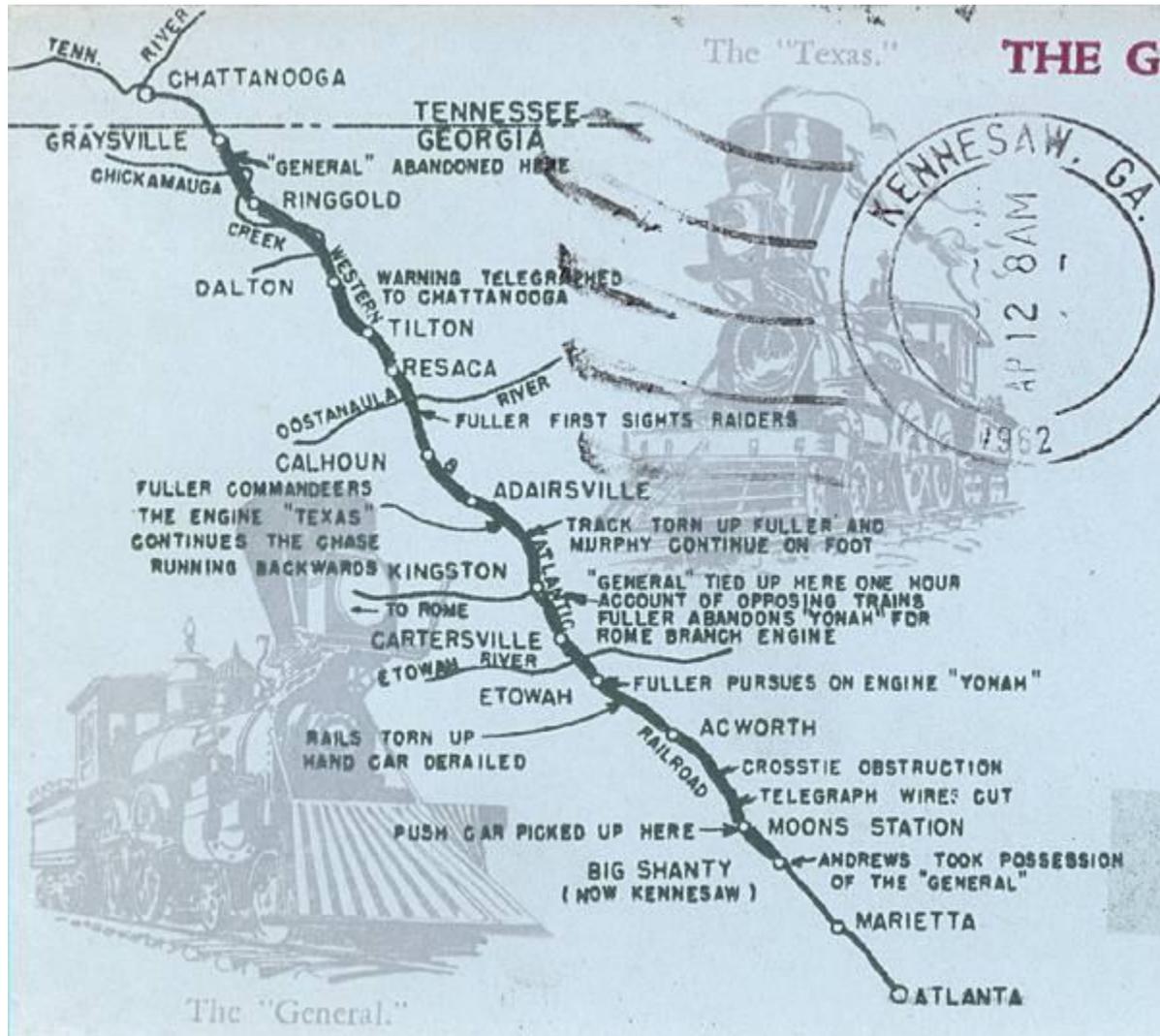


# Great Locomotive Chase



Map of The Great Locomotive Chase

In April 1862 During the American Civil War Maj. Gen. Ormsby M. Mitchel, commanding the Federal troops in middle Tennessee, planned to move south with his army and seize Huntsville, Alabama, before turning east in hopes of capturing Chattanooga. General Mitchel recognized the strategic value of seizing the rail and water transportation center of Chattanooga.

At the time, the standard means of preventing Chattanooga's reinforcement would have been its encirclement. But Chattanooga's natural water and mountain barriers to the east and south made this

nearly impossible with the forces that General Mitchel had available. He believed that if he could block railroad reinforcement from Atlanta, he could take Chattanooga. Once taken, the Union could enjoy the city's natural defenses and would have rail reinforcement and supply lines to its rear, leading west to the Union-held stronghold and supply depot of Nashville, Tennessee in the middle of the state.

James J. Andrews, a civilian scout and part-time spy, proposed a daring raid to destroy the Western and Atlantic Railroad link to Chattanooga, thereby isolating the city from Atlanta. He recruited the civilian William Hunter Campbell and 22 volunteer Union soldiers from three Ohio regiments, the 2nd, 21st, and 33rd Ohio Infantry. Andrews instructed the men to arrive in Marietta, Georgia, by midnight of April 10. With the plans delayed a day by heavy rain, they traveled in small parties in civilian attire to avoid arousing suspicion. All but two (Samuel Llewellyn and James Smith) reached the designated rendezvous point at the appointed time. Llewellyn and Smith joined a Confederate artillery unit, as they had been instructed to do in such circumstances.

## The Chase

Because railway dining cars were not yet in common use, railroad timetables included water, rest, and meal stops. In addition, as the locomotives of the time needed to frequently replenish fuel and water, stops for passenger and crew meals were combined with the stops for water and fuel as a feature of passenger railway travel.

On the morning of April 12, a northbound passenger train with the locomotive General stopped at Big Shanty, Georgia (now Kennesaw) so that the crew and passengers could breakfast at the Lacy Hotel. Andrews and his raiders hijacked the General and the first several rail cars. They intended to drive the train north towards Chattanooga to meet up with Mitchel's advancing army. The raiders chose to make their move at Big Shanty station because it had no telegraph. Along the way, Andrews planned to stop and tear up track, sabotage switches, burn covered bridges, and cut the telegraph wires at numerous locations. The raiders steamed out of Big Shanty, leaving behind startled passengers, crew members, and onlookers, which included a number of Confederate soldiers from Camp McDonald, which stood directly opposite the Lacy Hotel.



**The Locomotive 'General'**

The train's conductor, William Allen Fuller, and two other men, chased the stolen train, first on foot, then by handcar. Locomotives of the time normally averaged 15 miles per hour (24 km/h), with short bursts of an average speed of 20 miles per hour (32 km/h). In addition, the terrain north of Atlanta is very hilly, and the ruling grades are steep. Even today, average speeds are usually never greater than 40 miles per hour (64 km/h) between Chattanooga and Atlanta. Since Andrews intended to stop periodically to perform acts of sabotage, a determined pursuer, even on foot, could conceivably have caught up with the train before it reached Chattanooga.

Fuller spotted the locomotive Yonah at Etowah and commandeered it, chasing the raiders north all the way to Kingston. There, Fuller switched to the locomotive William R. Smith and continued north towards Adairsville. Two miles south of Adairsville, however, the raiders had destroyed the tracks, and Fuller was forced to continue the pursuit on foot. Beyond the damage, he took command of the southbound locomotive Texas at Adairsville, running it backwards and tender-first northward.

For a number of reasons, the raiders never got far ahead of Fuller. **First**, destroying the railway behind the hijacked train was a slow process. The raiders were too few in number and were too poorly equipped with the proper railway track tools and demolition equipment, or with suitable igniters and explosives (modern high explosive demolition munitions had not yet been invented), to effectively close the line. In the time the raiders had (for their number), they could not either permanently disable or destroy any section of the installed railway plant (track, switches, bridges) of the Western & Atlantic Railway between Marietta and Chattanooga. The railway was too well built for their efforts to yield anything more than minor, temporary, and superficial, damage.

**Second**, the raiders had stolen a regularly scheduled train on its route, and they needed to keep to the train's timetable. Had they reached a siding ahead of schedule, they would have had to wait there until scheduled southbound trains passed them before they could continue north.

**Third** (and neither Andrews nor Mitchel understood or foresaw this), Mitchel's threat upon Chattanooga occurred long enough in advance of the commencement of Andrews' raid that Confederate Military Railway officials in Chattanooga had sufficient time to order, organize, and implement the emergency evacuation of all engines and rolling stock in Chattanooga. Thus, special freight trains with superior right of passage (over the single track line between Chattanooga and Atlanta), were made up in Chattanooga, and ordered southbound, hauling critical railroad supplies away from the Union threat, so as to prevent their either being captured by General Mitchel, or trapped uselessly inside Chattanooga, during a Union siege of the city.

Andrews' claim as explanation to the Station Masters he encountered moving northward was that his train was a special northbound ammunition movement, ordered by; and in support, of General Beauregard's operations against the Union forces threatening Chattanooga. This story was sufficient for the isolated station masters Andrews' encountered moving northward (as he had cut the telegraph wires to the south). But it had no impact upon the Train Dispatchers and Station Masters north of him; whose telegraph lines to Chattanooga were working. And who were following their orders to dispatch and control the special train movements southward; at the highest level of priority; and superior to all other trains.

The conductors of southbound trains had superior right of passage over all other train movements between Chattanooga and Atlanta, including the regularly scheduled passenger train that Andrews had stolen and was operating northbound. While Andrews' verbal claim of special authority for an ammunition movement, was a bluff (that only worked in a Station Master's office without a working telegraph); his actual authority for movement, was only that of the stolen passenger train's regular schedule, and it's approved timetable, between it's origin and destination.

Andrews met the first of these southbound conductors at Kingston, where he had stopped (under the authority of his timetable) for the watering and fueling of his locomotive. As the first of the southbound Special Freight movements approached, Andrews inquired of that train's conductor why his train was carrying a red marker flag on its rear car. Andrews was told that Confederate Railway officials in Chattanooga had been told by Confederate Army officials that the Union Army under General Mitchel was approaching Chattanooga from Stevens, Alabama, intending to either capture or lay siege to the city, and as a result of this warning, the Confederate Military Railways had ordered the Special Freight movements. The red train marker flag on the southward train meant that there was at least one additional southward moving train behind the one which Andrews had just met; and, that Andrews and his train (regardless of whatever "orders" they were adhering too) had no "authority for movement"; until the last train of that sectional movement (displaying the appropriate rear marker flag), had passed him.

In the running of an "Extra" sectional movement, the conductor of the lead train is dispatched with orders to post markers (flags) on the front and rear of his train. These markers identify this train as the lead train of a sectional movement. The sectional movement can contain any number of individually powered sections (trains) with separate locomotives, cars, conductors, and crews. Extra section movements are to be regarded by all Dispatchers, Station Masters, conductors; and crews they may encounter, as being a single train (in multiple sections), whose authority for movement is superior to all other trains' movements on the line of road upon which they have been dispatched, until the last train (in the sectional movement, and displaying the proper flags) is passed. Then, and only then, may any other trains on the line, resume their movement; in accordance with their orders, their rank, and their hierarchy (their "authority for movement"), over the line.

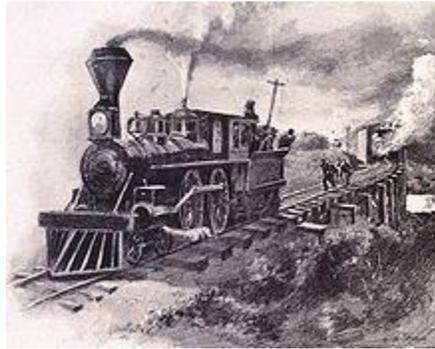
Neither Andrews or any other conductor or crew had authority to move their train onto the line of road where an "extra" sectional movement was operating until the last train of the sectional movement (as evidenced by the special flag on the rear car of the last train in the sectional movement) had passed. Any crew who failed to obey this rule would almost certainly be the cause of a head-on or rear-end collision, with the extra, sectional movement train. It was this operational reality that meant Andrews could not attempt to move north of Kingston until the final section of the "Extra" movement had passed. If that train too, had a red marker flag on its last car, Andrews was still not to attempt to move his train north of Kingston. It was this mechanism of delay that gave Fuller all the time needed to close the distance between them.

The raiders considered stopping to attack and overwhelm the first work party they encountered who were operating a locomotive, the Yonah, at Etowah. If the Yonah had been seized, it could possibly have been run at high speed and derailed, demolished, and/or its boiler deliberately exploded in a tunnel or covered bridge. This would have not only stopped Fuller's pursuit, but it would have achieved the raiders' mission

of closing the line between Marietta and Chattanooga. Additionally, the line would have remained closed until a major work party had been assembled to remove the destroyed locomotive and replace a destroyed bridge. However, given the size of the Yonah's work party (even though unarmed) relative to the size of the raiding party, Andrews judged that any firefight conducted to commandeer and safely escape with the Yonah would be too long and too involved without alerting nearby troops and civilians.

The Texas train crew had been bluffed by Andrews into taking the station siding, thereby allowing the General to continue northward along the single-track mainline. As Andrews' party had cut the telegraph lines, all train crews, station masters, and W&A management to the north had no idea that the General had been captured by the enemy. Fuller, when he met Texas, took command of her, picked up 11 Confederate troops at Calhoun, and continued his pursuit.

With The Texas still chasing the General tender-first, the two trains steamed through Dalton and Tunnel Hill. The raiders continued to sever the telegraph wires, but they were unable to burn bridges or damage Tunnel Hill. The wood they had hoped to burn was soaked by rain.



**The raiders set a train car on fire to try to ignite a covered railway bridge and thwart pursuit, from *Deeds of Valor***

Finally, at milepost 116.3, north of Ringgold, Georgia, just 18 miles from Chattanooga, with the locomotive out of fuel, Andrews' men abandoned the General and scattered. Andrews and all of his men were caught within two weeks, including the two who had missed the hijacking that morning

## **Aftermath**

Confederate forces charged all the raiders with "acts of unlawful belligerency"; the civilians were charged as unlawful combatants and spies. All the prisoners were tried in military courts, or courts-martial. Tried in Chattanooga, Andrews was found guilty. He was executed by hanging on June 7 in Atlanta. On June 18, seven others who had been transported to Knoxville and convicted as spies were returned to Atlanta

and also hanged; their bodies were buried unceremoniously in an unmarked grave (they were later reburied in Chattanooga National Cemetery).

Writing about the exploit, Corporal William Pittenger said that the remaining raiders worried about also being executed. They attempted to escape and eight succeeded. Traveling for hundreds of miles in pairs, they all made it back safely to Union lines, including two who were aided by slaves and Union sympathizers and two who floated down the Chattahoochee River until they were rescued by the Union blockade vessel USS Somerset. The remaining six were held as prisoners of war and exchanged for Confederate prisoners on March 17, 1863.

Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton awarded some of the raiders with the first Medal of Honor. Private Jacob Wilson Parrott, who had been physically abused as a prisoner, was awarded the first. Later all but two of the other soldiers also received the medals, with posthumous awards to families for those who had been executed. As civilians, Andrews and Campbell were not eligible



**Monument in the National Cemetery, Chattanooga, Tennessee**

The Ohio Monument dedicated to Andrews' Raiders is located at the Chattanooga National Cemetery. There is a scale model of the General on top of the monument, and a brief history of the Great Locomotive Chase. The General is now in the Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History, Kennesaw, Georgia, while the Texas is on display at the Atlanta Cyclorama.

One marker indicates where the chase began, near the Big Shanty Museum in Kennesaw, while another shows where the chase ended at Milepost 116.3, north of Ringgold — not far from the recently restored depot at Milepost 114.5.

There is a historic marker in downtown Atlanta, at the corner of 3rd and Juniper streets, at the site where Andrews was hanged.

## Raiders

Rank	Name	Unit	Date of Medal of Honor award	Notes
	<a href="#">James J. Andrews</a> (c. 1829-1862)		No award	Hanged in Atlanta; ineligible as a civilian for the Medal of Honor
Private	William Bensinger (1840-1918)	21st Ohio	March 25, 1863	Exchanged; later promoted to captain
Private	<a href="#">Wilson W. Brown</a> (1837-1916)	21st Ohio	September 17, 1863	Escaped; later promoted to 2nd lieutenant
Private	Robert Buffum (1828-1871)	21st Ohio	March 25, 1863	Exchanged; later promoted to 2nd lieutenant
	<a href="#">William Hunter Campbell</a> (1839-1862)		No award	Hanged; ineligible as a civilian for the Medal of Honor
Corporal	Daniel Allen Dorsey (1838-1918)	33rd Ohio	September 17, 1863	Escaped; later promoted to 2nd lieutenant
Corporal	Martin Jones Hawkins (1830-1886)	33rd Ohio	September 17, 1863	Overslept and did not participate; escaped; later promoted to sergeant
Private	William James Knight (1837-1916)	21st Ohio	September 17, 1863	Escaped

Corporal	Samuel Llewellyn (1841-1915)	33rd Ohio	No award	Did not participate; enlisted in a Confederate unit before reaching Marietta; later promoted to sergeant
Sergeant	<a href="#">Elihu H. Mason</a> (1831-1896)	21st Ohio	March 25, 1863	Exchanged; later promoted to captain
Private	<a href="#">Jacob Parrott</a> (1843-1908)	33rd Ohio	March 25, 1863	Exchanged; later promoted to 1st lieutenant
Corporal	<a href="#">William Pittenger</a> (1840-1904)	2nd Ohio	March 25, 1863	Exchanged; later promoted to sergeant
Private	John Reed Porter (1838-1923)	21st Ohio	September 17, 1863	Overslept and did not participate; escaped; later promoted to 1st lieutenant/ shot later
Corporal	<a href="#">William H. H. Reddick</a> (1840-1903)	33rd Ohio	March 25, 1863	Exchanged; later promoted to 2nd lieutenant
Private	Samuel Robertson (1843-1862)	33rd Ohio	September 17, 1863	Hanged as a spy; received award posthumously
Sergeant Major	Marion A. Ross (1832-1862)	2nd Ohio	September 17, 1863	Hanged as a spy; received award posthumously
Sergeant	John Morehead Scott (1839-1862)	21st Ohio	August 4, 1866	Hanged as a spy; received award posthumously
Private	Charles Perry Shadrack (1840-1862)	2nd Ohio	January 4, 2007	Hanged as a spy; real name was Phillip Gephart Shadrach
Private	Samuel Slavens (1831-1862)	33rd Ohio	July 28, 1883	Hanged as a spy; received award posthumously
Private	James Smith (1844-1868), born Ovid Wellford Smith	2nd Ohio	July 6, 1864	Did not participate; enlisted in a Confederate unit before reaching Marietta, but was held prisoner in Swims Jail during the Raid; later promoted to corporal
Private	George Davenport Wilson (1830-1862)	2nd Ohio	January 4, 2007	Hanged as a spy
Private	John Alfred Wilson (1832-1904)	21st Ohio	September 17, 1863	Escaped
Private	John Wollam (1840-1890)	33rd Ohio	July 20, 1864	Escaped

Private Mark Wood (1839- 21st September 17, Escaped; later promoted to 2nd lieutenant  
1866) Ohio 1863

In October 1911, a 50 year reunion was held by members of the 33rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry in Portsmouth, Ohio. The picture was taken in front of the Post Office. A contemporary newspaper account reported that, "...This will be a rare relic in a few years, when most of the 32 members who were present have passed away..". It is believed that second from right in the front row of the photograph is Daniel Dorsey and that second from the right in second row is Samuel Llewellyn - both of whom were reported at the reunion and both of whom were members of Andrews Raiders in 1862. Also note veteran second from the right in the third row who is wearing a Grand Army of the Republic hat badge.



33 Co. F. O.V.I. 61 to 65 Taken Oct. 12, 1911

[Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great\\_Locomotive\\_Chase](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Locomotive_Chase) Apr 2013 ++]