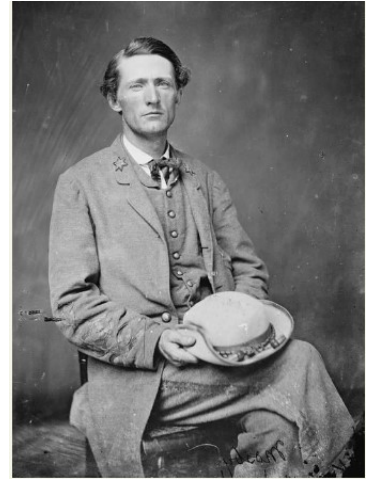
As governor, Francis Pierpont arrived in Alexandria in late August 1863 and set up his temporary headquarters at the City Hotel.

On September 28, 1863 under the cover of night, Mosby and four other rangers slipped through the Union defenses and into Alexandria. They headed to the City Hotel; however, Pierpont had gone to Washington, D.C. that evening. Legend has it Mosby left a note for Pierpont, unnerving him greatly:

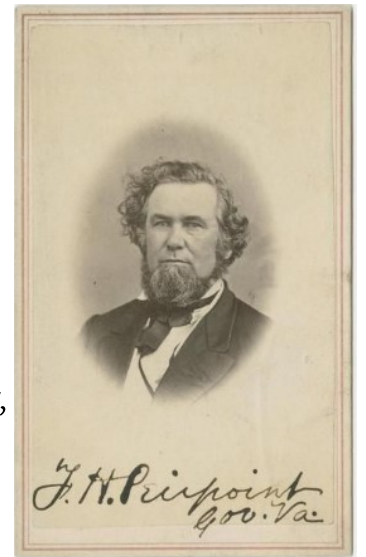
“You did not see the farmer who rode by your hotel on a hay wagon yesterday, did you Governor? My driver pointed out your window, and I marked it plain. It’s just over the bay, and I’ll get you some night, mighty easy.”

Even though the Governor was not taken that night, Mosby was able to capture Pierpont’s aide Colonel Daniel F. Dulany. Why so easy? One of Mosby’s rangers that night was Daniel Dulany’s son, D. French Dulany.

To learn more about Mosby – and his work with President Ulysses S. Grant after the war – visit www.mobysheritagearea.org.



John S. Mosby
From the Library of Congress



Francis Pierpont
From the Library of Virginia