

NEWS AND NOTES

from

The Fauquier Historical Society

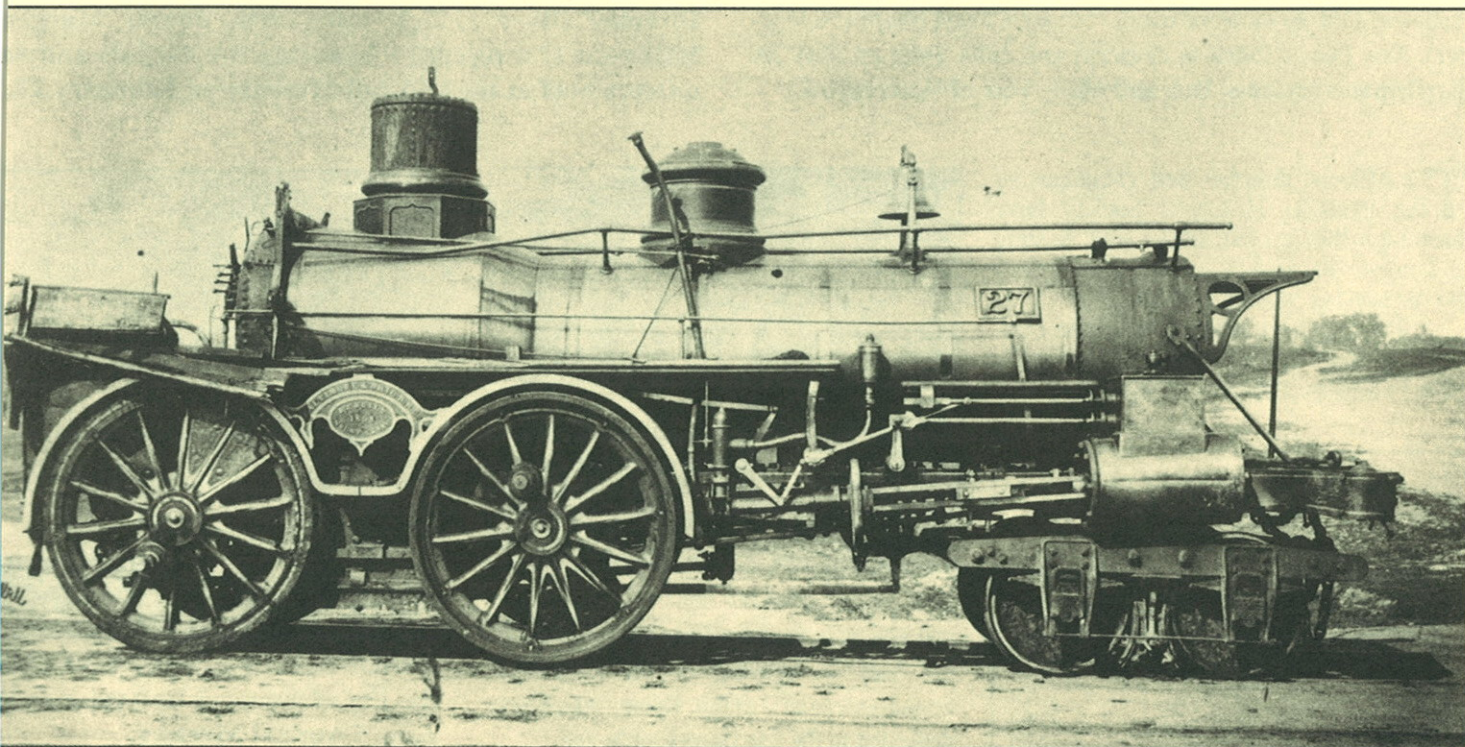
Vol. 33, No. 1

WARRENTON, VIRGINIA

Spring-Summer 2011

Rangers wrecked a Federal payroll train and captured \$168,000 in cash

Col. Mosby's Famous 'Greenback Raid'



B&O Railroad locomotive No. 27 was severely damaged during the Greenback Raid. In the photo above, the engine was stripped of its damaged cab, smokestack, headlight and cowcatcher, and the front wheels replaced by an old freight car truck for the trip to the B&O repair shop. It was rebuilt, and remained in operation until about 1898.

By John H. White

Contributing Writer

The Civil War was a disaster for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Its tracks, which crossed northwestern Virginia parallel to the Mason-Dixon Line, were in the direct path of Union and Confederate armies.

Both forces ravaged and despoiled the railroad in the course of battles, counterattacks, and guerrilla raids. Tracks were uprooted, ties burned and rails heated and twisted into useless iron tangles. Stations, shops, bridges and

water tanks were demolished. Gen. T. J. "Stonewall" Jackson's encampment at Harper's Ferry and his later visit to Martinsburg resulted in the wholesale confiscation of B&O locomotives and cars for use in the South.

Later in the war, after Gen. Robert E. Lee's defeat at Gettysburg, the B&O felt more secure, because the battle zone had moved south. In addition, the Union army had moved eleven regiments along the railroad between Parkersburg and Harpers Ferry. It was now possible to maintain regular sched-

ules, but despite the Federal presence, Confederate raiding parties continued to molest the road.

Particularly troublesome was Col. John Singleton Mosby. A wiry, restless man, Col. Mosby, trained as a lawyer, became a model guerrilla leader who specialized in lightning raids and spurned the ritual and formality of the regular army. He and his men moved about mostly at night in small bands, and rendezvoused mysteriously at lone-

(Continued on Page 3)

Recent Society Happenings and Events



Tours of Old Town were conducted by Cheryl Shepherd (center), Ann Power (back to camera) and John Toler on May 29. Participants included Bob and Mary Voss of Warrenton.



Director Diane Gulick visits with docent Margaret Robinson at a reception honoring the docents and volunteers held at the Old Jail Museum on February 27.

The officers, directors and volunteers of the Fauquier Historical Society have been busy the first half of the year, hosting a number of events in Warrenton (see accompanying photos).

The Society is participating in the U. S. Civil War Sesquicentennial, offering new exhibits and a timeline display at the museum.

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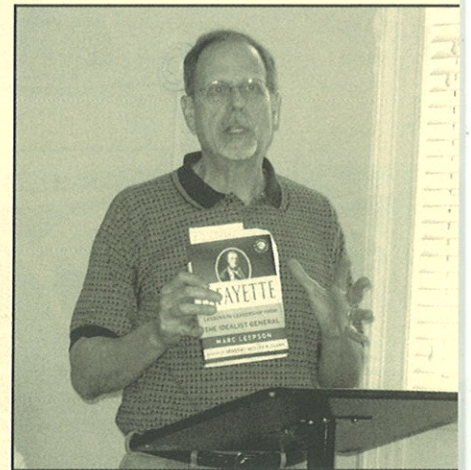
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Pres. Yakir Lubowsky talks with David Bell and Museum Director Frances Allshouse at the May 20 opening of the Civil War Sesquicentennial Exhibit Room, which was dedicated to the late Doug Lamborne.



Former president Maxwell Harway and Pres. Yakir Lubowsky got together for the opening of the exhibit.



Author Marc Leepson spoke about the life of General Lafayette at the June 5 Annual Meeting.

History Book Available

Warrenton, Virginia, a Unique History of 200 Years, written by Society members John Toler, Cheryl Shepherd and Ann Power has been reprinted, and is now available at the Old Jail Museum.

The new book was published by the Partnership for Warrenton Foundation and the Town of Warrenton in 2010 as part of the town's 200th anniversary.

Richly illustrated, the 160-page book includes a comprehensive description of Warrenton's many historic properties.

Greenback Raid

(Continued from Page 1)

ly crossroads deep in the wooded countryside.

The most successful exploits of Mosby and his Rangers were the capture of Brigadier Gen. Edwin Stoughton and of Gen. Phil Sheridan's entire supply train. His accidental capture of a Union Army payroll train is surely less significant, yet the "Greenback Raid," as it came to be called, was one of Mosby's most colorful adventures.

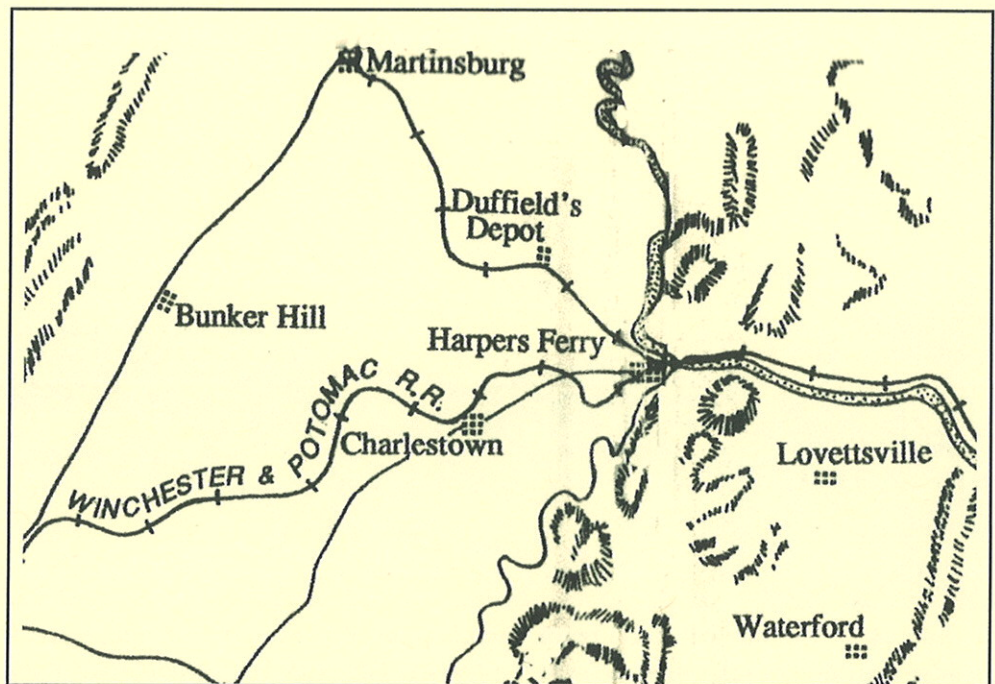
On Oct. 12, 1864, Mosby passed through union lines near Charlestown, and rode toward the B&O main line. At about 10 o'clock the next evening, he came to a deep cut near Kearneysville, eleven miles west of Harpers Ferry.

The cut was known as Quincy Siding, and was an emergency haven for trains running behind schedule. It was also an isolated place, perfect for an ambush. Mosby regarded deep cuts as the safest place to derail trains, because the cars would slide into the cushion of a soft bank, rather than roll over or go down an embankment.

The night was clear, cold and starlit. A few of the men removed some rails, while the remainder of the party concealed themselves along the tracks nearby. Soon, the sounds of an approaching train were heard from the east.

It drew near, then rattled on by, and disappeared in a smoky whirl. The rangers had mistakenly pulled up rails on the siding, rather than the main track. Oaths and foot stamping gave way to crowbars and strong backs. No more trains would pass Quincy Siding that evening.

At about one o'clock the next morning, the Western Express came up the grade from Duffield. Behind the locomotive, No. 27, were eight cars. Aboard were 200 weary passengers – many of them emigrants – resting as best they could inside the slowly swaying cars. The lamps were down and the



The Greenback Raid took place about 1 a.m. on Oct. 14, 1864, between Duffield's Depot and Harpers Ferry, at the northern extreme of 'Mosby's Confederacy.'

stoves were banked. The atmosphere was heavy, warm and drowsy.

While classified as an express, the train rarely exceeded thirty miles per hour and was already nearly four hours

see the missing rails. No. 27 derailed and turned over; the train came to a sudden and unexpected stop.

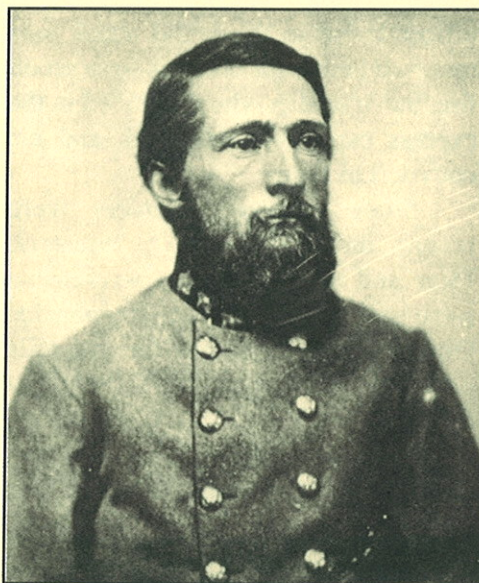
The passengers had no time to assess the damage, for Mosby's men immediately burst into the cars and demanded a general surrender. One Union officer resisted, and as he drew his revolver, was shot dead by Lt. Charles Dear.

A satchel held by Maj. Edwin L. Moore attracted the attention of Lt. Dear. He asked to see it, and was refused, but the other officers, sensing the danger to Moore, persuaded him to give it over.

Meanwhile, Lt. West Aldridge found the other paymaster, Maj. David C. Ruggles, attempting to hide himself and a large metal box under a blanket.

It was discovered that the bag and box were filled with paper money – \$168,000 in greenbacks. Mosby found train wrecking to be a mighty profitable business.

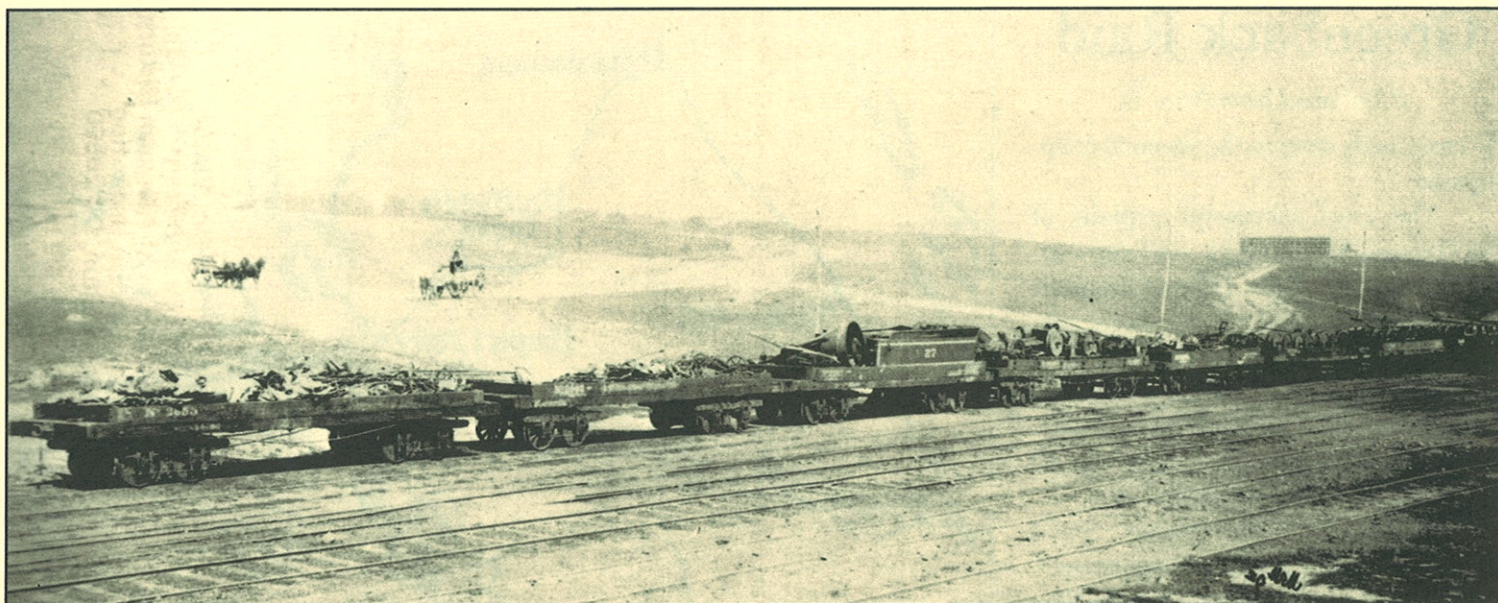
Meanwhile, the other Rangers were robbing the passengers and crew. Two cattle drovers were relieved of \$20,000. A. P. Shutt, con-



COL. JOHN S. MOSBY
at the time of the Greenback Raid

out of Baltimore. The engineer, Elijah Collins, and his son were up in the cab. They strained to see ahead, but the feeble headlight was of little help, and it is likely that they did not even

(Continued on Page 4)



Remnants of the burned B&O train, including an express car, a baggage car, five passenger cars and a sleeper car were loaded on flatcars for removal from the tracks. The tank from the tender marked "27" and the locomotive's smokestack can be seen near the center of the line of cars. It was reported that \$20,000 in cash and other property was also burned.

Greenback Raid

(Continued from Page 3)

ductor of the train, lost his prized gold watch and \$300 in cash. Rings, jewelry and cash were natural loot, but anyone possessing a new pair of boots or stylish hat had those removed as well.

One wily passenger, a Mr. Hooper from Martinsburg, managed to conceal \$10,000 about his person after giving the Rangers \$500 and claiming that this was all he possessed.

Mosby next ordered everyone out of the train, and made ready to burn the cars. The passengers dutifully left, except for a number of German immigrants. They sat tight and would not move. An interpreter explained that they had paid for through tickets, and would not leave their seats until delivered to the west.

Mosby saw a bundle of newspapers in one corner of the car, and told his men to scatter them about the aisle. After setting the papers ablaze, he remarked he would "...burn the d—d Dutch if they didn't disgorge and leave the car." Somehow, the communica-

tions gap was overcome and the immigrants fled the car in a general stampede out both ends.

Of course, the cars in this period were almost entirely wooden, and the train was soon consumed by the flames, leaving only the wheels and some incidental hardware. The body of the Union officer killed in the initial attack was removed before the coaches were set on fire, but a soldier who was killed in the express car was overlooked, and his body left to burn.

Some twenty prisoners were taken, including two paymasters. Dear and several trusted lieutenants were sent south with the Greenbacks. One of the party named Grogan tells what happened after they left Quincy Siding:

"We soon crossed over the river, and slept the remaining hours of that night in a mountain cabin, quite regardless of newly acquired wealth. All met next day at Bloomfield in Loudoun County, examined into the condition of our Sub U.S. Treasury.

Finding there was a net surplus of \$168,000, the same was divided among our stockholders (\$2,000) each and circulated so freely in Loudoun County that never afterwards was there a pie or

blooded horse sold in that section for Confederate money."

The entire affair transpired in no more than an hour, and yet Mosby's small band had cost the Union cause several hundred thousand dollars. The B&O lost eight cars: an express, a baggage, five coaches and a sleeper. The locomotive was seriously damaged.

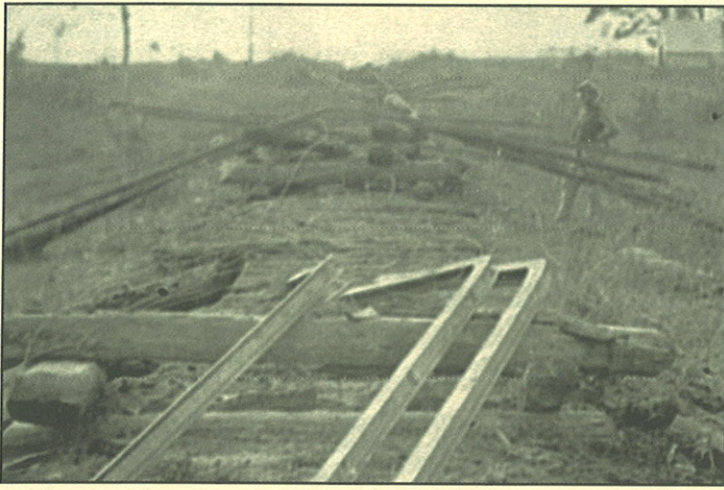
Claims for materials that had been aboard the train — including a shipment of books and an Adams Express Co. safe — added to the loss. Traffic was halted on the main line until 3 p.m., October 15.

Although the Greenback Raid was fairly well recorded in contemporary newspapers and Civil War histories, the aftermath is best preserved in two photographs of the damaged locomotive and the burned cars taken by R. M. McMurray, a one-time official photographer for the B&O.

These pictures reveal only the leavings of a violent moment, and in no way convey its excitement and horror.

The crumpled roofing tin, twisted iron rods and blackened castings are deceptively bland. They tell us so little. It is like trying to explain the

(Continued on Page 5)



Destruction of the tracks frequently disrupted railway service and caused derailments. In order to maximize the time the line was closed, rails were sometimes heated over burning cross-ties until they could be bent or twisted (left photo). In areas where guerrilla activity persisted, armed sentries were called to protect the railroad workers.

Greenback Raid

(Continued from Page 4)

life of some ancient city by viewing the moss-covered outline of its foundation stones. Yet however bland the

physical remnants, these photographs capture better than any printed word the drama of that late-night encounter at Quincy Siding.

(Reprinted with the permission of The Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, Inc. This article originally

appeared in the Spring 1982 edition of Railroad History, Bulletin 146. Mr. White, a former associate of the Smithsonian Institution, is one of America's foremost railroad historians.)

Pvt. J. P. Smith's Epilogue to the Greenback Raid

One of the youngest Ranger to participate in the Greenback Raid was Pvt. James Philip Smith. He was born Aug. 6, 1846, the son of James and Ann Moore Smith of "Old Hagley," in the village of Waterfall, Va.

His older brother, William Randolph Smith, was killed during the Battle of Frazier's Farm on June 30, 1862. His body was brought home and buried in the cemetery at Antioch Baptist Church in Waterfall.

Avenging his brother's death was the main reason James Philip joined the fight while so young. Barely 18 years old at the time of the raid, Pvt. Smith had been riding with Mosby for almost two years, and had fought in several skirmishes.

Once during a fight with the 6th New York Cavalry, he had his horse shot from under him, and "But for a

comrade who was quick on the draw, his fate would have been the same as his horse," according to an account written by his daughter, Mrs. Richard Benoni Gossom, in 1939.

Mrs. Gossom provided an interesting description of the Greenback Raid, and the subsequent actions involving her father.

"Papa was with the bunch that stopped the federal pay train near Harpers Ferry. Papa said some of the fellows began to act rough, such as taking the passengers' baggage. He told them, 'Come on, all we have the right to is the Federal Army money.'"

The ladies swarmed all around him. 'Oh, thank you, Col. Mosby. We knew you were a gentleman,' the said. Papa felt very important, being taken for Col. Mosby. He was just a kid!

They robbed the paymaster, divided the spoils and put it away for

their start in life. It is said that all's fair in love and war, and the money served them well. Mama (nee' Anna Marshall Foley) was such a young girl, but she enjoyed the show when the bunch rode through Waterfall waving their money, still uncut, great sheets of it, like flags.

The only other thing Papa got out of the raid was a box of fine cigars. He took them from one of molested trunks, and hid them in the ash pile at his father's house. The next time the Yankees came on a plundering expedition, the first thing they found was the box of cigars.

Fortunately for Pvt. Smith, they didn't find the money.

In 1998, William Randolph Smith, a namesake of the Civil War soldier killed at Frazier's Farm, published "The

(Continued on Page 6)

Pvt. J. P. Smith

(Continued from Page 5)

Civil War Experiences of William Randolph Smith" on line.

He notes that the 83 Rangers who participated in the Greenback Raid each got \$2,100, at a time when enlisted men were being paid \$13 a month in Confederate money – which by the time of the raid in late 1864 was virtually worthless.

Comments posted to the Web site reveal that James Philip Smith used his share of the money from the Greenback Raid to build a house at Waterfall called "Twin Oaks."

According to Lewis Smith, another descendant who still has a home at Waterfall, Pvt. Smith later built a larger home east of the village known as "New Hagley."

His daughter, Flora Smith, continued to live at "Twin Oaks, which burned in 1916. It was replaced by a new house, also called "Twin Oaks," which stands there today.



After the war, Pvt. James Philip Smith used his share of the captured greenbacks to build 'Twin Oaks,' in the village of Waterfall in Western Prince William County, shown above about 1900. The house burned in 1916.

During the Sesquicentennial, visit these sites in 'Mosby's Confederacy'

Leading up to the Greenback Raid were several other notable engagements in northern end of Mosby's Confederacy.

On June 24, 1864, Mosby's Rangers captured the railroad station at Duffield, which was being protected by members of the 10th Maine Regiment.

Using the small cannon he had acquired after losing a similar piece at Catlett's Station, Mosby intimidated the Union soldiers guarding the station, who surrendered without firing a shot.

On Sept. 24, 1864, Union Capt. Richard Blazer – on a special assignment with 100 cavalymen to capture Mosby – was attacked by the Rangers. A fierce fight ensued.

Capt. Blazer's force was completely routed, and he was captured by Pvt. Syd Ferguson in front of the Hefflebower House on the Myerstown-Rippon Road.

To reach the site of the Greenback Raid, head north on U.S. 29 from Warrenton, and then take U.S. 15 to Leesburg. As you approach Leesburg,

take a left turn on to the Route 7 bypass, toward Winchester.

From there, take Route 9, the Charlestown Turnpike, to Charlestown, and stay on Route 9 (by then called the Veterans' Memorial Highway) to Route 8 at Bardane, W. Va., and head east.

You will quickly go over the B&O

tracks at Brown's Crossing. The site of the raid is about 200 yards to the west of the crossing. The high banks have been cut away, but the siding is still there.

The Jefferson County Museum, located in the library at the intersection of Route 340 and Samuel Street in Charlestown, is also worth a visit.

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