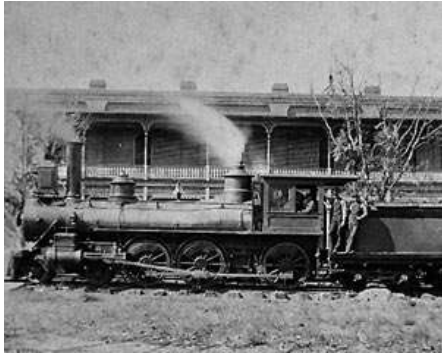


The Great Locomotive Chase

About North Georgia

Jefferson Cain's long fingers easily wrapped around *The General's* throttle, slowly pushing it forward until the wheels of the 57-ton locomotive bit the iron rails that ran from [Atlanta](#) to [Chattanooga, Tennessee](#). A gentle shudder and the train began to move away from the platform of the station. In the cars of this combined freight-passenger train conductor William Fuller was checking with his passengers. As he moved through the cars he noticed a familiar face - Anthony Murphy - the mustachioed Irish foreman of Locomotive Power for the [Western and Atlantic Railroad](#). He was on his way to the yard at [Allatoona Pass](#) to pick up a part. As the train left the station a cool Spring rain pelted the windows. It was 4:15am.



Locomotive and tender in front of Lacey Hotel, Kennesaw

Crossing the [Chattahoochee River](#) at Bolton, then passing through Vinings, *The General* arrived at the depot in [Marietta](#) about 5:00am. At the time the wooden depot sat across the street from the Fletcher House (now Kennesaw House) on the outskirts of Marietta Square. 20 men, most out of uniform Union soldiers, boarded the train after carefully purchasing tickets in smaller groups (2 men were left behind). Their secret journey south had been to look for a unit in which to enlist from Fleming County, Kentucky, or so they said.

Leading these northern spies was James Andrews, an enigmatic Kentuckian who had made a name for himself by smuggling much needed quinine through the Union lines for Confederate soldiers and citizens. Also with him were three experienced engineers, William Knight, Wilson Brown and John Wilson. It was a short ride to the depot at Big Shanty, where the train would stop for breakfast. It was here that the General would begin its incredible ride into history.

Additional Information:

[Great Locomotive Chase Participants](#)

Andrews choice of Big Shanty as the spot to steal *The General* might seem unusual at first. More than 300 recruits and officers called Camp McDonald home, training for fighting further north, and Camp McDonald surrounded the Big Shanty depot. A large, mobile force with arms and munitions could quickly bring an end to Andrews' plan, but it was what Big Shanty didn't have -- a telegraph -- that attracted Andrews. Without a telegraph someone would have a hard ride to Marietta to get the word out, giving him enough time to make his escape and cut the telegraph wires north of Big Shanty.

View [Andrew's Raid](#) in a larger map Lacey Hotel was an outpost for travelers between Atlanta and Chattanooga. There was little else in the area, besides the Lacey and the depot. "20 minutes for breakfast" came Fuller's call as the train slowed for Big Shanty. Once *The General* had stopped, the crew and some of the passengers headed to the hotel less than a block from the depot. A few minutes later Andrews signaled his men to take over the train.

Once the raiders had been given the signal they unhitched the passenger cars...they would be of no use to the raiders... while William Knight jumped into the cab, throwing the throttle wide open, lurching the train forward, slowly gaining speed. Quickly the train left the station but almost immediately began losing power. Knight brought the train to a stop while he corrected the problem, then returned to the cab and once again began to move.

"Someone...has stolen our train," William Fuller said with amazement as his train pulled away from the depot at Big Shanty. The W&ARR men stood up and quickly began the chase, Fuller leading the way with Jeff Cain close behind. Anthony Murphy paused briefly to get a man to ride to the depot in Marietta and tell them what happened. He then followed his friends up the track towards a work area known as Moon's Station. A small cavalry unit from Camp McDonald prepared to make chase.

Between Big Shanty and Moon's Station the General stopped twice, once for the mechanical problem and once to cut the telegraph wires to prevent the stations further north from receiving word from Marietta that a train had been stolen. At Moon's Station Andrews stopped and acquired a crowbar to destroy the rails between Atlanta and Chattanooga, for that was their mission. Union forces in Bridgeport, Alabama were advancing towards Chattanooga and the raiders job was to destroy bridges and tear up track to prevent reinforcements coming from Atlanta.

Andrews planned some aspects of the adventure very well. The General was an express train, so once past Big Shanty the number of stops was limited. This meant giving fewer explanations to curious stationmasters and a faster ride to Chattanooga. After the town of Allatoona he raised a rail so that any locomotive following them would be halted "in its tracks."

As Andrews and his men crossed the Etowah River they spotted the short-line locomotive The Yonah, used by Major Cooper's Iron Foundry. The presence of the engine and men meant that the raiders could not destroy the bridge they had just crossed, and a major target of the raid. Knight commented that they should return and destroy the locomotive to prevent men from following them. Andrews said no. As it turned out later, that was a big mistake.

Conductor William Fuller, a captain in the Georgia militia, was the first member of The General's crew to make it to Moon's Station. A brief discussion with foreman Jackson Bond secured a "pole car" for Fuller, who returned down the track to pick up his friends, engineer Cain and mechanic Murphy. They were joined by Mr. Bond for help in moving the car.

From Big Shanty to the Etowah River the grade of the Western and Atlantic Railroad is downhill -- an unusual 14-mile stretch. It would make no difference to a locomotive but on the pole car it was an important factor. In Acworth the car slowed to pick up two more men. Fuller's men did not slow at Allatoona and did not see the track raised by the raiders. The car flew into the air when it hit the empty space, throwing the pursuers into a ditch but damaging only their pride.

For the raiders Kingston would be a major hurdle. There was a switching station here that coordinated trains from Rome, Chattanooga and Atlanta and even under normal conditions it was difficult. But these were bad times for the Confederacy -- General [P. G. T. Beauregard](#) had just lost [Battle of Shiloh](#) on April 9th and Ormsby Mitchel had just taken Huntsville. Mitchel taking Huntsville was good news for the raiders - that was part of the plan that sent them south. What Andrews did not consider was that with Huntsville under Union control goods heading west would have to travel to Atlanta then west instead of moving west out of Chattanooga. This had

the single line of the WARR heavily used and stalled the advance of the raiders in [Kingston](#) for an hour.

When the pursuers arrived in Kingston Andrews had just left. Fuller's veteran eyes quickly sized up the situation in Kingston. Getting the Yonah through would be impossible but the mail train to Rome, the William R. Smith, was in position and fired up with a full head of steam. Oliver Harbin and his crew, including brakeman Joe Lassiter, a free black, did not hesitate to help Fuller. The William R. Smith then started north to Adairsville.

Andrews and the raiders knew they had to block a possible pursuit. The men in Kingston had been very inquisitive and one even refused to switch Andrews to the correct track at one point. Things were going so bad at the stop that the men in the boxcar had been told to be ready to fight. The General was halted while a rail was removed and ties thrown into the boxcar. Then, from the south came the plaintive cry of a locomotive whistle. No northbound train should be following them but one was...and not that far behind. Off sped The General.

Having learned a lesson at Allatoona, Fuller chose to ride in the cab to check for problems on the track. This time he saw the missing rail and had Olly Harbin stop the locomotive in time. Once again the pursuit was on foot, only Jeff Cain decided to return to Kingston. Fuller doggedly continued with the others but now Andrews and his raiders were gaining precious time with every minute that went by.



Adairsville Depot

[Roadside Georgia's Adairsville Depot](#) The General arrived in Adairsville quickly but now the questions were mounting. Out of touch with Atlanta for hours and now being unable to reach Kingston, the stationmaster and workers were understandably suspicious of the crew of *The General*. They barraged Andrews with questions, but the Kentuckian convinced them of his mission and he found out that Mitchel indeed was moving on Chattanooga. As the southbound freight train "*The Texas*" cleared the depot's platform Andrews and the raiders headed north.

By the time Peter Bracken, engineer of "*The Texas*," saw William Fuller from the cab of his locomotive Fuller and his pursuers had added a couple of miles on foot. Fuller, gun in hand, stood on the track in front of Bracken. The engineer recognized his fellow worker and stopped. A quick explanation and the Texas was off after picking up the men with Fuller. There had been no place nor time to turn around, so *The Texas* returned to Adairsville in reverse, where they dumped the freight cars off on a siding.<

William Knight had been carefully following the rules of the railroad, but once north of Adairsville Andrews told him to open up the throttle on *The General*. There would be ample opportunity to see any oncoming smoke plumes in the short, rolling hills in the Great Valley of northwest Georgia. Near Calhoun they narrowly avoided colliding with *The Catoosa*, and after a brief exchange of words the spies continued north.

After passing *The Catoosa* on a siding, *The Texas* was now in hot pursuit of the raiders with *The Catoosa* behind it, both chasing *The General* in reverse! North of Calhoun the Southern pursuers and the Northern spies first spotted each other. Andrews and his men set fire to the car at the end of the train and dropped it in the middle of the covered railroad bridge over the Oostanaula River

just south of Resaca.

Smoke billowed out of both ends of the bridge but Captain Fuller and his men entered the structure and pushed the car out. The bridge had not been in peril from Andrews actions because of the steady rain. As *The General* moved north through the town of Resaca the raiders tried to block *The Texas* by dropping railroad ties. This effort failed to slow Fuller and his men.

The diligent pursuit of Captain Fuller was beginning to pay off. Andrews had exhausted his wood supply trying to set the car on fire to burn the Oostanaula Bridge and water was in short supply. A quick attempt to replenish the thirsty locomotive and refill her tender was made at Green's (for wood) and Tilton (for water). For the raiders Dalton was the next major obstacle.

Edward Henderson began a southbound journey on foot from Dalton when the telegraph to Atlanta went out. Henderson was surprised when *The General* steamed by at full speed with a crew he did not know. When *The Texas* approached the 18-year old telegrapher just north of Calhoun, Fuller told Bracken to slow down and pick the boy up, then wrote out a message to General Leadbetter, commanding the troops in Chattanooga. In Dalton *The Texas* slowed to dropped the young man off. He ran to the telegraph office and sent the following message:

My train was captured this a.m. at Big Shanty, evidently by Federal soldiers in disguise. They are making rapidly for Chattanooga, possibly with the idea of burning the railroad bridges in their rear. If I do not capture them in the meantime, see that they do not pass Chattanooga.

Before the entire message got through Andrews Raiders, fearful of an attempt to warn the Rebel forces in Chattanooga, cut the wire north of Dalton, but enough of the message was received in Chattanooga that General Danville Leadbetter sent troops south along the Western and Atlantic right-of-way to halt the engine by force if necessary. It was not. With wood and water running out, William Knight and James Andrews knew the end was near. Then, just after the Ringgold Depot a small valve blew and the locomotive quickly lost power.

The General came to a halt about 2 miles north of Ringgold Gap. Andrews and his men fled. They moved west for two reasons: it was towards the closet pocket of Union control in the South and the rugged mountains south of Chattanooga could cover their movements and help prevent cavalry patrols from finding them. In spite of their plans a massive search netted all the participants, including the two men left on the platform in Marietta.

On May 2, 1862, The General returned to Atlanta. In early June, Andrews escaped from the Swaims Jail (sometimes listed as Swims Jail) in Chattanooga. Built by John Swaims and referred to as "The Hole," Swaims Jail was a slave jail before the Civil War and a fitting place for the raiders to be kept.

Andrews was hung on June 6, 1862. 6 other men, tried and convicted of being spies, were hung in Atlanta. 6 men would escape prison and 8 would be exchanged for prisoners. All the men except Andrews, who never enlisted, were awarded the [Medal of Honor](#).

Great Locomotive Chase Participants

About North Georgia

Known as "Andrews'" Raiders

1. James J. Andrews, Kentucky, Leader of the Expedition. **Hung**
2. William. Knight, Co. E, 21st Ohio Volunteers. **Escaped**
3. Wilson H. Brown, Co. F, 21st Ohio. **Escaped**
4. Mark Wood, Co. C, 21st Ohio. **Escaped**
5. Alfred Wilson, Co. C, 21st Ohio. **Escaped**
6. John R. Porter, Co. G, 21st Ohio. **Escaped**
7. Robert Buffum, Co. H, 21st Ohio. **Exchanged**
8. William Bensinger, Co. G, 21st Ohio. **Exchanged**
9. John Scott, Co. F, 21st Ohio. **Hung**
10. Sargent E. A. Mason Co. K, 21st Ohio. **Exchanged**
11. Daniel A. Dorsey, Co. H, 33d Ohio. **Escaped**
12. Martin J. Hawkins, Co. A, 33d Ohio. **Escaped**
13. John Whollan (Wollam), Co. C, 33d Ohio. **Escaped**
14. Jacob Parrot, Co. K, 33d Ohio. Corporal **Exchanged**
15. William Reddick, Co. B, 33d Ohio. **Exchanged**
16. Samuel Roberson Co. G, 33d Ohio. **Hung**
17. Samuel Slavens, Co. D, 33d Ohio. **Hung**
18. Corporal William Pittinger, Co. G, 2d Ohio. **Exchanged**
19. George D. Wilson, Co. B, 2d Ohio. **Hung**
20. Marion Ross, Co. A, 2d Ohio, Sergeant-Major of the Regiment. **Hung**
21. Perry D. Shadrack, Co. K, 2d Ohio. **Hung**
22. William. Campbell of Kentucky. **Hung**

In Pursuit of the Raiders

Crew of the General

1. William A. Fuller, Conductor
2. E. Jefferson (Jeff) Cain, Engineer
3. Anthony Murphy, Foreman of Machinery and Motive Power for the [Western and Atlantic Railroad](#)

Crew of the Texas

1. Peter James Bracken, Engineer
2. Henry Haney, Fireman
3. Fleming Cox, Engineer - Mr. Cox was an engineer on the Memphis and Charleston Railroad who relived Haney as fireman.
4. Alonzo Martin - boarded in Calhoun. Unloaded tender car.

Others involved:

1. Edward R. Henderson - Telegraph operator (messenger), Dalton

2. Jackson Bond - worked at Moon's Station. Continued on with the pursuers to Ringgold.

The Locomotives

1. The General - Combined passenger - freight train that ran from Atlanta to Chattanooga and back. The train stolen by Andrews' Raiders
2. The Texas - Freight train that was heading south on the W&ARR. Picked up by Fuller and the pursuers south of Adairsville.
3. The Yonah - First train picked up by the pursuers at Etowah Station.
4. William R. Smith - Train on the Rome RR. "Long Bill" Smith was first president of the railroad.
5. The Catoosa - Often overlooked player in the Great Locomotive Chase, the crew of the Catoosa nearly ended the chase north of Adairsville. After letting the General go by, and seeing the Texas following, they joined the run behind the Texas.

Names for the raid

1. The Great Locomotive Chase
2. Andrews Raid(ers)
3. Andrews Wild Raid
4. Railroad Raiders of '62
5. Mitchel Raiders (Ormsby Mitchel commanded the men who served as spies.)

The General

Born December, [1855](#), Paterson, New Jersey

Current residence: Kennesaw, Georgia



The General from front

That The General captures the heart and soul of Civil War and railroad enthusiasts is a fact. The "why" is a little harder to explain. Early in the Civil War, spies rode this combined freight-passenger train into history in an event now popularized as "[The Great Locomotive Chase](#)." It was nearly destroyed as General [John Bell Hood](#) burned the railyard and some of the city before he left [Atlanta](#), a scene vividly recreated in [Gone With the Wind](#). For the next 135 years this locomotive would earn a place in the hearts of many Americans, train-lovers and Civil War veterans and buffs alike.

The General and her sister locomotive The Texas were born in December, [1855](#) and January [1856](#), respectively, in the city of Paterson, New Jersey. Although some aficionados dislike the word "sister" the term is frequently used to describe the two engines.

She made the journey to Georgia by ship from Philadelphia, then by rail to her home, the yard of the Western and Atlantic Railroad in Atlanta. The American 4-4-0 would run on the W&ARR

throughout most of her life, occasionally straying outside the 138 miles of track belonging to the state-owned railroad between Chattanooga and Atlanta.

Civil War

See also: [Western and Atlantic Railroad in the Civil War](#)

On [April 12, 1862](#), 21 men stole The General from Big Shanty and ran her to Ringgold, Georgia, where she slowed to a stop some two miles north of [the depot](#). The spies hastily disembarked and fled. Unable to move to a side track under her own power, the General got an assist from her "sister" The Texas, who pushed the engine to Greysville for wood and water, then pulled her to Ringgold for repair. After the capture of Andrews' Raiders in the forests of North Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama, The General hauled them back to Atlanta on [May 2](#).



As the [Atlanta Campaign](#) moved [William Tecumseh Sherman](#)'s army closer and closer to Atlanta, The General had fewer miles it could travel. Finally, almost all of the W&ARR route was under Union control so the General was impressed and put on workhorse duty between Atlanta and Macon. She pulled the last train out of Atlanta on [September 1, 1864](#). She never made her destination, halting at Rough and Ready and returning because of heavy artillery fire.

By the time it returned, the evacuation of Atlanta by Hood's Army of Tennessee was nearly complete. General Hood had one last job for the locomotive. He ordered it, along with five other engines, run into the 81-car munitions train that could not be moved since all rail lines to Atlanta had been severed.

Although badly damaged from the resulting explosion and fire, The General survived and ran on the United States Military Railroad Service (USMRS), continuing her service to the Western and Atlantic after the USMRS returned the W&ARR equipment. During this time the practice of naming trains had been replaced by the practice of giving them numbers. The General was now No. 39. The numbers were assigned based on the age of the locomotives.

During the 1870's and 80's she continued her service, surviving new owners and a railroad crash in Kingston, finally moved into "accommodation service." Her job here was to pull excursions, frequently groups pertaining to the Civil War. Another popular group was the "car accountants," photographed with the aging locomotive at Allatoona Pass ([Hike it](#)) on a number of occasions. On May 30, [1891](#), The General was pulled out of service for one last time. A new marker known as the "Ohio Monument" was to be dedicated to the seven raiders buried in [Chattanooga National Cemetery](#). No longer did she run for the Western and Atlantic; the lease had been picked up by the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railroad the year before. And it did not carry the familiar #39; she was now #3.

After her appearance at the dedication, the General retired to a siding in Vinings, where the old locomotive languished for a year when a photographer "discovered" the old lady and convinced the president of the NC&StL to refurbish her and send the locomotive to the Chicago Exposition. Starting in September, [1892](#), it was common for the newly outfitted General to visit reunions and

dedications. In [1895](#) The Cotton States and International Exhibition counted The General as one of its visitors.

On May 16, [1901](#), the aging lady was put on permanent display at Union Depot in [Chattanooga](#). Throughout the years, a number of films were made about her adventure including Railroad Raiders of '62, The General starring Buster Keaton ([VHS](#), [DVD](#)), and The Great Locomotive Chase ([VHS](#), [DVD](#)). None of these are considered historically accurate and none of them used The General.

Invitations abounded for her to leave her berth at Union Station and venture around the country. In [1927](#) she helped celebrate the 100th anniversary of the railroad in America at a festival in Maryland. In [1939](#), she visited the New York World's Fair. It would be a big year for the locomotive. In December, "Gone With the Wind" ([VHS](#), [DVD](#)) premiered and once again The General was in the spotlight. She had been offered a part in the film but the cost of moving the old lady west for filming was prohibitive.

For more than 60 years the General had been a centerpiece of the Union Depot in Chattanooga. In June, [1961](#), the Louisville and Nashville moved her under cover of darkness from Chattanooga to Nashville. It was not the first time or last that a city suffered "General-envy." Stone Mountain, [Atlanta](#), [Marietta](#), the [Chickamauga Battlefield](#), and Paterson, N. J. had expressed various levels of interest in the locomotive or actually made an attempt to take her.

Nashville's theft of the engine, though, was well intentioned. The L&N rebuilt The General to exhibit her for the Civil War Centennial. On a cool February day in [1962](#) she came out of her stall and moved under her own power for the first time in more than 50 years. After returning to Louisville as the Centennial ended the debate arose as to who should have the General. The state of Georgia expressed an interest but 60 years in Union Station gave Chattanooga the rights to the locomotive. Or so they thought.



On a trip south, America's Scenic City seized The General in [1967](#). For three years a legal battle was waged over a locomotive and would be carried all the way to the Supreme Court, who refused to hear the case. It let stand a lower court ruling that the L&N Railroad owned The General and can dispose of it as they wished.

The state of Georgia had long desired The General, and had made it well known to the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. With the help of Gov. Jimmy Carter The General returned to the most appropriate place, in a cotton gin about a hundred yards from the site of the original theft of the engine, Kennesaw, Georgia.

Since April 12, [1972](#), The General has spent her retirement in the perfect place, the [Kennesaw Civil War Museum](#) (formerly the Big Shanty Museum), protected from the elements not far from the start of America's most famous train story!