



Take Sides with the Truth: The Postwar Letters of John Singleton Mosby to Samuel F. Chapman

John Singleton Mosby

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During the Civil War, John Singleton Mosby led the Forty-third Battalion, Virginia Cavalry, better known as Mosby's Rangers, in bold and daring operations behind Union lines. Throughout the course of the war, more than 2000 men were members of Mosby's command, some for only a short time. Mosby had few confidants (he was described by one acquaintance as "a disturbing companion") but became close friends with one of his finest officers, Samuel Forrer Chapman. Chapman served with Mosby for more than two years, and their friendship continued in the decades after the war. *Take Sides with the Truth* is a collection of more than eighty letters, published for the first time in their entirety, written by Mosby to Chapman from 1880, when Mosby was made U.S. consul to Hong Kong, until his death in a Washington, D.C., hospital in 1916. These letters reveal much about Mosby's character and present his innermost thoughts on many subjects. At times, Mosby's letters show a man with a sensitive nature; however, he could also be sarcastic and freely derided individuals he did not like. His letters are critical of General Robert E. Lee's staff officers ("there was a lying concert between them") and trace his decades-long crusade to clear the name of his friend and mentor J. E. B. Stuart in the Gettysburg campaign. Mosby also continuously asserts his belief that slavery was the cause of the Civil War—a view completely contrary to a major portion of the Lost Cause ideology. For him, it was more important to "take sides with the Truth" than to hold popular opinions. Peter A. Brown has brought together a valuable collection of correspondence that adds a new dimension to our understanding of a significant Civil War figure.

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