

THE ANDREWS' RAIDERS
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On the evening of April 7, 1862, under storm-threatening skies, twenty-three volunteers from the Ninth Brigade of the Union Army, commanded by Col. Joshua W. Sill, met on a lonely knoll east of Shelbyville, Tennessee, to plan one of the most daring expeditions conceived during the War Between the States.

These men, from the Second, Twenty-first and Thirty-third Ohio Volunteer Infantry, plus one civilian volunteer, met with a Northern Secret Service agent by the name of James J. Andrews.

Mr. Andrews, along with Gen. Ormsby M. Mitchel, had planned an expedition to penetrate deep into the Southern lines in Georgia to disrupt and destroy the railroad lines between Atlanta, Georgia and Knoxville, Tennessee. By stealing a locomotive and returning north, they could burn bridges and destroy the track along the Western and Atlantic Railroad, thereby cutting off the means of support of the Confederate Army now in possession of Chattanooga. This would permit Gen. Mitchel to move southeast from Murfreesboro, Tennessee and seize Huntsville, Alabama and then move eastward to take Chattanooga.

With the rail line destroyed, the Rebels in Chattanooga could not be easily reinforced from Atlanta and the city would certainly fall to the Yankee troops.

Following the hillside meeting, these volunteers had three days to travel to Marietta, Georgia, as the operation was scheduled to begin on the morning of April 11th.

As the raiders made their way south in small groups, it began to rain and did not stop for the next several days. This caused Andrews to assume that Gen. Mitchel would not be able to move on Huntsville as planned and he passed the word along the way to postpone the raid by one day. This assumption would prove to have a disastrous effect upon the expedition in the end.

All but two of the raiders had managed to reach Marietta by April 11th, where they stayed in two separate hotels. Andrews met with each group and discussed the plans for the next day.

The following morning, April 12th, at four o'clock a.m., the locomotive "General," with a mixed passenger and freight train, left Atlanta and headed for its first stop at Marietta. On board were Jeff Cain, the engineer, William A. Fuller, the conductor and Anthony Murphy, a foreman of the motive power and

machinery department of the Western and Atlantic Railroad.

The train arrived at Marietta about five o'clock a.m. and Andrews and nineteen of his raiders boarded the passenger cars, having purchased tickets to various stops up the line. Raiders John R. Porter and Martin J. Hawkins did not board the train as they had overslept that morning and did not get to take part in the seizure of the train.

At six o'clock a.m. the "General" made a scheduled twenty-minute breakfast stop at Big Shanty (now Kennesaw), Georgia and all but the raiders disembarked and walked to the Lacy Hotel for their morning meal.

When all had left, Andrews, along with William Knight, Wilson Brown and William Campbell, the civilian, mounted the locomotive while the other raiders, after uncoupling the passenger cars, piled into one of the three remaining boxcars.

On Andrews' command, Knight opened the throttle and the "General" started forward, leaving bewildered passengers and crew behind.

Conductor Fuller, on seeing the train leave, was joined by Murphy and Cain and proceeded to give chase on foot. Fuller reasoned that deserters from Camp McDonald, which was situated across the tracks from the Lacy Hotel, had stolen the train and would abandon it as soon as they had gotten far enough from the camp.

As the "General" raced northward, the raiders stopped several times to cut the telegraph lines and to obstruct the tracks.

Andrews had instructed his engineers to keep close to the established rail schedule so as to not attract undue attention.

He knew that they would have to wait for one southbound train along the way north and that it would then be a clear line to Chattanooga.

As the raiders continued north, they made several stops to take on wood and water. At these points, in order to appease the curious, Andrews stated that he was running a special train of ammunition north to Gen. Beauregard at Corinth.

In the meantime, Fuller and his companions had appropriated a hand cart from a work gang and were continuing the pursuit of the stolen train.

Upon arriving at the Etowah Bridge, they commandeered the switch engine "Yonah," and continued their relentless pursuit of the "engine thieves." The raiders, upon reaching Kingston, knew that they would have to pull onto a

siding and wait for the scheduled southbound freight before continuing north.

This is where Andrews' decision to postpone the raid by one day proved to be a tragic mistake. Gen. Mitchel had not postponed his move on Huntsville, but had gone ahead as planned and now was threatening Chattanooga. This movement had caused much concern on the part of the rebels in Chattanooga, who consequently began sending special trains loaded with supplies to the south to keep them from being captured by the Union army.

Thus, after the expected southbound freight arrived at Kingston, Andrews learned that he would have to wait for two additional trains from the north. After spending over an hour on the siding, the "General" was able to leave Kingston and continue north, but the delay had enabled Fuller to arrive in Kingston only four minutes after their departure.

At Kingston, Fuller and his party, reinforced by several rebel soldiers, seized the locomotive, "William R. Smith" and continued the chase.

At Adairsville, the raiders passed another southbound freight, which was being pulled by the locomotive, "Texas," with Peter Bracken at the controls. The relentless Fuller was forced to abandon the "William R. Smith" south of Adairsville due to a missing rail, which the raiders had torn up. He and Murphy made their way on foot until they encountered the "Texas" making its way south. They boarded the "Texas" and resumed the chase with the "Texas" running in reverse.

The gap between the "General" and the "Texas" gradually closed so much that Andrews and his raiders were forced to forgo their plans to destroy the bridges. Eventually the raiders, with their engine running out of fuel and water, were forced to abandon the "General" two miles north of Ringgold, Georgia.

Within a week the "engine thieves" were captured and imprisoned in Chattanooga. During this time, Andrews was tried by a court martial, but due to movements by Gen. Mitchel, the raiders were moved to a jail in Madison. Later they were again moved back to Chattanooga.

On May 31st, twelve of the raiders were moved to Knoxville to await a court martial.

On June 6th, Union artillery began to bombard Chattanooga and the raiders were moved south by train to Atlanta. Ironically the train, which carried them to Atlanta, was pulled by none other than the "General."

No sooner had they reached Atlanta than Andrews was taken by carriage through the streets to a place where he was hanged in accordance with the

verdict of his court martial.

Not long after Andrews' execution, the raiders in Knoxville were removed to Atlanta and placed with their companions. On June 18th, 1862, William H. Campbell, Samuel Robertson, John Scott, Philip Shadrach, Samuel Slavens, George Wilson and Marion A. Ross were hanged near the Oakland Cemetery in Atlanta.

On October 16, 1862, the remaining fourteen raiders attempted an escape. Of the fourteen, eight were successful and eventually reached Federal lines after much difficulty. The other six were recaptured and eventually exchanged. These exchanged prisoners were to become the first recipients of the Nation's newest and highest award, the Medal of Honor. It was presented to them by Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, on March 25, 1863. Pvt. Jacob Parrott, a native of Kenton, Ohio, was the first recipient. On September 9, nine more of the raiders were presented the medal. Eventually, 19 of the 24, including four of those who were hanged as spies, were eventually presented with the medal. As civilians, neither Andrews nor Campbell were eligible for the medal.

Andrews, and the seven who were hung, were later removed to the National Military Cemetery in Chattanooga where they now rest beneath a large memorial, on the top of which is a replica of the famous "General."

Of the raiders, one was known to have been a member of the Masonic Fraternity at the time, and one would later become a member.

Sergeant Major Marion A. Ross was born in Christiansburg, Ohio on October 9, 1832, and was the son of Levi and Mary (Ruffner) Ross. His father, a native Virginian, was a veteran of the War of 1812, and later became a charter member of Mt. Olivet Lodge No. 226 in Christiansburg. Marion was initiated into Mt. Olivet Lodge on May 29, 1855, passed on July 11, 1855 and raised on August 4, 1855. A recipient of the Medal of Honor, he is interred in the National Military Cemetery in Chattanooga.

Corporal Daniel A. Dorsey, who escaped from the rebel prison, was later initiated in South Macon Lodge No. 467, Macon, Illinois on December 1, 1868, passed on January 5, 1869 and raised on February 2, 1869.

He later became a charter member of Blue Mound Lodge No. 682, Blue Mound, Illinois. He then affiliated with Rob Morris Lodge No. 46 in Kearney, Nebraska before finally becoming a member of Enid Lodge No. 80, in Enid, Oklahoma. Brother Dorsey, also a Medal of Honor recipient, was on leave from the Veterans' Administration Home in Wadsworth, Kansas, when he died in Columbus, Ohio on May 10, 1918. He was buried in the Leavenworth National

Cemetery in Wadsworth.

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Delivered to Millennium Council No. 382, AMD – 6/30/04

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