

# The Story Of The "General"

Included in a Mantua "General" model  
railroad kit produced about 1950

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**The Capture of a Locomotive a  
Brilliant Exploit of the War**

## "TWENTY MINUTES FOR BREAKFAST!"

Nothing particularly interesting about the old familiar cry, but when, on a bright April day in 1862, the train man sang out: "Big Shanty, twenty minutes for breakfast," the hearts of a score of brave men beat faster, as they knew the hour had come for the beginning of one of the grandest exploits in history.

The men, from their dress, were citizens, and had boarded the northbound train at Marietta, a pretty little Georgia town twenty miles north of Atlanta. They paid their fares to different points, and from the conversation one would suppose that they were refugees from the Yankees,

but in reality they were disguised soldiers of the United States Army under command of General Mitchell, then in middle Tennessee, bound south.

They were volunteers to do a dangerous work, and were to get through the country as best they could to Marietta, then board a train bound for Chattanooga, and, at Big Shanty, seven miles away, while the train crew and passengers were at breakfast, detach the engine, run north, obstruct the track, cut the wires and burn bridges, of which there were fifteen between Big Shanty and Chattanooga. This was the brilliant scheme; how well it was carried out is related in the following story:

On the morning of the 12th of April, 1862, Captain W. A. Fuller left Atlanta at 6:00 o'clock in charge of the passenger train, having three empty freight cars next to the engine, which were intended to bring commissary stores from Chattanooga to Atlanta. When he reached Marietta, twenty miles distant from Atlanta, a considerable party of strangers, dressed in citizens' clothes, got on board and paid their fares, some to one point and some to another. They all claimed to be refugees from within the Yankee lines, desirous of joining the Confederate Army.

Seven miles from Marietta, at Big Shanty, the train stopped for breakfast.

Most of the passengers and train's crew went to the breakfast house, which was situated some forty feet from the track. At this time Big Shanty was the location of a camp of instruction, called

## CAMP McDONALD

and there were about three thousand Confederate recruits there at the time, being drilled ready to send to the front for active service. The passengers had taken seats at the table. Captain Fuller was sitting on the opposite side of the table from the railroad, and facing the train. He saw through the window some of the strangers who got on at Marietta get on the engine in an excited manner and

## START OFF RAPIDLY

with the three freight cars detached from the passenger train. He remarked to his engineer, Mr. Jeff Cain, and to Mr. Anthony Murphy, who was present, and at that time foreman of the Western & Atlantic Railroad shops: "Some one who has no right to do so has gone off with our train." All three arose and hurried out of the house just as the engine passed out of sight.

Some deserters had been reported as having left Camp McDonald, and the commanding officer had requested Captain Fuller to look out for them and arrest any soldiers who attempted to get

on his train without a passport. No one had any idea that the parties in possession of the engine were Federals, but supposed that it had been, taken by parties desiring to desert Camp McDonald, and who would run off a short distance and abandon it.

Captain Fuller, Murphy and Cain left Big Shanty with a clear and well defined motive and a fixed determination to recapture the engine, no matter who the parties were. They started out

### ON FOOT AND ALONE,

nothing daunted in putting muscle in competition with steam. Captain Fuller outran his companions and soon reached

Moon's Station, two miles from Big Shanty. Here he learned from the track men that the men with the engine stopped and took their tools from them by force. They reported that on the engine and in the freight cars there were twenty-four or twenty-five men, and that while some of the men gathered the tools, others climbed the telegraph Poles and cut the wires in two places, carrying away about one hundred yards of the wire. This statement satisfied Captain Fuller that these men were Federals in disguise. This added new stimulus to his resolve. The determination then was not only to capture his engine, but the Federals.

With the assistance of the track hands, he placed on the track a hand car, such as is used to haul crossties and tools, and pushed back for his engineer, when he, soon met Messrs. Murphy and Cain.

Knowing the schedules, grades, stations and distances so well, he was confident that by using great effort he could reach Etowah River by the time the fugitives could reach Kingston. At Kingston he knew they would have to contend with a number of freight trains, which would necessarily detain them several minutes.

As soon as he got Mr. Murphy and Mr. Cain on board, he told them his plan was to push on to Etowah as quickly as possible, for there he hoped to get old

"Yona", an engine used at Cooper's Iron Works, and this plan proved successful. In the "rapid transit" by hand car, Captain Fuller, Mr. Murphy and Mr. Cain took turns in pushing,

## TWO RUNNING ON FOOT

and pushing, while the other rested; one mile from Moon's Station they found a large pile of crossties on the track-placed there by the fugitives to obstruct pursuit. The obstructions were removed, and they pushed on to Acworth. Here they pressed into service such guns as they could find, and were joined by two citizens, Mr. Smith, of Jonesboro, and Mr. Steve Stokely, of Cobb County, who

rendered valuable service in the subsequent pursuit. Resuming their journey they found no obstructions until they reached a short curve two miles from Etowah. Here two rails from the outside of the curve had been taken up. The result was the hand car was ditched. In a few seconds Captain Fuller and his men had the car on the track

### BEYOND THE BREAK,

and with renewed energy and determination they pushed on to Etowah, where, to their great joy, they found the engine, as they supposed they would. And yet it appeared a slim chance. The engine was standing on the sidetrack with the tender on the turntable. The

tender was turned around and pushed to the engine and, a coal car attached. Some six or eight Confederate soldiers volunteered in the chase and took passage in the coal car. From Etowah to Kingston Captain Fuller ran at the rate of

## SIXTY MILES PER HOUR

and found that the fugitives had passed by. A large number of freight trains had pulled by the station so as to let the fugitives out at the further end of the track. The agent informed Captain Fuller that the leader of the fugitives claimed to be a Confederate officer who had impressed the train at Big Shanty and the three cars were loaded with fixed

ammunition for General Beauregard at Corinth. Captain Fuller, he said, was behind with the regular passenger train. He insisted that the agent should let him have a switch key and instruct the conductors of the down trains to pull by and get out of his way, as it was important for him to go on to Chattanooga and Corinth as rapidly as possible. So authoritative was he in his demands, and so plausible in his speech, that the agent, a patriotic man, believing his story, carried out his request, and so the fugitives, by the finesse of their leader, passed by one great obstruction. The freight trains were gathered here, and so heavy to, move, that had Captain Fuller stopped to get them out of his

way, to pass/ his delay would have been too long. Finding that he could not pass with old "Yona," he abandoned it. The Rome engine was on the "Y," headed for Chattanooga, with one car attached. He immediately took possession of it, and continued the chase with all who would volunteer to go with him. He had not proceeded far before he found crossties on the track every two or three hundred yards. After passing Kingston the fugitives punched out the end of the rear car, which enabled them to drop out ties without slacking up. Captain Fuller was forced to lose time in stopping to remove these obstructions. Laboring under these disadvantages, the pursuers redoubled their energy and proceeded to

Adairsville. When he reached a point four miles from Adairsville he found sixty yards of track torn up, and

## SET OUT ON FOOT

calling on his men to follow. When he had gone half a mile he looked back and saw none but Anthony Murphy following him. He made two miles as

## QUICK AS HE COULD RUN,

and met the express freight. Having a gun and knowing the signal, the engineer recognized Captain Fuller and stopped the train immediately. Knowing that Mr. Murphy was only a short distance behind, the train was detained until he

came up. He then took a position at the rear end of the train, twenty car lengths from the engine and

## STARTED BACKWARD

in the direction of Adairsville, without taking time to explain to the engineer or conductor. When he got within two hundred yards of the switch at Adairsville, Captain Fuller jumped off the train, ran ahead and changed the switch so as to throw the cars on the sidetrack. He accomplished this, changed the switch to the main track and jumped on the engine, which had been uncoupled from the train. This feat was accomplished so quickly that the train and engine

## RAN SIDE BY SIDE

for fully three hundred yards. He now had only the engine with the following crew: A. Murphy, Peter Bracken, the engineer, Fleming Cox, the fireman, and Alonzo Martin, wood-passer. He resumed the chase, making Calhoun, ten miles distant, in twelve minutes. As he approached Calhoun, Captain Fuller recognized the telegraph operator from Dalton, a lad twelve years old. The operator also recognized Captain Fuller, and, as the engine passed by at the rate of

FIFTEEN MILES PER HOUR

grasped Captain Fuller's hand held out to him, and was safely landed on the engine. The operator, having discovered that the wire had been cut, made his way down to Calhoun, looking for the break. As they sped along backwards as last as an engine with five-foot ten-inch wheels could possibly run, Captain Fuller wrote the following telegram to General Ledbetter, then in command at Chattanooga. "My train was captured this A.M. at Big Shanty, evidently by Federal soldiers in disguise. They are making rapidly for Chattanooga, possibly with an 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." Captain

Fuller's desire now was to reach Dalton and send the telegram before the fugitives could cut the wire beyond Dalton. Two miles beyond Calhoun

## THE FUGITIVES WERE SIGHTED FOR THE FIRST TIME,

and from their movements they were evidently greatly excited. They detached one of their freight cars and left it at the spot where they were discovered. They had partially taken up a rail, but that or the car did not detain Captain Fuller. He coupled the car to the engine without stopping, got on top of the freight car and gave signals to the engineer by which he could run, as the car in front obscured his view. Two and a half miles farther

Captain Fuller came across another freight car which the fugitives had detached. As before, he coupled this on without stopping, and pushed on to Resaca, where he switched the two cars off on the siding. Again he started with an engine only. Two miles north of Resaca, while standing on the rear of the tender, he discovered in a short curve a T-rail diagonally

## ACROSS THE TRACK

and, being too close to stop, the engine went over it at the rate of fifty-five miles an hour. After this, until they reached Dalton, only occasionally were obstructions met with. At Dalton he

dropped the telegraph operator, with instructions to put through the telegram at all hazards, and continued the chase. Two miles beyond he overtook the fugitives

## TEARING UP THE TRACK

in plain view of Col. Jesse A. Glenn's regiment, camped near by. They cut the telegraph wire just after the Dalton operator had flashed Captain Fuller's telegram over it, preventing him from receiving the usual acknowledgment from Chattanooga. The fugitives resumed their flight, and never, perhaps, did two engines with five-foot ten-inch wheels make faster time than the pursued and the pursuer. The fugitives had the advantage,

from the fact that the "General," a "Rogers," was headed for Chattanooga, while the "Texas," a "Danforth and Cook" engine, was running backward.

The fifteen miles to Ringgold and three miles beyond was made in less time than Captain Fuller ever made the same distance in twenty-two years experience as a conductor. Half way between Ringgold and Graysville he got within one-quarter of a mile of the fugitives, who, being so closely pressed, set their only remaining

## FREIGHT CAR ON FIRE

with a view of cutting it loose on the next bridge. The smoke of the "General"

plainly evidenced that she was fagging. The fugitives abandoned the engine and took to the woods in a westerly direction. Captain Fuller now ran up and coupled on to the burning car. The fire was extinguished and the car sent back to Ringgold in charge of the engineer. As Captain Fuller passed Ringgold he noticed some fifty or seventy-five militia mustering and sent back word to the commanding officer to put all his

## MILITIA ON HORSEBACK

and send them into the woods in pursuit of the fugitives as quickly as possible. This was about half past one o'clock P.M. Although jaded and fatigued, Captain Fuller, Anthony Murphy,

Fleming Cox and Alonzo Martin took to the woods in pursuit. When the fugitives abandoned the engine, Andrews, their leader, said:

"EVERY ONE TAKE CARE OF  
HIMSELF"

and they left in squads of three or four. Four of them were run down in the fork of the Chickamauga River, at Graysville, and one was forcibly persuaded to tell who they were. The militia, mounted on fresh horses, scoured the woods that afternoon, and in a few days the last of the fugitives were captured.

Later there was a trial by military court, and eight of the number were executed in

Atlanta as spies. Six were exchanged and eight escaped from prison at Atlanta. Thus ended one of the most daring exploits on record.

There were twenty-two men engaged in the enterprise. Twenty of them were from Ohio and two from Kentucky.

The following official letter received from the War Department is reproduced, on account of the valuable information it contains:

**RECORD AND PENSION OFFICE,  
War Department.**

Washington City, February 18, 1903. R.  
W. L. DANLEY, General Passenger

Agent, Nashville, Chattanooga & St.  
Louis Railway, Nashville, Tenn.

Dear Sir: In response to your letter of the 11th instant, in which you request information relative to the members of the "Andrews Raiders," this information being desired for use on the tablets that are to be placed on the engine "General," that was used by Andrews and his followers in the raid made by them on the Confederate line of communications, south of Chattanooga, Tenn., in April, 1862, I have the honor to advise you as follows:

It appears from the official records of the War Department that the following named persons participated in the raid,

on the Confederate line of communications between Chattanooga, Tenn., and Marietta, Ga., April 7 to 12, 1862:

Jas. J. Andrews, leader, citizen of Flemingsburg, Ky.

William H. Campbell, citizen of Kentucky.

William Pittenger, Sergeant, Company G, 2d Ohio Infantry.

George D. Wilson, Private, Company B, 2d Ohio Infantry.

Charles P. Shadrach, Private, Company K, 2d Ohio Infantry.

Elihu H. Mason, Sergeant, Company K,  
21st Ohio Infantry.

John M. Scott, Sergeant, Company F,  
21st Ohio Infantry.

Wilson W. Brown, Corporal, Company  
F, 21st Ohio Infantry.

Mark Wood, Private, Company C, 21st  
Ohio Infantry. John A. Wilson, Private,  
Company C, 21st Ohio Infantry.

William Knight, Private, Company E,  
21st Ohio Infantry.

John R. Porter, Private, Company G,  
21st Ohio Infantry.

William Bensinger, Private, Company G, 21st Ohio Infantry.

Robert Buffum, Private, Company H, 21st Ohio Infantry.

Martin J. Hawkins, Corporal, Company A, 33d Ohio Infantry.

Wm. H. Reddick, Corporal, Company B, 33d Ohio Infantry.

Daniel A. Dorsey, Corporal, Company H, 33d Ohio Infantry.

John Woliam, Private, Company C, 33d Ohio Infantry. Samuel Slavens, Private, Company E, 33d Ohio Infantry.

Samuel Robertson, Private, Company G,  
33d Ohio Infantry.

Jacob Parrott, Private, Company K, 33d  
Ohio Infantry.

It further appears that eight of these men, whose names appear below, were executed by the Confederate authorities at Atlanta, Ga., in June, 1862: Andrews, on June 7th; and Campbell, Ross, George D. Wilson, Shadrach, Scott, Slavens, and Robertson, on June 18th. On October 16, 1862, the eight following named made their escape from prison at Atlanta, Ga.: Brown, Wood, John A. Wilson, Knight, Porter, Hawkins, Dorsey and Wollam. The remaining six members of the raiding

party were paroled at City Point, Va., March 17, 1863. Their names follow: Pittenger, Mason, Bensinger, Bugum, Reddick and Parrott.

On March 25, 1863, medals of honor were presented to the last mentioned (paroled) soldiers in person by the Secretary of War, and were the first medals of honor awarded under the authority conferred by the joint resolution of Congress approved July 12, 1862, and Section 6 of the sundry civil appropriation Acts of March 3, 1863. The men who escaped from prison in October, 1862, were also subsequently awarded medals. Of those who had been executed, medals were

delivered to the mother of Ross and to the widows of Scott and Slavens. In the case of Robertson a medal was also issued, but to whom it was delivered cannot now be ascertained.

Very respectfully, (Signed) F. C.  
AINSWORTH,

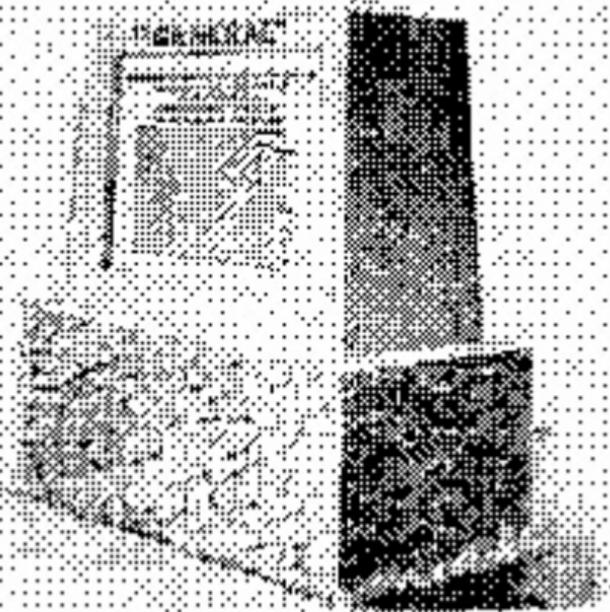
Chief Record and Pension Office

The survivors of the Andrews Raiders have erected a monument to their fallen comrades, and it stands today in the National Cemetery at Chattanooga. The "General" is reproduced in miniature on top of the monument, and on the left-hand side is a die containing the names of the "Raiders" who were executed in Atlanta;

on the right-hand side a die containing the names of the eight who escaped from prison at Atlanta; and at the rear a die containing the names of those exchanged.

Two monuments, with tablets, have also been erected by the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway, one marking the spot at which the "General" was captured and the other where it was abandoned. A third tablet has been erected in front of the engine "General" in Chattanooga.

## THE STORY of the "GENERAL"



Mr. Pittenger, in his book, "Capturing a Locomotive," says: "We obstructed the track as well as we could by laying on crossties at different places. We also cut the wires between every station. Finally, when we were nearly to the station

where we expected to meet the last train, we stopped to take up a rail. We had no instruments but a crowbar, and instead of pulling out the spikes, as we could have done with the pinch bars used for that purpose by railroad men, we had to batter them out. Just as we were going to relinquish the effort, the whistle of an engine in pursuit sounded in our ears. With one convulsive effort we broke the rail in two, took up our precious half rail and left. We were scarcely out of sight of the place where we had taken up the half rail before the other train met us. This was safely passed. When our pursuers came up to the place where the broken rail was taken up, they abandoned their engine and ran on foot

till they met the freight train and turned it back after us. We adopted every expedient we could think of to delay pursuit, but as we were cutting the wire near Calhoun they came in sight of us. We instantly put our engine to full speed, and in a moment the wheels were striking fire from the rails in their rapid revolutions. The car in which we rode rocked furiously and threw us from one side to the other like peas rattled in a gourd. I then proposed to Andrews to let our engineer take the engine out of sight while we hid in a curve, after putting a crosstie on the track; when they checked to remove the obstructions, we could rush on them, shoot every person on the engine, reverse it, and let it drive

backward at will."

The "Southern Confederacy," a paper published at Atlanta at the time, says: "The fugitives, not expecting pursuit, quietly took in wood and water at Cass Station and borrowed a schedule from the tank tender upon the plausible pretext that they were running a pressed train loaded with powder for Beauregard.

The article further states: "They had on the engine a red handkerchief, indicating that the regular a regular passenger train would be along presently. They stopped at Adairsville, and said that Fuller, with the regular passenger train, was behind, and would wait at Kingston for the freight train, and told the conductor to

push ahead and meet him at that point. This was done to produce a collision with Captain Fuller's train. When the morning freight reached Big Shanty, Lieutenant-Colonels R. F. Maddox and C. D. Phillips took the engine and, with fifty picked men, followed on as rapidly as possible. Captain Fuller, on his return, met them at Tunnel Hill and turned them back. Peter Bracken, the engineer on the Freight train, ran his engine fifty and a half miles- two of them backing the whole freight train up to Adairsville-made twelve stops, coupled the two cars dropped by the fugitives, and switched, them off on sidings in one hour and five minutes. Captain Fuller fully corroborates the invaluable service

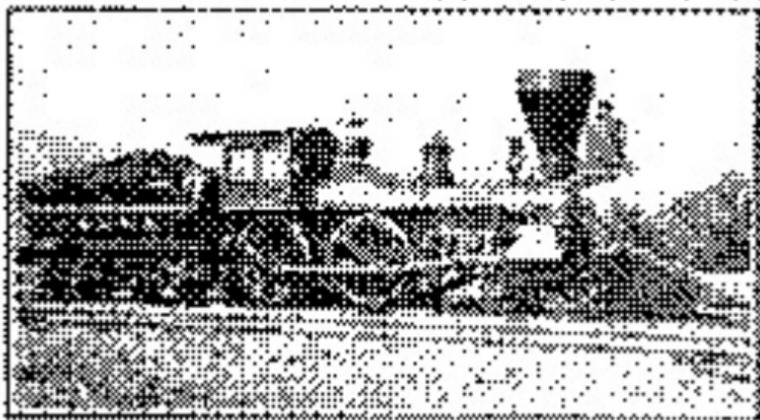
rendered by the veteran Bracken."

In his evidence at the trial, Pittenger stated that one of the party proposed to stop the engine in a short curve, ambuscade and kill Fuller and his men as he came up, but Andrews would not agree to it. He also stated that when the "General" gave out, they were burning oil cans, tool boxes, and planks ripped off the freight car. As they abandoned her, they reversed her, in order to bring on a collision with Captain Fuller's engine, but in their excitement they left the brake on the tender, and the steam had not sufficient force to back the engine.

# **DESCRIPTION OF THE "GENERAL"**

We are indebted to Mr. Louis L. Park, Chief Draughtsman of the Rogers Locomotive Works, Paterson, N. J., for the following information in regard to the "General," taken from the plans and specifications of that Company:

## The STORY of the "GENERAL"



THE ENGINE "GENERAL"

was on display on the grounds of "A Century of Progress" in Chicago, June-November, 1933.

"Built by the Rogers Locomotive Works in December, 1855, for the Western & Atlantic Railroad. An eight-wheel, wood-burning locomotive of type 440-50, weighing 50,300 pounds; gauge 5 feet; cylinders, 15x22 inches; piston rod, 2 1/4 inches in diameter; has four

driving wheels, each sixty inches in diameter, made of cast iron, with journals six inches in diameter; driving wheel base, seven inches; total wheel base of engine, about twenty feet, six inches; weight on drivers, 32,000 pounds; weight on truck, 18,000 pounds; heating surface: flues, 748.38 square feet; fire box, 71.08 square feet; total heating surface, 819.44 square feet. Grate area, 12.46 square feet. Boiler of type known as Wagon Top, covered with felt and Russia iron; diameter inside first course, forty inches; working pressure, about 140 pounds; thickness of barrel of boiler, five-sixteenths of an inch; thickness of dome course, three-eighths of an inch; fire box: thickness of shell,

three-eighths and five-sixteenths of an inch; thickness of crown, three-eighths of an inch; thickness of flue sheet, one-half inch; thickness of sides and back, five-sixteenths of an inch; length of grate, forty-six, inches; width, thirty-nine inches. Contains 130 flues, each eleven feet long by two inches in diameter. Steam pipes five inches in diameter. Engine truck, four-wheel, rigid center; tender trucks, four-wheel, inside bearing. Diameter of wheels, thirty inches. Has two escape valves and two pumps. The smoke stack is of the old balloon type, and the cow-catcher is much longer and larger than those on modern engines."

he following article, which appeared in the Kenesaw "Gazette" of March, 1886, shows that the old "General" has had an eventful life:

"This famous locomotive is still on the Western & Atlantic Railroad, pulling a train. She is one of 'the old issue,' but is retained in service, although the capacity is rather limited, when compared with the big 'ten-wheelers' and other modern locomotives which the ever wide-awake Western & Atlantic Railroad Company now possess.

"It is a matter of national knowledge that the 'General' was captured by twenty-two Federal soldiers in disguise, April 12, 1862, at Big Shanty, and the attempt

was made by them to escape with her and burn the bridges on the Western & Atlantic Railroad, etc. Their chase from Big Shanty to a point near Ringgold, and the capture of the entire party, are well-known facts.

"It is not known, however, that the 'General' was almost under fire of the Federal batteries at the great battle of Kenesaw Mountain, June 27, 1864. When the battle began, during the early morning, General Johnston sent up a train load of ammunition, etc., to the Confederate lines at the eastern base of Kenesaw Mountain. The ammunition, etc., was unloaded and carried to the front as quickly as possible, but the

engine and train were detained at that point, by order of General Johnston, to carry back the wounded at the close of the battle. During the entire morning the 'General' and her train stood at the point where now is the station Elizabeth, and some of the Federal bomb shells, flying over the Confederate entrenchments, exploded almost in her neighborhood. In the afternoon wounded soldiers from Featherstone's Division, and others in that portion of the field, were placed aboard the train, and the 'General' brought them down to Marietta, and thence on to Atlanta.

"The 'General' was also the last Western & Atlantic Railroad engine to leave

Atlanta when Hood's army evacuated it, and it was thought just I before she left that it would be impossible to take her away, but they managed to get her safely out, and she went southward with a train load of refugees, war materials etc."