MORGAN IN ALEXANDRIA

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Preparing for a Raid

From late in 1862 to mid-1863, Confederate Gen. Braxton Bragg fortified his defenses in Middle Tennessee while Union Gen. William S. Rosecrans reinforced his army. To disrupt the extended Federal communication and supply lines, late in 1862 Bragg ordered Gen. John Hunt Morgan to attack the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. On this occasion, and again in 1863, Morgan initiated a cavalry raid into Kentucky from here in Alexandria.

Alexandria offered well-watered areas near the fairgrounds sufficient to assemble thousands of mounted men, a road leading north to multiple Cumberland River crossings, and a supportive population. The presence
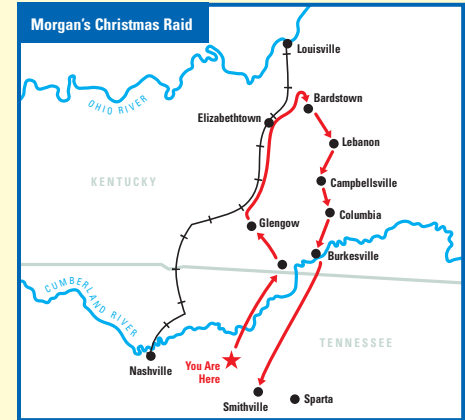

Gen. John Hunt Morgan
Courtesy Library of Congress

of the Confederate raiders was no secret, however, and there were those who felt that Morgan's use of the area left the residents open to Federal reprisal.

On December 22, 1862, Morgan headed north from Alexandria with 3,100 cavalrymen and several artillery pieces on his "Christmas Raid." Five days later, he reached Elizabethtown, Kentucky, where his men destroyed Louisville and Nashville Railroad trestles and bridges, temporarily rendering the line impassible. Pursuing Federal forces failed to block his return to Tennessee.

Morgan's most daring raid began here when on June 11, 1863, he led 2,400 cavalrymen through Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio in the deepest penetration of the North by Confederate troops. Federal gunboats patrolling the Ohio River prevented Morgan from returning south, and tireless pursuit by Federal forces led eventually to his capture and imprisonment.

Morgan's Raiders, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (Aug. 1865)

Morgan's Christmas Raid

Morgan's Ohio Raid