

A Tribute to the Andrews Raiders and Quest for the Medal of Honor on behalf of ...



Private George Davenport Wilson

Private Philip Gephardt Shadrach

Preface

This tribute is a synopsis of the events of the Andrews Raid. It was prepared and sent day by day via email to friends and family beginning April 6th, 2012, during the 150th Anniversary of the Andrews Raid. It was intended to provide an awareness, recognition and appreciation of these men and their dedication to the nation. It has been updated to include the conditions of their imprisonment, trial by court martial, execution, escape and repatriation.

By January 2008 the Medal of Honor had been authorized under Public Law H.R. 4986; sec 564 and 565 respectively for Private Shadrach and Private Wilson by President George W. Bush. It was anticipated that this honor would finally be awarded to these men sometime during the 150th Anniversary of the Andrews Raid Civil War events in 2012.

The very first Medals of Honor were awarded to six repatriated members of the Andrews Raid on March 25, 1863. It is time to fulfil the recognition intended by Secretary of War Edwin Stanton and President Abraham Lincoln at that time for these two soldiers of the Andrews Raid.

The story and pictures below are adapted largely from:

Daring and Suffering: A History of the Great Railroad Adventure, Lieut. Wm. Pittenger, Philadelphia: J.W. Daughaday, Publishers, 1863, 288p.

The Great Locomotive Chase and the First Medal of Honor, Russell S. Bonds, Westholme Publishing, LLC. 2007, 444 pages.

Wild Train: The Story of Andrews Raiders, Charles O'Neill, Random House, Inc., 1956, 482p.

The Story of Andrews Raid – *Great Locomotive Chase*

1861-1862: General O. M. Mitchel's forces winter quartered at Bacon Creek, Ky. suffering severely from measles, chicken pox and camp diarrhea. On April 4th, 1862, they left camp Van Buren and marched 26 miles in two days to Shelbyville, Tn. It rained both days, but they had a good turnpike, and their knapsacks were hauled.

Sunday April 6, 1862

They arrived in Shelbyville about the time civilian James J. Andrews was returning from his first attempt to steal a locomotive and destroy the road and communications between Atlanta and Chattanooga. Andrews had enlisted eight Ohio volunteers and the aid of a southern engineer to run the engine. That engineer failed to show at the appointed time and the mission was abandoned.

On the night of April 6th, 1862, in private conference with General Mitchel a new plan was discussed, this time taking along engineers, firemen and others who would run the engine, protect the way and facilitate destroying communications, the road and bridges. None of the original volunteers would try it again. When they learned Andrews was going to try it again, one of them said, he would fool around with that scheme until he got hanged.

On April 6 and 7, 1862, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, USA and Gen. P. G. T. Beauregard, CSA were facing off at the battle of Shiloh (Pittsburgh Landing) in southwestern Tennessee. Gen. Don Carlos Buell's Army of Ohio was called on to support Gen. Grant at Shiloh. Gen. Mitchel's orders from Gen. Buell were to protect Nashville (the first Confederate capitol to be captured by Union forces). Not being one of inaction, Mitchel decided that taking Chattanooga would also protect Nashville. He prepared a coordinated attack on Huntsville, Ala. with the raiders strike on the railroad to sever Chattanooga from Atlanta. After taking Huntsville, Mitchel would move eastward on the railroad to take the isolated Chattanooga. This would divide the Confederacy in half separating Atlanta and the west from Richmond. The raiders had four days to get to Marietta, Ga. on their own, steal a locomotive and complete their mission to Chattanooga before the railroad south would become clogged with citizens, Confederate troops and stores fleeing south from Mitchel.

Monday April 7, 1862

On the morning of April 7th an order would go to the Colonels of the three Ohio regiments to have a man from each company selected for special and hazardous service... a secret service expedition. Each Colonel called a meeting of Captains and gave them a general idea of the nature of the work required. The officers were particularly instructed to search out men with railroad experience.

Select men were designated by their company commanders and told to report to their Colonel for interview. They were examined and duly sworn and then introduced to the commander of the expedition and told to obey Mr. Andrews orders. The

engineers and firemen were interviewed by General Mitchel and Andrews to insure they were competent to take charge of an engine.

William J. Knight: I thought they wanted someone for a soft duty to run a saw or grist mill when they asked for anyone who could run a locomotive to take two steps forward.

When Knight was presented to Andrews and his Colonel, Andrews had his maps laid on the table. Knight said, "Andrews pointed to where I was at the time and where he wanted me to go. It looked much better on paper, than I afterwards found it on land."

After being selected they were told there was a secret raid being organized to penetrate into the south to burn bridges and destroy communications that connect Georgia, Tennessee, Virginia and Mississippi. To complete the work, a locomotive would have to be captured. With information that the matter of the raid would be more fully explained by their leader after they passed out of their lines, they were dismissed to make final preparations for the mission. They were given a pass to go down and procure all the civilian clothing they could in camp. They were then taken to Shelbyville where more clothes were procured with gold coin provided by Andrews. They were told, take nothing in your pockets that would give you away if captured. They returned to camp for dinner.

About dusk on Monday, they parted camp in secrecy as possible and returned to Shelbyville, taking the road to Wartrace, a small village east of town. They were unacquainted with each other at that time.

As darkness closed, they weren't sure if their comrades were ahead or behind them. As they went along, men came by in a watchful manner so like their own that they joined in ascertaining they belonged to the same. More travelers overtook the party and halted by the side of the road until another squad arrived. Next Andrews himself came up, with others yet to arrive. After a time, Andrews seemed satisfied no more were to come, he arose and spoke, leading them a little way from the road and up a slope.

Twenty-three men met with Andrews this night along the Wartrace Road. Their names, given by regiment, grade and company were:

2nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry (OVI):

Sgt. Maj. Marion A. Ross

Cpl. William Pittenger, Company G

Private George D. Wilson, Company B

Private James Smith, Company I

Private Philip Gephart Shadrach, Company K (also known as Perry G., or Charles P. Shadrach)

William Campbell, of Salineville, O

(Civilian friend of Shadrach who took the place of a 2nd OVI soldier)

21st OVI:

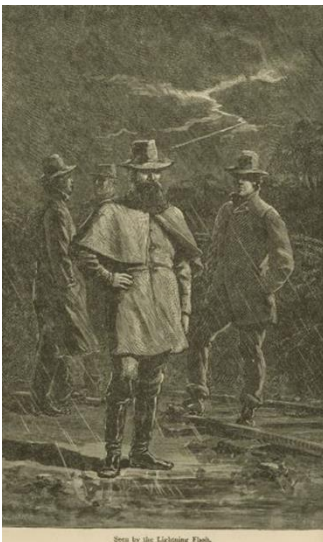
Sgt. John M. Scott, Company F
Sgt. Elihu H. Mason, Company K
Private Mark Wood, Company K
Private John Alfred Wilson, Company C
Private William J. Knight, Company E
Private Wilson W. Brown, Company F
Private William Bensinger, Company G
Private John Reed Porter, Company G
Private Robert Buffum, Company H

33rd O.V.I.

Cpl. Martin Jones Hawkins, Company A
Cpl. William A. Reddick, Company B
Cpl. Daniel Allen Dorsey, Company H
Cpl. Samuel Llewellyn, Company I
Private John Wollam, Company C
Private Samuel Slavens, Company E
Private Samuel Robertson, Company G
Private Jacob Parrott, Company K

Andrews informed them of enough of the plan for them to decide whether to go on or return to camp. Although they had made up their minds, acceptance here, made them full volunteers. Andrews told them to break up into squads of four to five and explained the route to travel... arriving at Chattanooga by Thursday afternoon and Marietta, Ga. the same evening. They were provided money for conveyance. If they came under suspicion, they were to report they were Kentuckians escaping Yankee rule to join a Southern regiment. If closely questioned, they were to say they hailed from Fleming County as Andrews knew no Southern soldiers were from Fleming. Andrews said if they were pressed further, enlist on the spot the hard thing is

keeping out of the Southern army not getting into it!



They then formed into little parties. Pittenger said he was fortunate as Campbell, Shadrach and George D. Wilson fell to his portion. As Andrews gave the last instructions it began to rain and they hurried on their way along the railroad stumbling in the darkness, the crash of thunder and lightning soon occurred overhead. It commenced raining and continued with little cessation the entire trip.

Pittenger: No start on a long journey could have been less promising than ours. The night was pitchy dark, the rain poured down, and the Tennessee mud was almost

unfathomable. We had hoped to pass beyond Federal pickets before daylight. The country was thinly peopled; and a mist which began to creep along the ground prevented us from seeing a road before us. A barn was our first discovery. Sweeping around in widening circles until a house was reached, we roused an old farmer, who on seeing us, looked as if he would refuse us entrance. The look of four able-bodied men, in such a storm, at such an hour had a good deal of persuasive force. At our admission fresh wood was thrown on the fire. Our host, insisted on providing us something to eat and began questioning us on how we came to be travelling so late on such a bad night.

It was a good opportunity to commence our drill in deception.... we were Kentuckians from Fleming County...journeying in the night to avoid union pickets. We partook of a plain good meal and afterward discussed the great questions of the day. It was a novel experience trying to maintain that the rebels were right in seceding. Whenever Shadrach and Campbell took part in conversation, they expressed very radical southern views with great emphasis on language at which Wilson would interrupt them.

When our host and his wife, who had been aroused to minister to us, had retired, Shadrach asked for the reasons for the interruptions. Wilson replied, you two were making fools of yourselves by being better rebels than the rebels themselves. I had supposed that Wilson's frank words would be resented. To my surprise, both Campbell and Shadrach admitted the justice of the criticism and hereafter declared that they would limit themselves to endorsing all that Wilson and I should say. At length we lay down for rest, two in a bed.

William Pittenger was a schoolteacher, teaching in Steubenville, Ravenna and southern Illinois. In Cleveland, he was an editor and publisher for the *School-Day Visitor* and made some essays towards the business of photography, purchasing a photographic establishment in Jefferson County, Ohio. He was severely nearsighted and wore spectacles.

Pittenger: George D. Wilson was the most remarkable man of those thrown together. In vigor and force of language I never knew a man who surpassed him. He delighted in argument on any topic ... and in the use of scathing language, in the power to bury an opponent under a flood of exhaustless abuse, he excelled. In coolness, bravery, natural shrewdness, and quickness of intellect he was fully equal even to the unusual man who was to become our leader.

As George Wilson excelled in intellectual powers, so did William Campbell in physical strength. A native of Salineville, Ohio, Campbell's muscular feats were astonishing. He weighed over 220 lbs., was of fine build, and for all his size was as agile as a circus acrobat. Danger seemed to have an attraction for him although he wasn't the least bit quarrelsome, he often reproved wranglers.

Philip Gephart Shadrach was about 21 when he came from Somerset County Pennsylvania to Knoxville, Ohio, and enlisted in 2nd Ohio when it was being organized for the three years' service. He was variously carried on the company rolls

under Perry G. and Charles P. Shadrach. Not tall, he was plump, solidly built, merry and reckless, with an inexhaustible store of good nature. His temper was quick, but he was as quick to forgive, and ready to sacrifice anything for a friend. His wit was frequently the life of any group in which he found himself, and his blue eyes sparkled with mischief on the slightest provocation.

Tuesday April 8, 1862

On the morning of Tuesday April 8, 1862, Brigadier General O. M. Mitchel's men broke camp in the rain and began a forced march April 9, on Huntsville, Alabama. His force consisted of three brigades of the Third Division with infantry and cavalry amounting in all, to about 10,000 men. Leaving a detail and supplies not immediately needed in Fayetteville, about 27 miles distant, Mitchel advanced Turchin's Brigade, Kennett's Cavalry and Simonson's Battery on Huntsville.

Pittenger: We reached Wartrace in a pelting storm. At first, we intended to go around the town as it was the last station on the Union picket line. But it was raining so hard we thought we might manage to slip along unobserved. On attempt, we were promptly halted and compelled to admit our identity. We waited under a sheltering porch until a messenger had ridden to brigade headquarters and brought an order for our release. We travelled onward though knee deep mud and swollen creeks. Early in the afternoon we reached Duck River at a point opposite Manchester. The river was at flood. We crossed being taken one at a time by a horseman, and thus being carried through.

Bensinger: We arrived in a small town, Manchester where we stopped for refreshments. The town seemed to be alive with secesh citizens inquisitive as to who we were. We told them the story of citizens from Kentucky going to join the rebel army. While Hawkins and others were in a grocery store purchasing corn juice, I saw an old chap mounted on a horse, who had the title of colonel, signal several others to follow him. He rode down an alley and a half dozen others followed him, where they held a short consultation. He then rode back to the grocery and told us that he lived four miles right on the road that we wished to travel and insisted we should go home and stay the night with him, which we agreed to do.

We took a square drink of the corn juice and started, but I had made up my mind the colonel's roof shouldn't shelter me that night and told Brown so on the road. I told all the boys just before reaching there, that we were suspected. When we arrived, the colonel was pretty fired up. When we entered the house, Brown remarked, "Your clock isn't running." "No, she's broke down," said the old man. "I can fix clocks," Brown said. "Ah," said the old man, "you are a Yankee then." Brown was equal to the occasion and said he had learned from a Yankee who had worked in Flemingsburg.

After supper we pulled out, although the old man insisted, we stay. We had impressed on the old man our fear for not staying over was fear of the Yankees. As we learned afterwards, the colonel and the others had concluded that we were alright.

Pittenger: As we pressed on that Tuesday afternoon, we realized fully that we were in the enemy's country. We arrived in Manchester in the afternoon and stayed a short distance out from Hillsboro Tuesday night. The gentlemen with whom we lodged with this night was a slave hunter. He tracked Negroes with bloodhounds for money. This we heard for the first time, from one who practiced it. He said he had caught a great number in that way and the business was profitable.

Wednesday, April 9, 1862

Knight: Where we were getting breakfast, we asked the man for the names of some good men we could trust along the line of our journey, so that we could keep away from Yankee sympathizers. These he gladly gave and guided us past the Federal outpost. Soon after he left us, we came to a Rebel picket post in the bend of the road and were upon them before we saw them. They were armed with double-barreled shotguns and weren't slow in bringing them to bear on us, demanding that we give an account of ourselves or be blown through. The usual story proving satisfactory, they dropped the guns and presented a quart bottle, which, being less formidable, we didn't refuse.

Pittenger: Wednesday morning, we continued on our journey. We found a man who agreed for an exorbitant price to give us a ride in his wagon for several miles. As it was now the ninth and we were due in Marietta the 10th, this conveyance was a great aid. Room was made for several others we overtook and came insight of the Cumberland Mountains. A mighty rampart of freshest green, although along the tops clung a heavy mist. The mist quickly spread and thickened into clouds overhead, and again an interminable rain began to fall. At about that time our driver turned off and we were obliged to plod along on foot. We clambered up the mountain, across the summit - a tolerably level tableland about six mile in breadth - then down again over cliffs, chasms, and great gullies. This rough jaunt led us into Battle Creek Valley.

Dorsey: At a crossroads we came to a cabin where whiskey was kept. We noticed a number of saddle horses hitched to a fence near the cabin with heads down, calmly taking the pouring rain. Entering, the room was pretty crowded with men, some who had evidently been drinking. We ordered some whiskey, which was drawn in a stone pitcher and placed upon the counter, with a tin cup to drink out of. Buffum acted as master of ceremonies and took a drink and again had the pitcher filled up, paid the bill and told the gentlemen to help themselves, providing something to occupy their time so they would not take interest too zealously in our welfare as we took our leave.

.... toward the evening Andrews came riding by and quietly told us that owing to the swollen condition of the streams, Mitchel would be delayed in his movements to take Huntsville and that we should take another day for it, and to be sure and reach Marietta on the night of the 11th. One or two of our squads did not get Andrews orders to take another day for it and travelled all of one night in order to get to Marietta on time.

Dorsey: That night we stayed with an old man at the head of Battle Creek Valley, Mr. Clepper (he lived 14 miles from Jasper and 40 miles from Chattanooga). This staunch southern man was highly elated to see so many young men coming from Kentucky to join the Southern army. Pittenger gave him a glowing account of the uprising among the people of Kentucky, on account that Pittenger alleged of passage by the Yankee legislature in that state of an expatriation order.... it so aroused Mr. Clepper's ire that he wished Pittenger to write it up for him, which he did, and we all signed it. I think there were eight of us there that night.

Pittenger: Just after sunset we found the house of a strong secessionist recommended us by our soldier friend. The householder shared with us the best his place afforded, giving us his only bedroom and sleeping with his family in the living room or kitchen. This open-handed hospitality, given by those whose dearest hopes we were laboring to overthrow, was even more painful than the plentiful falsehoods to which we were compelled.

Thursday April 10, 1862

Andrews: You are soon to enter upon our dangerous duty, but the first man that gets drunk, or flinches in the least, I will shoot dead on the spot; your objective must be accomplished, or you must leave your bones in Dixie.

Dorsey: It was now Thursday the 10th, and passing down the valley a few miles, we came to a mountain stream so swollen that we were unable to cross it. Fortunately, a gentleman on a stout, well-saddled mule arrived at the ford about the same time going in the opposite direction. Seeing our dilemma, he very politely offered us the use of the mule to cross the stream. Eight of us crossed one at a time sending him back empty with many thanks shouted across the roaring current to the gentlemen for his kindness.

Soon we again broke up into pairs and scattered out so as not to attract attention. We had been changing partners frequently and thus became acquainted with each other so that we might be able to recognize the members of our party in the event of any sudden emergency. While travelling together that afternoon Slavens paid me an unexpected compliment by saying he had walked with most of the party and that I was the only one who could keep up with him. We leaned right out from early morning to late at night. Near midday a couple of horsemen came riding upon us. As they approached, we thought one was certainly a Confederate officer and we felt a little anxiety about it but as they passed, we discovered it was our own Buffum. He had bought a Confederate Colonel's overcoat and had hired a man to take him horseback to Jasper a few miles further on.

Near Jasper, Sam Llewellyn and James Smith were stopped and questioned by the Confederates, and then arrested on suspicion of not being what they claimed to be. Rather than be thrown in jail, they joined the Rebel army, enlisting in a light artillery battery on duty nearby.

Pittenger: Reddick and Wollam learned it was, yet a hard two day walk to Chattanooga but had lodged with an influential and hospitable Rebel whose sons were ferrying bacon across the river for the army. It was supposed to be against the law for anyone else to cross but the gentleman said go down there and tell them I said to put you over. From there it is only half a mile to Shell-Mound Station, and you'll have time to catch the 12:00 train to Chattanooga. They were ferried across and directed to the station. The train was several hours late and when it came, they found a regiment of Rebel soldiers on board. These soldiers, who were being sent on to Corinth to reinforce Beauregard at Shiloh, had been turned back for some reason they didn't understand. Reddick and Wollam were kindly received on the train and managed to say little in route to Chattanooga. They arrived just in time for the down train to Marietta, but as they had learned that the attempt would be laid over for another day, they preferred waiting till morning.

Wollam and Reddick stayed in the Crutchfield House that night but the only bed they could get was in the same room with two sick Confederate soldiers. These men had some kind of fever and kept calling for water continually. The bell-knob had a cord on it, saying that twenty-five cents would be charged for every room call during the night. Our comrades, however, had money, and not only remained awake most of the night ministering to their foes, but invested a good many quarters on their behalf.

Knight: It was rough travelling, following a trail that led over the mountain spurs, through a most desolate part of the country. We didn't see a man or a house all day; but it brought us out all right in the evening to the house of a squire (all the people in the south had some kind of title) that we had been directed to, and only five or six miles from Chattanooga. The squire seemed well posted in army movements, telling us how the Yankees were moving on Huntsville, which was no news to us, though we hadn't before heard it intimated by any of the citizens. He said the Southern army was moving back only to get the Yanks in a trap, which they had already set.

F. M. Gregg (historian): About one mile out of Jasper, Pittenger, Shadrach, Campbell and Wilson ate dinner with Amos Cox, a farmer. From an eyewitness: "About noon they commenced to pass through Jasper in a party of four, consisting of the "spectacled man; a big man with a full beard and two smaller men with the last wearing a pin with a woman's face in it " - (Pittenger, Campbell, Shadrach, and Wilson) - they stopped at a grocery store, now used as a bank, and bought tobacco from Billy Hatch. To use the expression of one of the witnesses, "they beat 'em all talking secesh." This, however, didn't convince the crowd of their true character. Some of the crowd were doubtful whether the South produced such a "Yankee face as that man with the spectacles." Another fact the crowd noticed was that one had on a pair of shoes with perforated tips, never seen before, and not made south of the Ohio River.

About this time Amos Cox, the man with whom they had eaten dinner came in and whispered to a friend, "Them fellers are Yankees, they gave me a silver half-dollar for dinner." Suspicion was thoroughly aroused by this time, and as the party started on, Major P. T. Rankin, home on a furlough, stopped them and demanded some information of themselves. This was readily given, and as it was that they were to

join the Confederate army at Corinth, Major Rankin allowed them to continue unhindered, in spite of the suspicions of the crowd.

Pittenger: Twelve miles out from Jasper we journeyed directly to the banks of the Tennessee River with the intention of crossing in the morning. We were recommended for the night to a kind of rude country hotel, well known in the area as "Widow's Hall's." The entertainment here was excellent and as we believed the harder part of our travel to be over, we were in high spirits. Andrews and several others joined us, and for the first time we spent a social evening together, we had a chance to become in some degree acquainted.

The large guest-chamber with its great roaring fire, and two beds in the corners opposite, was exceedingly comfortable; and after a smoking hot supper, we gathered around the open fire and began to talk and tell stories. Andrews was, according to his want, rather silent and reflective, but appeared greatly to enjoy the conversation of others. Especially did he show that he appreciated the wit of Shadrach - - which seemed to pour forth in an unending stream - - remarking; "That man never opens his mouth, but he says something."

George Wilson, who had traveled so widely, dominated the conversation in all serious and political matters as much as Shadrach did in sport and humor.

Dorsey: We reached Widow's Hall's some miles east of Jasper about dusk and put up. There was by this time, I think eight of us at this one house....and a merry crowd we were. After a bountiful supper, we were soon left mostly to ourselves around the log fire in the sitting room, and the jests we got off at each other's expense provoked at time roars of laughter, never to be forgotten by anyone present. Andrews seemed to enjoy the sport as much as any, though he had little to say. Buffum, Shadrach and Geo. Wilson, were chiefs in the sport, while the rest of us occasionally threw in a droll remark for the sake of variety. At a rather late hour we retired to sleep.

I had always been disposed to talk in my sleep, and on this trip had no little concern lest I should in my dreams utter a word that would lead us to detection. We were under a constant mental strain, sleeping or awake. What if this stranger, Andrews himself, whom we were trusting to lead us, should prove to be a Rebel spy and betray us into the enemy's hands? All these thoughts naturally suggested themselves to our minds, and so with Andrews. Here we had more than twenty men, any one of whom might prove false and betray us. We were all in a boat that might at any time spring a leak, and by now, it was well out in mid-ocean in some deep and strange waters.

Pittenger on James J. Andrews: In the spring of 1859 a traveler came either by stage or on foot into the secluded village of Flemingsburg, Ky. No opportunity presenting for employment as a teacher, the newcomer began work as a house and ornamental painter and was quite skillful. He had an excellent singing voice and taught several singing schools in the evenings. On arrival in Flemingsburg James J. Andrews must have turned 30 years of age. He was a commanding figure - six feet in height, weighing approximately 185 pounds. From the first, his new neighbors

sensed an air of mystery and reserve about him. His wide information and refinement of manner, his good looks and easy grace in any company gave him a marked ascendancy over his companions, even while he tried to be one of them. The blankness of his pre-Flemingsburg years points to some decisive break in his history.

Andrews spoke decidedly in favor of maintaining the Union. He wasn't an abolitionist, but he held with the old flag and the nation undivided. Andrews became a contraband runner bringing quinine and needed goods to the south, but his real business was the secret collection of information for the Union army operating as a spy or a scout.

Dorsey: J. J. Andrews was a large well-proportioned gentleman with a long black silken beard, black hair, Roman features, and an almost effeminate voice.

Friday, April 11, 1862

Brigadier General O. M. Mitchel's men arrived outside Huntsville early this morning and began taking up positions. At 6:00 AM on order, the cavalry troopers accompanied by Mitchel, galloped at breakneck speed into Huntsville, followed fast by the infantry just as the first regularly scheduled train was leaving for Chattanooga. Several pieces of artillery were rolled rapidly into position. One locomotive attempting to flee westward was destroyed by cannon blocking the track. One fleeing eastward, to Chattanooga, escaped cannon fire that had been placed on it but, the cavalry then took over the track to the east blocking further escape of valuable engines caught in town.

They captured about 200 prisoners, fifteen locomotives, a large amount of passenger, box and platform cars, the telegraphic apparatus and the Southern mail. They succeeded in cutting the great artery of railway intercommunication between the southern states. Mitchel had marched his men 57 miles in 48 hours. The city was taken completely by surprise, with no one having considered the march practicable in that time. The railroad was in fine condition; the depots, water and wood stations, turn-tables, engine-houses, locomotives, and cars all in prime order.

Parrot: At the ferry below Chattanooga on Friday morning a rumor had it that the Yankees were coming, and as orders had been issued against anyone crossing, we trudged upstream to Chattanooga to take our chances at the ferry there. On our way we met a man whom we had seen at the ferry.

"Hello, Yanks," he said. Were recognized? It was a lonely spot, so Robertson said to me loud enough for the man to hear: "He's a Yankee spy. He takes us for Yankees."

We turned on the man with drawn revolvers, making him throw up his hands. "We've come a long way to fight such fellows as you," Robertson said. We searched the man, finding by his papers that he was from Chattanooga, we then let him come along with us.

THE RAIDERS' REVOLVERS

There is seldom any mention of the makes and models used by the raiders. Being from infantry units, to which revolvers were not issued, it can only be surmised that they obtained non-issue side arms. Officers bought their own revolvers and it was not uncommon for rankers to unofficially do the same. The raiders' handguns would have been obtained either from officers or friends, as none were available to purchase locally. A revolver of the period was expensive and a private made \$13 a month; Government cost for a Colt was \$25. The most common makes were Adams, Colt, Kerr, Lefauchaux, LeMat, Remington, Savage, Starr, and Whitney. The Colt was very popular, and expensive, with the two most common models being the .44-cal Model 1860 Army and .36-cal Model 1851 Navy. "Navy" models were used almost as widely by soldiers as "Army" models. The one confirmed revolver carried by a raider was indeed a Colt Navy Model 1851. Andrews himself carried a pearl-handled Colt. Other widely used handguns were the Remington New Model 1861 Army .44-cal and Navy .36-cal models, plus the Star .44-cal Army Model. Some may have had only small-caliber pocket pistols. There was little standardization of calibers and cartridges, with most makes having their own unique ammunition. No doubt several types of ammunition were carried by the raiders. These were all single-action, percussion six-shooters. These revolvers used conical bullets held, glued, in a combustible paper or linen cartridge containing the black powder charge.



At the river more of our men were waiting to cross but the ferry man said the wind and waves were too high. It was nearly 5:00 and we were getting desperate, when the man we held up on the road, who knew the ferryman, spoke up for us and convinced him we were Kentucky boys that needed to get down by the cars tonight to join our army. The ferryman believed him and as we stepped ashore in Chattanooga, we were unchallenged. The train for Marietta hadn't left, and our Chattanooga friend even helped us to buy our tickets.

Dorsey: After crossing the river and getting into Chattanooga, we scattered out somewhat; but a group of us going up the main business street attracted the attention of some men about a store. We were walking along in as aimless and ungainly a way as possible, when some fellow called out: "Hello, whose them fellows?" To which another replied, "Oh, some country jakes, I reckon."

Andrews had instructed us to be on our guard, and avoid the soldier step, and also all such commands as, "Halt! Attention!" etc., as these might be used as a means of detection by anyone who might suspect us. We were now in the midst of our enemies, and an act or word might entrap the whole party.

At the depot we found quite a rush for tickets going south. The crowd informed us that General Mitchel had captured Huntsville and cut off communications with

Corinth and the west. Soldiers in route to Corinth had been turned back and were with many citizens, fleeing southward. This was unwelcome news to us, as it being 24 hours too soon for best fitting in with the work we had ahead.

F. M. Gregg (historian): The southbound train the raiders took, left Chattanooga at 5 P.M. At Dalton, supper was had and about midnight of Friday, the 11th of April, it reached Marietta. The 22 union men reunited there, were 200 miles from their comrades, whom they had left less than 5 days before in Shelbyville.

Pittenger: Nearly all of our group registered at the Tremont House, under all kinds of names. As the hotel was much crowded, we took a few rooms close together and packed into them to their utmost capacity. Andrews was with our larger party in the hotel near the railroad station, while Porter and our 3 engineers - Hawkins, Knight and Brown - were in the other hotel at some distance. Porter and Hawkins had arrived the night before. We were sleeping 3 or 4 to a bed.

Alf Wilson: Before retiring, arrangements were made to have the hotel men awake us in time for the northbound train in the morning, which they promised to do without fail. No man knows what a day may bring forth. The uncertainty of what the light of the next day's sun would bring in our particular cases was the reason some of us, myself at least of the number, didn't sleep very much. By the setting of another sun we might be hanging to the limbs of some of the trees along the railroad, with an enraged populace jeering and shouting epithets; or we might leave a trail of fire and destruction behind us and come triumphantly rolling into Chattanooga and Huntsville, within the Federal lines, to receive the welcome plaudits of comrades left behind, the thanks of our general and the praise of a grateful people. Such thoughts as these weren't calculated for sound sleep, and even this broken rest wasn't to continue long. In 2 or 3 hours we were going to be called.

Saturday, April 12, 1862

Pittenger: On the morning of April 12, we were roused promptly at the railroad hotel a little before daybreak. Andrews who had slept little if at all that night, moved from room to room seeing every man. There was suppressed fire in Andrews's low whispered words, a calm confidence in his manner that was contagious. There seemed to be no doubt, no hesitation, no shrinking on his part, but on the contrary, almost an eagerness and joy that the test was so near at hand.

Most of us gathered in Andrews room for an informal council of war. Behind locked doors some of us were seated on the bed, one or two of us on chairs, and the remainder stood around as best we could. We all kept our voices down.

Andrews: "Get seats near each other in the same car," "When the train makes the Big Shanty breakfast stop, keep your places till I tell you to go. If anything unexpected happens, look to me for the lead. You, you, and you" - designating Knight, Brown and J. A. Wilson - "will go with me on the engine. The rest will go on the left of the train, forward of where we'll uncouple it. Climb onto the cars as quickly

as you can when the order is given. If anyone interferes, shoot him, but don't fire unless you have to."

Andrews went on to lay out every action with the nicest of accuracy. The engineers, firemen and brakeman were assigned their work. The rest of us were constituted a guard to shoot down anyone attempting to interfere with the work. All orders were to come from Andrews. Any man not aboard when the signal was given would be left, as after our intent became clearly known, it could result in slaughter of the whole party.

At this point, Sergeant Major Marion Ross, the ranking soldier of the party, and as brave a man as we had, offered a respectful protest against going further.

Marion Ross: In substance, the circumstances have changed since we set out. It was a day later than planned. Many more troops were at Big Shanty than had been reported. We'd seen the over loaded traffic on the road as we came down, and the full effect of Mitchel's attack on Huntsville will throw W&ARR schedules into even worse confusion. On these accounts, it would be better to postpone the attempt or give it up altogether.

Andrews answered quietly, admitting the facts as stated, but suggested that they operated in our favor, rather than against us.

Andrews: The military excitement, extra trains on the line and general commotion would make our irregular train less likely to be suspected. As to the several thousand troops at Big Shanty's Camp McDonald, if we do our work promptly, they will have no chance to interfere. Capturing the train at the moment it is surrounded by armed regiments might actually be easier than anywhere else, because no one would believe it possible and there would be no guard and little watchfulness.

Andrews could be plausible at any time, and with any material, but on this morning, he hadn't yet completely convinced his hearers. Several placed themselves frankly as sharing Ross's misgivings.

In final answer to the doubts raised, Andrews first made plain that he wanted no man to come against his better judgment. Anyone in the room who thought the attempt to hazardous to try was at liberty to switch to the down train to Atlanta and thereafter work his way back to Union lines as best he could. For himself the decision was made. "Boys," he said, "I tried this back in March and failed. Now I'll succeed or leave my bones in Dixie." The words and manner won us all. We hurried down to the platform and procured our tickets paying fares to different locations so as not to attract attention.

Knight: I sat up near the front of the car. Looking back, I saw that most of our men were pale but steady.

John Reed Porter: Through some mistake or negligence of the hotel porter, Martin Hawkins and I weren't called in time for the train, although we arrived at the depot in time to see the cars before they were out of sight. I glanced at Hawkins, who

appeared to be as much bewildered as myself. There we were in the heart of the Confederacy, knowing that if we were suspected of anything wrong, we could expect death.

Alf Wilson: There were two good reasons to capture the train at Big Shanty: there were no telegraph-sending offices there and it was an eating station, where passengers were allowed 20 minutes for refreshments. This second point might save us the necessity of killing the engineer and fireman, who would, in all probability, leave the engine to go to the refreshment room. Aside from considerations of humanity... there were thousands of Confederates camped within sight of the Big Shanty station.

There were many an anxious gaze from one another of our party after we had taken our seats in the cars that morning... For my own part, I couldn't discover on a face in our party any sign of nervousness or fear. Each appeared cool, decided and resolute.

When the shrill whistle announced that we arrived at the station, and the conductor (William Fuller) sang out. "Big Shanty! Twenty minutes for breakfast!" and himself started for the restaurant, followed by the engineer and fireman, we felt a happy relief. The passengers were swarming into the eating house pell-mell. Now was our time.

Pittenger: As we drew into the Big Shanty stop, we could see the white tents of the Rebel troops and even the guards slowly pacing their beats. They were camped almost entirely on the west side of the road, but their camp guard included the railroad depot on the right. There were three or four regiments of 1,000 men each.

We didn't reach Big Shanty till it was fully daylight. It required strong effort to keep from rushing forward... if anything could be gained by waiting, we knew that Andrews, with his marvelous coolness, would wait and expect us to do the same. Absent from the car for a time as we neared Big Shanty, Andrews only now returned and resumed his seat close to the door. He quietly rose and swung off the train with Knight on the military camp side of the train and walked forward at an ordinary pace till abreast of the locomotive which they saw to be vacant. A brass plate bore the engine's name: The **General**.



The “GENERAL”

The *General* was completed in December 1855 by Rogers, Ketchum & Grosvenor of Paterson, NJ for the Western & Atlantic R. R. An eight-wheel, wood-burning locomotive of type 440-50. It cost \$8,850 to build. It was built as a classic 4-4-0 American wood burner, with a balloon stack (Radley and Hunter type).

The *General* as-built description:

- There was no brake on the engine (although there was a brake on the tender). In those days, an engine was braked by putting it into reverse.
- Original Gauge: 5 ft.
- Four driver wheels diameter: 60" with journals 6" in diameter
- Total weight: 50,300 lbs.
- Capacity of tender: 1.75 cords of wood.
- The smokestack is of the old balloon type.
- The cowcatcher is much longer and larger than those on more modern engines.

... Andrews walked a few steps ahead of the engine with Knight at his side, until he could see ahead of the engine that the switches were open and the track clear. Then they walked back just in advance of the first baggage car and behind the three empty freight cars, when Andrews said to Knight with a nod, "Uncouple here and wait for me.

Back at the door of our car, Andrews opened it and spoke in his ordinary tone, not a whit louder or more hurried than usual. "Come on, boys, it's time to go now."

Dorsey: The sentinels were within perhaps 50 feet of the railroad track pacing their beats. We could hear the rattle of their tin cups and bayonets and the soldiers in camp pounding their rye coffee and getting breakfast.

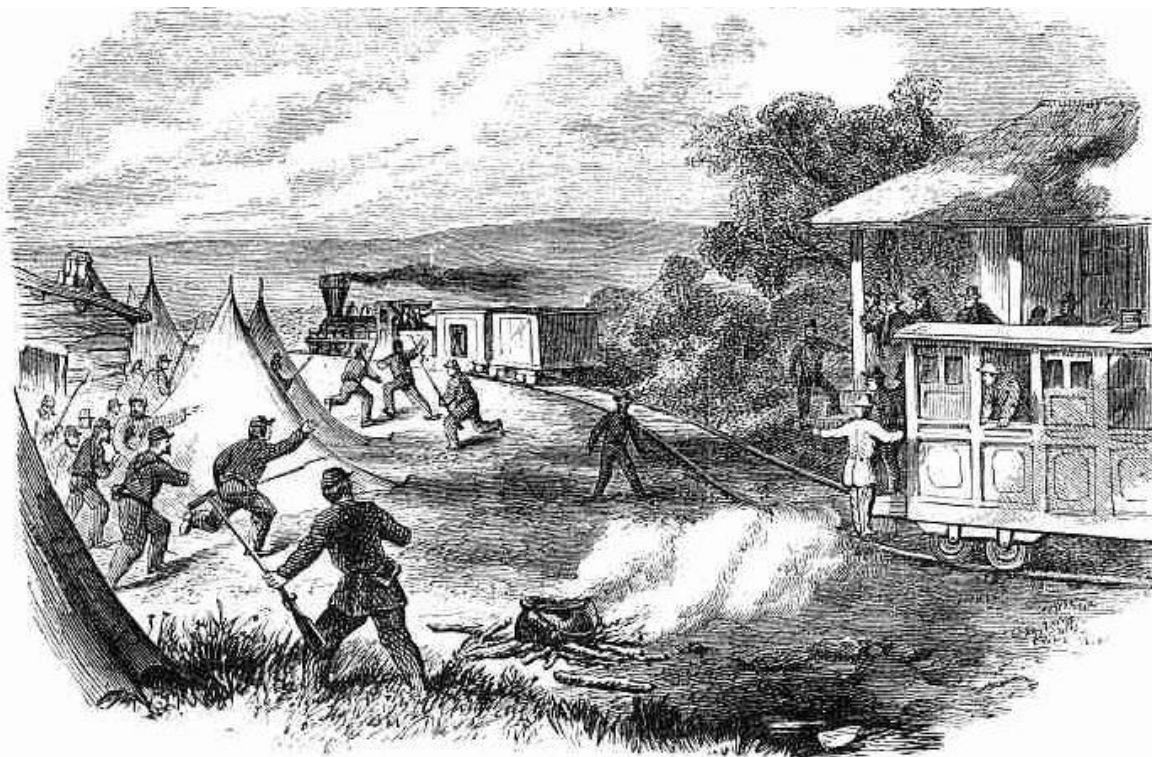
On signal, some moments later we stepped off the train on the same side Andrews got off. Andrews walked rather briskly up to the head of the train, followed by the rest of us, all leisurely following with feigned indifference.

Although I had been in the army for about 8 months, I had never been in a battle. I had never before made up my mind that I could get the consent of my conscious to kill another... but now I found myself placed in a position where, if need be, I felt that I could have no regard for any man who might put himself in our way. We were there to get that engine and meant to have it. As I walked up along the side of the train with my hand on my revolver, for the first time in my life I felt that if a man opposed me, I could shoot him with perfect deliberation.

Pittenger: Brown and Alf Wilson took their position on the engine with Knight. The rest of us reached the rear box car of the three forward boxcars and Andrews motioned and called for us to get in. The floor was breast high. I helped throw Shadrach up and had my arm almost pulled off as I was dragged in by him a second after.

All this time a Rebel sentry was standing not a dozen feet from the locomotive, casually watching as though this were the more ordinary proceeding, and a number of other soldiers were idling but a short distance away.

The scramble onto the cars took seconds and with a nod to Knight from Andrews the valve was instantly thrown open. The wheels slipped on the track ... but before the nearby soldiers could raise their muskets or give alarm, the wheels "bit" and the train shot away.



And soon enough, it seemed we were to have serious trouble right at the start. The engine ran slower and slower, until finally it came to a full stop, not yet far from camp. There had been just one burst of speed, and then this alarming failure of power. We asked eagerly of those forward what it meant, and the answer was far from reassuring -- "The steam has gone down."

Alf Wilson: We shot out lively for a short distance, perhaps nearly a half mile, as Knight had thrown the valve wide open, when we discovered that the engine had been damped and left with little steam or fire. We were compelled to come to a dead stop, and the way we put in wood and poured on oil wasn't slow by any means. Several squads of soldiers started after us, with their guns, on a dead run, yelling like wild Comanche's. We waited till they were within 30 to 40 rods, then pulled the lever and rolled on slowly for some distance until we could gain a good head of steam. They did us no harm, and every revolution of the big wheels carried us farther beyond their reach.

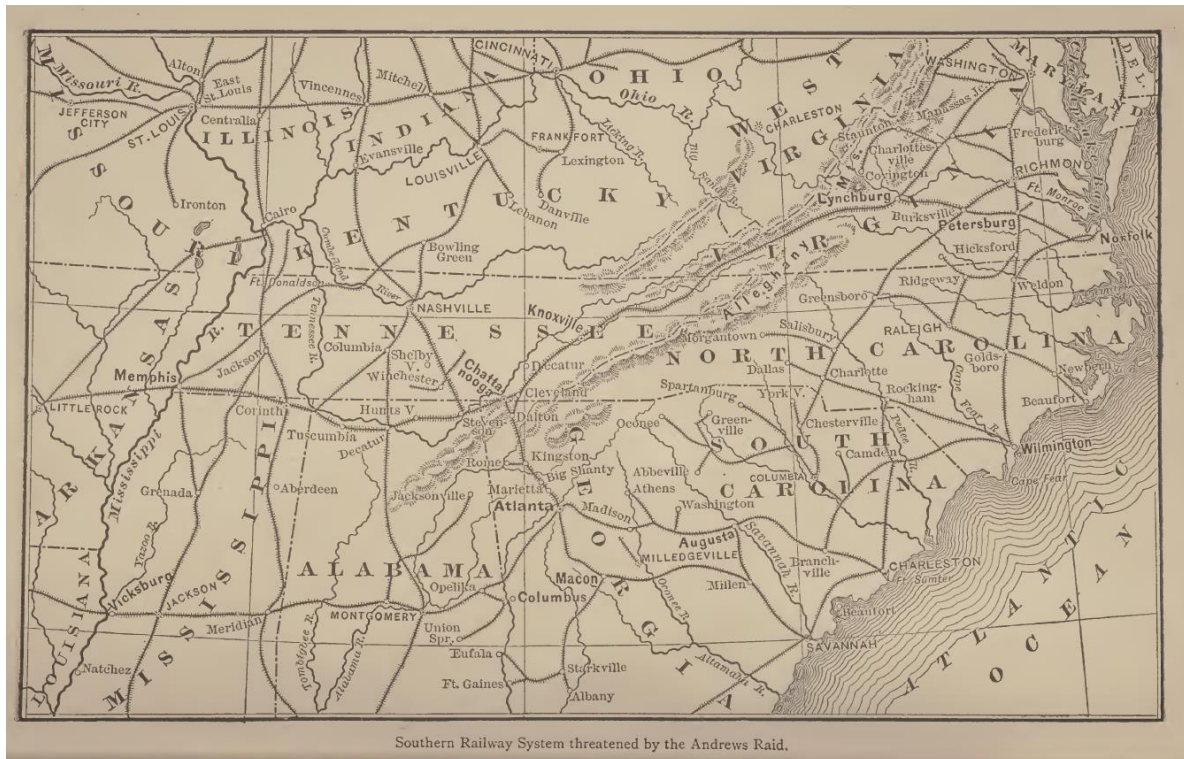
About two miles north of Big Shanty the Raiders came upon a work crew at Moon's Station and acquired a bar to use to pull up the track.

Pittenger: At a second stop -- beyond Moon's Station, something over two miles from Big Shanty -- the telegraph wire was cut, and we made our first attempt to obstruct the track. John Scott, who was agile as a cat, scrambled up the 20-foot pole and cut the wire with a hack saw found on the engine.

At this first deliberate stop Andrews declared that we had the enemy at such a disadvantage they couldn't harm us or save the engine. "When we pass one more train," Andrews declared, "the coast will be clear for burning the bridges and running on through to Chattanooga and around. For once boys we have the upper hand of the Rebels."

The Southern Railroad

In the spring of 1862, the railroads of Georgia were still among the best in the south. The Western & Atlantic Railroad (W&ARR) continued to be the pride and concern of Governor Joseph E. Brown of Georgia.



William Allen Fuller, at the age of 18 he gave over chopping cotton on his father's farm to head for Atlanta and a job with the state-owned railroad. For a youngster not mechanically bent or trained, but long of wind and quick of foot, the first chief assignment as a W&ARR train hand at the time was almost automatic: jogging for miles daily as advance flagman for wild freights or before scheduled trains on particularly twisting sections of the Atlanta-Chattanooga run. Proving himself ambitious, aggressive, and quick to learn, Fuller won promotion to the responsibilities of train conductor by 1857.

A partisan, of quick and stubborn convictions, Fuller, drilled with the Georgia militia and considered going with it when the local military organizations of the state were called to active service at the outbreak of war. Governor Brown promptly made it clear that experienced railroad men could best serve Georgia in the emergency by helping to keep the supplies and men rolling over the state's own W&ARR line. The young conductor took the governor's word for it and stayed where he was.

Now, conductor Fuller, master mechanic Anthony Murphy, and Anthony Cain, the General's engineer, chased the runaway engine on foot despite the jeering words of the spectators. Fuller sprinted like a deer for over two miles to Moon's station where he procured a pole car and returned to get Murphy and Cain and pursued the raiders. They came to an obstruction in the track where rail had been lifted and went flying off the track into a ditch. They righted the pole car on the other side of the gap and continued.

Knight: We reached a private line connecting with the Cooper's Iron Works at the Etowah River Crossing. On this branch stood the locomotive the "Yonah" with steam up. I looked at her for a moment and shook my head. "We ought to disable her and burn the bridge. Andrews replied, "It is so early in the enterprise that I don't wish to rouse alarm." "It is a simple precaution," I insisted, not being pleased with the words of Andrews, our leader.

From Big Shanty to the Etowah River Station, it is 20 miles and the grade of the W&ARR is downhill for an unusual 14-mile stretch. To an engine, this made no difference but to Fuller pushing a pole car it was a huge factor in his benefit. In Acworth, the car slowed and picked up two more men. Fuller was making good time as he neared Etowah and to his delight saw the yard engine the Yonah, blowing off steam at the Cooper Iron Works. As they rounded a curve, they saw too late another section of rail had been removed and again they went pell-mell into the ditch. But they were too much elated at the sight of the Yonah and pushed on. In five minutes, the Yonah was running at full speed towards Kingston, 14 miles distant and having taken on eight soldiers in the pursuit.

Andrews was delayed over an hour at Kingston waiting for three trains to come through before he could proceed (two of them unscheduled trains moving freight and rolling stock out of Chattanooga to safety from Mitchel's forces). All the while, Andrews was convincing the station master and crew that he was an unscheduled ammunition supply train for General Beauregard at Corinth (Shiloh). As time went on the crowd that gathered had grown discontent. There was increased grumbling and resentment of Andrews high-handedness. Questions were asked particularly by an old switch-tender in charge that grew sharper by the minute.

Andrews dealt with each question raised, briefly and plausibly, without appearing concerned over anyone's opinion. He even did some grumbling of his own about the bad management of a railroad that would allow its tracks to be blocked at such a time of urgency, with the fate of the Confederacy's brave soldiers in the balance and added accounts of himself at Beauregard's headquarters --- all of it with an air so confident and truthful that no one ventured to challenge him. When the third train finally came in, Andrews ordered it to draw down the road that we might have room to go out. Its conductor obeyed.

It only remained now to reset the switch so that we might again get on the main track. This Andrews directed the old switch-tender to do; but the grumpy old yardman had been getting in a worse and worse humor for the whole of the last hour. Hanging up his keys, he now defiantly declared he wouldn't take them down until this fancy stranger showed him by what authority he was ordering everybody around as if he owned the whole State Road. We who were shut up in the box car could hear the loud and angry voice and supposed that the time for us to act had come, but Andrews only laughed good-humoredly as though the anger of the old man amused him.

"I have no more time to waste with you", he said. Ignoring the old man's hot calls for aid from the crowd, Andrews stepped into the station, found the keys, took them

down, walked out quietly and swiftly and the made the change himself. The tender stormed after him, swearing and said he would report the trespasser and have him arrested. Calmly, Andrews handed back the switch keys and signaled to Knight. As our General came promptly up, Andrews lifted his hand in a half-salute to the crowd and swung aboard the moving locomotive. We rolled out onto the main track, and we were off. Just four minutes later Fuller and Murphy arrived at Kingston in the Yonah.

The incoming southbound trains that moved out of Andrews way, now blocked Fuller and the incoming Yonah far down the track. Fuller abandoned the Yonah and sprinted almost two miles to the north end of town and took up the engine the William R. Smith, riding on the cow catcher to lookout for obstructions. As they moved north on the track, they were forced to slack speed to remove crossties thrown upon the track by the raiders from a hole punched through the rear of the last box car.

Knight: The ceaseless rain was now severe. Just out of sight of the Kingston Station we stopped, and Scott climbed the telegraph pole and cut the wire, while others threw a few obstructions on the track.

Dorsey: A little way out from Kingston, we halted, cut the wire, and were tearing up track when Andrews discovered a train from the south curling its smoke over the treetops as it came screaming along after us.

Some half dozen more of us sprang forward to the end of the rail that had been loosened and with a convulsive effort broke it loose and threw it into our rail car and again pushed for Adairsville, now at the highest rate of speed possible.

Fuller: Six miles north of Kingston the raiders had taken up several rails of the track in their rear and carried them away. As well, they had cut the telegraph wire, as they invariably had done whenever they stopped. Murphy and I continued on foot four miles north to Adairsville knowing that the down freight was due at that moment at Adairsville, and it could delay the General there. We sprinted another three miles north until the engineer (Pete Bracken) in the south bound engine the Texas, came upon our panting runners. The engine picked us up and continued to Adairsville dropping its cars on a siding and continue the pursuit of the General traveling backwards. The Texas was an engine of equal class and size to the General.

Pittenger: As we came in sight of Adairsville Station, there lay a freight train with another due behind it. The panic in Chattanooga, and resulting extra trains on the road, had disordered the whole schedule and enormously increased our difficulties. Andrews convinced the conductor that we needed to get powder to General Beauregard and the conductor being patriotic moved his train on but, warned us to move slowly due to a following train. Soon we moved off at a moderate rate of speed, but this wasn't to last. From Adairsville to Calhoun is a little more than nine miles. This section of road is almost straight and quite level, making it the most favorable stretch of the whole line for fast running.

"Let's see how fast she can go," was Andrews's order to his crew. "We'll want every second we can save from here to Calhoun."

Alf Wilson: Our locomotive was under a full head of steam. It was frightful to see how the powerful iron monster under us would leap forward under the revolutions of her great wheels. Over and over, Brown would scream at me, "give her more wood, Alf!" She rocked and reeled like a drunken man, while we tumbled from side to side like grains of popcorn in a hot frying pan.

It was bewildering to look at the ground, or objects on the roadside. A constant stream of fire ran from the rims of the great wheels, and to this day I shudder when I reflect on that, my first and last locomotive ride.

Pittenger: Andrews kept his watch in his hand, seeming to notice nothing else. Knight looked at the same watch and declared later that the interval of nine miles between the two stations was run in seven and a half minutes. Seventy-two miles an hour! It must be allowed that Andrews may have reckoned the interval from losing sight of Adairsville until coming in sight of Calhoun. Even so the rate would have been just slightly over a mile a minute.

Pittenger: At last - once out of Calhoun - we were on the main track with no train between us and Chattanooga: and if the rumors were true, no obstructions west of there to Huntsville since all traffic that way had been cut off by Mitchel. An open road lay ahead of us... we had passed five trains - the achievement the greater since all but one had been extras or behind time - and the Y-switch at Chattanooga promised no greater difficulty than any of the sidetracks we had already successfully met. Some of the first exhilaration we'd felt after capturing the train at Big Shanty was again ours as we swiftly whistled on for a mile or more and then stopped to cut the wire, and to take up rail - as we hoped for the last time.

The Oostanaula Bridge was just ahead, and when that was burned, our program seemed pleasurable.... we'd sail along from bridge to bridge, firing them as we passed. We had heard the whistle of a following train a dozen miles back; but that probably had to be one from Kingston, which if not wrecked by the broken rail, would almost surely have to return there for tools to help get across the gap. We knew nothing then of Fuller's and Murphy's pursuit, and if we'd been told the full story, we would have thought it too wild and improbable to believe.

The General flew into Calhoun with its whistle blowing a warning of its approach and yet nearly collided head-on with the southbound Catoosa just beginning to pull out. The crew of the Catoosa demanded an explanation. Andrews told the powder train story again and after much talk, Andrews said, "I've got to go on with no more delay!" The crew of the Catoosa let the General pass. With no more southbound trains to contend with, the raiders now felt free to accomplish their mission of burning bridges. The Oostanaula Bridge at Resaca was just ahead!

However, Fuller was gaining ground and picked up Ed Henderson in Calhoun. The 16-year-old telegraph operator from Dalton was travelling south on foot to find the

break in the wire. Armed Confederate soldiers in the Catoosa were soon following Fuller.

Near Resaca, the raiders tried to take advantage of a downhill slope by uncoupling a boxcar and rolling it back to collide on the now advancing Texas. Fuller was riding out front on the tender to spot obstructions. Seeing the boxcar coming, he signaled Bracken to reverse the engine just in time to avoid the collision. They were now fortunate to be travelling backwards as they coupled onto the car and pushed it ahead.

A second boxcar was dropped at the Oostanaula River Bridge where the raiders attempted to set this car on fire and thus start the covered bridge burning. The wet weather and close pursuit kept the bridge from catching fire. The Texas soon arrived and was able to push the burning car off the bridge, dropping both box cars at the next turn out.

North of Resaca the Texas proceeded with much caution as this area becomes mountainous and curvy. As such, the raiders were able to take on much needed wood at Green's Wood Station and water in Tilton. The raiders considered a plan to ambush their pursuers from the thick underbrush when forced to stop to clear the obstacles that had been laid. From close quarters it was believed they could storm and quickly overpower the Confederates who would likely be carrying rifles. However, Andrews not being a military man decided it is best to stay ahead of the rebels avoiding any direct confrontation as the numbers of their force were unknown.

Andrews steamed at full speed through Dalton while the bewildered passengers at the platform shrunk back with their bags in hand as the engine raced through. Just north of Dalton the raiders stopped to cut the telegraph wire again, but Fuller had just arrived in Dalton and dropped off Henderson to send a message to General Ledbetter in Chattanooga. Before the entire message got through and before Ledbetter could reply, the raiders cut the wire. However, General Ledbetter received enough to send his cavalry south to meet the stolen train. The message: *"My train was captured this AM in 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."* William A. Fuller.

The raiders continued past the Tunnel Hill Station and through the 1,447-foot Chetoogeta Tunnel. Another ambush or fire was considered in the tunnel, but the raiders pressed on trying to extend their lead. The Texas had to proceed cautiously through the dark tunnel looking for lifted track or obstructions. With little wood and oil remaining the General was running out of steam and Fuller knew it as the General left little smoke in the Chetoogeta tunnel with the passage of the engine. Just two miles north of Ringgold and the General nearly out of steam, Andrews orders the men to "jump off and scatter - every man for himself". He then had Knight reverse the fagging General backwards onto the approaching Texas but without success.

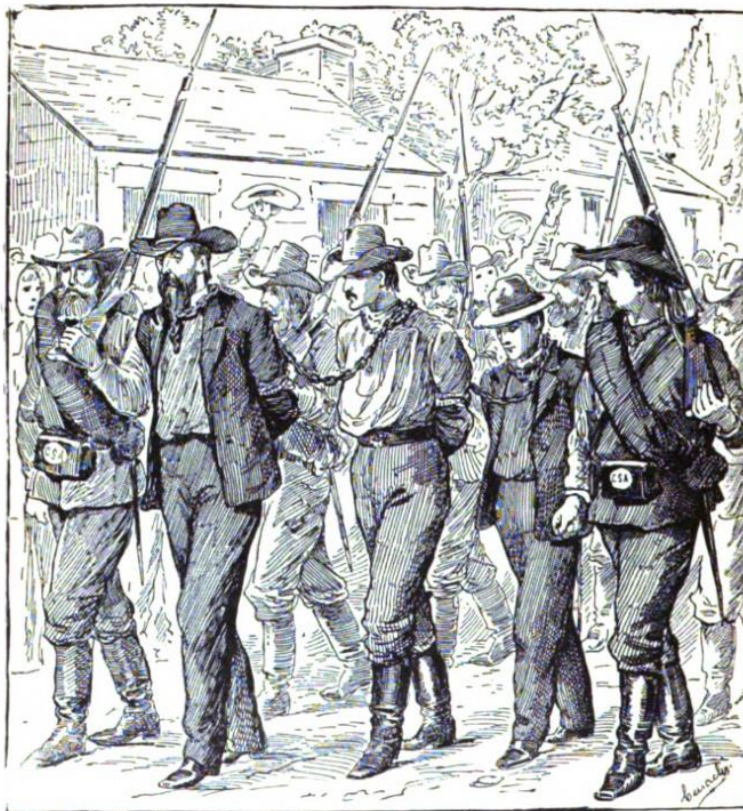
Soon, Fuller and his men began pursuit on foot of the raiders while Confederate cavalry stationed in Ringgold and Chattanooga joined in. Within days several thousand Confederate soldiers and citizens were scouring the countryside. By April 24th Andrews and all 21 members of his party became Confederate prisoners. They were collected and all placed in Swims jail at the corner of Fifth and Lookout streets in Chattanooga.

Dorsey: I am not clear just where Slavens was captured. Campbell and Shadrach were taken together, as I was later to learn from a Mr. Richard L. Rhodes of Chattanooga. Campbell and Shadrach at a rather late hour on the night of the raid, put up at the house of Mr. Rhodes' father, near Lafayette (about 18 miles SW of Ringgold), and after a hearty supper, retired to bed. But their host suspected them as members of the engine thieves and sent for help.

April 13, 1862

Dorsey: Early the morning of the 13th men came to the house of Mr. Rhodes. Entering the room in which our comrades slept, these men picked up the revolvers, which lay on the pillows between the heads of the unconscious sleepers and made them prisoners.

Campbell, the Hercules of the party, Slavens, also a man of massive proportions, and Shadrack, were the first to leave the fagging "General." It has even been said that they jumped off under the command of Andrews before we reached Ringgold, and that as we came near the town the de-



Slavens, Campbell, and Shadrack in chains.

Fifteen of our party were soon gathered at Chattanooga, crowded in a miserable dungeon but thirteen feet square and thirteen feet deep. All were in chains and irons except Pittenger. He wore handcuffs but wasn't chained by the neck to another. Slavens, Campbell and Shadrack were linked together on one chain. During the capture of our members over the next few days, word got out somehow that two of our number had been left off at Marietta and suspicion at once rested on Hawkins and Porter - - the two new recruits at Camp McDonald.

Porter: Everything went all right with us in our 9th Georgia Battalion at Camp McDonald until in some manner it leaked out among the Rebels that the Yankee raiders, by mistake or accident, had left two of their party at Marietta. How this information got out I never learned, but it couldn't be otherwise than that someone of our party had indiscreetly told more than he ought to when captured, who the man was we never learned.

The following excerpt from "High Twelve" by Edward S. Ellis...

The twenty-two captives, when secured, were thrust into the Swims jail of Chattanooga. They occupied a single room, half underground, and but thirteen feet square, so that there was not space enough for them all to lie down together, and a part of them were, in consequence, obliged to sleep sitting and leaning against the walls. The only entrance was through a trapdoor in the ceiling that was raised twice a day to let down their scanty meals, which were lowered in a bucket.



They had no other light or ventilation than that which came through two small, triple-grated windows. They were covered with swarming vermin, and the heat was so oppressive that they were often obliged to strip themselves entirely of their clothes to bear it. Add to this, they were all handcuffed, and, with trace chains secured by padlocks around their necks, were fastened to each other in companies of twos and threes. Their food, which was doled out to them twice a day, consisted of a little flour, wet with water and baked in the form of bread, and spoiled pickled beef. *(The first few days several men did not eat at all since being shackled, could not get to the bucket of food before it was gone. Subsequently Andrews organized an arrangement by which all could eat. The raiders spent nearly three weeks in the hole before they were moved upstairs).*

April 14-30, 1862

When Slaven, Campbell and Shadrach were captured, the civilian Campbell, falsely claimed to be a member of Shadrach's Company K of the 2nd Ohio as he might fare better as a prisoner of war rather than a civilian spy. They were placed in irons, chained together and then taken on to Ringgold. No one ever said any different.

The 18-year-old Jacob Parrott paired with his friend Samuel Robertson leaving the General. They were captured and taken to Ringgold for harsh interrogation which soon turned brutal.

Jacob Parrott: I was the younger and nattily dressed in a coat, vest, white broad brimmed hat, and black bow tie. "I was counted a Dude of the party".

His attire may have suggested a Northern, big city fragility they thought they could easily crack. Whatever the reason, Parrott would be the only raider singled out by the Rebel authorities for harsh treatment. Jacob Parrott's story is best told through his deposition to the Judge Advocate General's office the following March.

Parrott: An officer questioned me, but I would not tell them anything. An officer and four soldiers took me out and stripped me and bent me over a stone and whipped me. They stood by with two pistols, and said if I resisted, they would blow me through. I was whipped by an officer, a lieutenant, who was with the party, and who had on the uniform. He gave me over one hundred lashes with a rawhide.

"He stopped three different times during the whipping, let me up, and asked me if I would tell and when I refused to do so he would put me down and whip me again. He wanted me to tell who the engineer of the party was, and all about the expedition, but I would not do it. I did not tell him anything about it. The engineer was one of our soldiers who was captured with the rest."

Question: Were other persons present when you were flogged?

Parrott: "Yes, Sir: there was a crowd there. It was right by the side of the railroad, and the people there wanted to hang me. They got a rope and would have hung me if not for a colonel who came up."

Robertson sickened at the sight of his comrade's punishment, and seeing his back all gashed and bleeding, told his persecutors that they were United States Soldiers, the Ohio Company to which they belonged and that they were part of the raid. This put a stop to the whipping. The wounds he suffered from the whipping would cause him great pain during his incarceration in the hole yet to come.

William Knight: We named it "hell hole".

Colonel H.L. Claiborne, the provost marshal of Chattanooga, reportedly told General Ledbetter that "it would be mercy to those men to take them out and blow their brains out rather than keep them in that hole."

The Andrews Raiders would spend nearly three weeks trapped in the hole and would hold frightful memories from the ordeal the rest of their lives. The raiders were kept handcuffed (some without even a link between) and chained together in pairs by the neck. The swarming vermin were not only rats and mice, but other things smaller and worse. One raider put it, it was a particular problem since the handcuffs and chains made swatting and scratching difficult and ineffective. In the hole, the men were wedged side by side in two rows of ten with a pair of leftover men sleeping longways. Buckets were provided in one corner for water and the other for their slops. The water buck was rarely filled and the other rarely emptied.

The prisoners were fed twice a day, first come first served, meager portions of spoiled beef or pork, a few morsels of crumbling corn bread and watery caneseed coffee delivered by Swims by way of a hook lowered down on a tattered rope.

Dorsey: It quickly became obvious that this unseemly free-for-all scramble for rations would not do. Even with the rations shared, feeding themselves was “hard scrabbling,” as they had no utensils and most had their hands chained palm to palm.

Knight: Making light of the situation Knight said he wished the Rebels would give him one good square meal before hanging him so that his body would be heavy enough to break his neck.

During his capture and search of his person, Knight had managed to secret away some gold coin and a jackknife from his captors. After a few days Knight was able to whittle wooden scraps and bones from the rancid meat into serviceable picks for the padlocks allowing them to unhitch from each other the cuffs and collars.

With the money Knight had secreted away he was able to negotiate buying some plugs of tobacco through the jailer, old Swims. Swims passed time by drinking and tormenting his prisoners and then tilting back in his chair to sleep off the effects of copious amounts of whiskey. Subsequently it was decided to supplement their rations. They inquired with Swims, and he had no objections if they had the money. After a lengthy debate they settled on a tasty menu of wheat bread and molasses and handed up a few coins and eagerly awaited a royal breakfast the next day. In the morning the heartless old Swims lowered down their usual fare. In response to the angry complaints Swims stuck his head down the hole and in his slowest most provoking tone, said “*B-o-y-s, I lost that money!*”

Knight: “The hell you did!”, roared Knight. “You damned old scoundrel; you spent it for whiskey! Your drunk now!” A protest to the officer of the guard was summarily denied.

As early as April 15, 1862, The Atlanta newspaper, *The Southern Confederacy*, had already christened the affair, “THE GREAT RAILROAD CHASE”, its subheads proclaiming it “THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY AND ASTOUNDING ADVENTURE OF THE WAR” and “THE MOST DARING UNDERTAKING THAT YANKEES EVER PLANNED OR ATTEMPTED TO EXECUTE.”

The 3,800-word account in the *Southern Confederacy* of the glorious chase and facts reported in other the early accounts of the raid and subsequent chase were surprisingly accurate. Despite brave Jacob Parrott’s silence under the whip, it is apparent from the press reports that some among the raiders were talking to the Confederate authorities. The press described the object of the raid, the name of the leader, the place of the origin (Shelbyville) and the size of the party pegged by one paper as early as Monday, April 14 as being made up of twenty-two-men - - even though most of the party were still scattered at large in the forest at that time.

Dorsey: We talked at length of how we might escape. Yet the prospects of escape were bleak. The brick walls were reinforced with timbers, the iron in the windows was immovable and the trap door above was locked and out of reach. Once outside, an escape would have to get past armed Confederate guards, a locked gate and high fence. The reward being a swim across the fast-moving current of the Tennessee River and cross-country trek over harsh terrain to Union lines. Some of

us were injured or sick and all were ill-fed, weak and any attempt to run would certainly require more strength than they could muster. There was little to do but bide our time and wait for the inevitable trials to begin.

April 23, 1862 (Atlanta) *Southern Confederacy* newspaper wrote:

THE ENGINE THIEVES.

"Twenty-three of these villains have now been captured. They are now undergoing trial before a court-martial in Chattanooga. We know not what progress is being made. We hear that one of the scoundrels proposed to turn state's evidence against the balance, if he can thereby save his neck..."

The trial of Andrews was begun and held in the Old Armory building in Chattanooga. The prosecutions' case was conducted by two respected officers from Georgia. The court martial would last several days and be spread out over several weeks. Not a single line of evidence or testimony remains from the event. Andrews was charged with spying and treason based on his former contraband business and professed loyalty to the Confederate states. Both charges were capital offenses. The star



witness was William A. Fuller, the hero conductor. The last testifying would be Pittenger as spokesman for the party and that Andrews apparently approved initially.

Dorsey wrote years later a telling comment when Andrews was returned to Swims's jail following adjournment....

Marion Ross: Well, Andrews, how did the trial go today?

Andrews: "Well, I hardly know," he replied quietly, nodding at Pittenger, "but I'm afraid that fellow has swatted me."

May 1, 1862

On the morning of May 1 there was a scrape of the key above and a drunken Swims stuck his face in the trap door opening. As he lowered the prisoners' breakfast, he reported that Mitchel had advanced to Bridgeport and was now threatening Chattanooga. A short while later the faint booming of cannon could be heard, and they were ordered up out of the jail and marched in chains under heavy guard to the depot and loaded on passenger cars pulled by the engine General for the ride south.

The fleeting feeling of liberty and taste of fresh air was sweet indeed. Squinting in the brightness the Ohioans noticed that a passport system had been put into effect

to confirm the legitimacy and loyalty of travelers on the road and that a large body of soldiers were deployed to guard public property, government stores and railroad bridges.

Word spread down the road that Mitchel's raiders were traveling south and people crowded the depot platforms and peered in the windows to catch a glimpse of the shackled train thieves along the way.

The prisoners were taken on to Madison Georgia about 67 miles east of Atlanta for safe keeping and placed in the dreary confines of the Morgan County Jail. With nothing coming of Mitchel's advance on Chattanooga which turned out just to be a move to secure his eastern flank and protect his supply line, the raiders were returned to Chattanooga 3 days later, but this time in box cars.

May 3, 1862

They dreaded the arrival back at Swims' jail, a place they never hoped to see again. However, the provost marshal Colonel Claiborne and the new commander of the guard Captain James Law of the 43rd Georgia was by all accounts a reasonable and kindhearted officer and directed that they be allowed to stay in the upper room. Although the rations remained grim the light and air from the three large, barred windows made the confinement more tolerable and allowed new activities to pass the time. Foremost among them was singing. A number of the men in the party were excellent singers. Andrews and Ross had fine voices and formal music training. Mark Wood and John Porter were said to be fair assistants. An evening song service held each night about twilight soon drew the attention and admiration of the guards and a number of the locals who crowded in the prison yard to hear the "caged Yankees" sing.

Other pastimes developed during the daylight with the donation of books and cards by visitors or loaned by the guards. They also conducted mock trials with William Campbell serving as judge and Pittenger and George Wilson serving as counsel for the state and the defense. Each made blistering arguments, heaping abuse on the other to the amusement of all. The cases before the court ran the gamut from imaginary sordid crimes to actual petty grievances against one's chainmate.

May 31, 1862

It had been several weeks since Andrews's trial but while no word had come down various plans had continued for a possible escape. While some believed they should continue to put their faith in a legal defense or possible prisoner exchange the date was set to try Andrews's escape plan... have the slippery John Wollam hide under the jailer's bed as they returned from the yard from whence, he could sneak out and overpower old Swims and release the others. Under the cover of darkness, they could rush the gate as a group and overpower the guard.

However, during the afternoon of the day set to execute the plan an order was received to transport twelve of the raiders to Knoxville for trial. George Wilson who had been ill was allowed to stay in the yard for a longer period, was the first to

receive the news and given the privilege of selecting the men to go to Knoxville. Thus, hopeful that the trial could establish their bona fides as prisoners of war and render them eligible for exchange, he selected his comrades from the 2nd Ohio: Bill Pittenger, Marion Ross, and Perry Shadrach - along with friends and former travelling companions William Campbell, John Scott, Samuel Slavens, Samuel Robertson, Robert Buffum, Elihu Mason, Wilson Brown, and William Knight.

Dorsey: When the announcement was made that we must be separated, our spirits ran low, for we all knew that chances for escape were materially lessened. This fact, with the uncertainty of us ever meeting again, caused a gloom to fall over us ... the parting was painful, especially on Andrews's account, as all felt his days were numbered, though he had had no notice of the fact as yet.

Pittenger: Andrews bore this like a hero as he was, and continued mild and cheerful as ever, though the parting from the Knoxville twelve had all the markings of a final farewell. Andrews shook the hands of each of the men departing, and said, "Boys, if I never see you here again, try to meet me on the other side of Jordan."

The twelve men departed for Knoxville on Saturday morning May 31, 1862. That same day when the 10 remaining prisoners were in the yard for their "afternoon airing", Captain Law approached Andrews and handed him an envelope. He received it coolly, placed it in his pocket and walked a short while before climbing the steps with his chainmate, Martin Hawkins.

Dorsey: The document turned out to be his death warrant. For once there was a deathlike pallor upon the face of the man who appeared to have no fear. But the pallor did not last long. Mr. Andrews voluntarily told us the nature of the document he had received, and as he did so, he smiled, but oh, such a smile. It seemed like the smile of a corpse.

Alf Wilson: We all realized the reality that stared at us. This didn't simply mean the execution of our chief. It was the forerunner of the fate that awaited every man of us. The order set the date of the execution for June 7, one week hence. James Andrews had seven days to live – unless he could escape.

The nine raiders confined in Chattanooga set to work immediately to deliver Andrews from the noose. The earlier plans to rush the guards by surprise and force were abandoned. The focus now, sneaking out Andrews with others to follow if possible. This would be no easy task as Andrews had been returned to the dungeon for extra security.

They had but one asset, Knight's dull jackknife which the engineer had thoughtfully left behind with his comrades in case they might need it. The soldiers began preparing for Andrews's exodus overnight. The plan was a vertical escape. They would bring Andrews up from the dungeon and break through the ceiling of their cell into the attic where hopefully the outer brick wall of the jail could be breached. The Buckeye soldiers drowned the sound of the scoring to unseat the lock holding

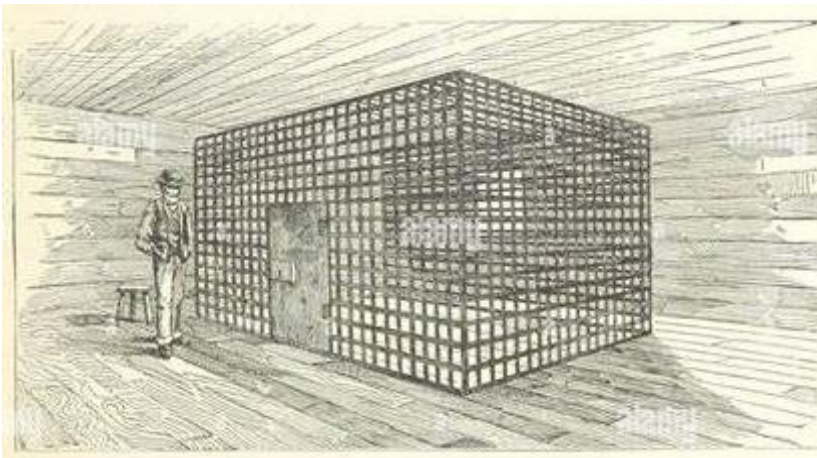
Andrews with singing and laughing. Standing on each other's shoulders they worked on the hardened two-inch oak ceiling planks above.

Alf Wilson: Our singers and noisemakers were about as weary with the monotony of their efforts as the saw-shovers.

F.M. Gregg (historian): These men possessed that fertile power of producing resources, for prosecuting their purpose out of things in which were thought not to exist. This character which enabled them afterwards to create schemes of escape, prosecute them and succeed after enduring untold suffering and fatigue did not forsake them in this great desire....

June 1, 1862

Mark Wood and Alf Wilson: The whole party-twenty-two in number-were chained with heavy irons, and confined in a dark dungeon, thirteen feet square, and for six weeks fed on half fare, of the most miserable quality. We were stripped of all in our pockets and left without a cent. A Court-Martial was ordered and 12 were selected and taken to Knoxville, Tenn. and confined in large iron cages.



While some were imprisoned at Chattanooga and others in Knoxville, Andrews was tried as a spy, convicted, and sentenced to hang. When Andrews was returned to the Chattanooga jail and his fate learned, we determined to attempt his escape by cutting

through the jail. From a bone in one of their meals, Knight carved a key with which they were able to unlock the shackles.

Saturday night the work on the ceiling was only partly done. Sunday passed with the efforts undetected, and the work began in earnest again. Three men stood close together to form a scaffold while a fourth stood on their shoulders and sawed at the planking till his hand grew tired and the knife was passed to another. When the hole in the ceiling was large enough to pass through, the lock in the trap door was cut out and a rope, improvised from twisted blankets and torn clothing, was lowered and their leader was swung up from below. It was now past midnight and too late for singing and noise. Andrews and John Wollam were lifted into the attic where they set to work in darkness with several others to cut an opening brick by brick as quietly as possible in the gable end of the jail. The bricks were loosened using the jackknife and bone and pulled gently inward and set down.

As morning light began to appear in the sky Andrews and Wollam whispered down they were ready, and the blanket rope was passed up and secured to a rafter. Andrews holding his boots in his teeth by the straps slipped out the opening. A falling brick discovered his position to the guards. He was fired on but made his escape over the south fence into Fifth Street dropping his hat and shoes in the process.

Wollam was entirely undeterred by the hollering guards and whizzing bullets. He slid down behind Andrews and disappeared over the fence as well.

The eight men remaining thought it foolish for another to make the attempt. The officer of the guard who burst into the cell minutes later found them quiet, innocently pretending to sleep. A laughable fiction not only because of the shouting and gunfire but also because the prisoners strangely lacked blankets and there was an unexplained hole in the ceiling.

Dorsey: Old Swims was a tower of rage. Irate that the raiders had “made merry” last night while cutting his jail all to pieces. He hotly blamed the provost guard and the Confederate sentries for the lenient treatment given of late. He whined he might have known there was some devilment up, the way the damned Yankees were singing hymns.

Alf Wilson: Whatever the minimal privileges we had been afforded; they were at an end. We were put down in the hole, loaded with heavy irons and treated with the greatest rigor and severity.

However, the Ohioans were elated, congratulating each other in the fetid darkness of their success and breathlessly awaited word of the two fugitives.

June 4, 1862

At the outset, Andrews and Wollam took different routes through the streets of Chattanooga making their way for the Tennessee River. Wollam discarded his coat and vest at the riverbank, waded in and returned to the near bank and hid in a canebrake. His pursuers searched the other side of the bank and assumed he had been swept away or drowned. At dark Wollam crept down river, found a discarded canoe and disappeared down the river.

Andrews made it a short way outside the city, waded along the riverbank to throw off the dogs and then climbed a tree to wait out the daylight hours. He watched armed men scour the area around him. As night fell thunderstorms rolled in. As a hard rain and vigorous winds blew across the river surface, Andrews descended and made his way in bare feet along the bank till he encountered a high bluff where he decided to swim the river. Removing his trousers and tying them around his neck he went out into the rushing current. Waves rushed over him dislodging his britches, but he finally made the other side exhausted, battered and bruised from the current and rocky bottom. He continued along the bank in the blackness, but it was hard going over rocks, limbs and briars tearing at his bare legs and feet.

By dawn Tuesday word spread that the notorious spy Andrews had escaped. Detailed descriptions of him, his voice and demeanor were carried in the newspapers. The conductor, William Fuller offered \$100 for his capture and reincarceration.

After hiding again for a time in a tree, nearly spent, unable to find an adequate hideout and succumbed to a gnawing hunger, Andrews approached a small boy in a dugout near Moccasin Bend about twelve miles from Chattanooga. The poor lad was initially paralyzed with fright seeing the half-naked, bloody, black-bearded skeleton, but recovered and took Andrews to Williams Island named for the plantation owner Samuel Williams. Captain Standifer and Williams took Andrews prisoner. He did not object.

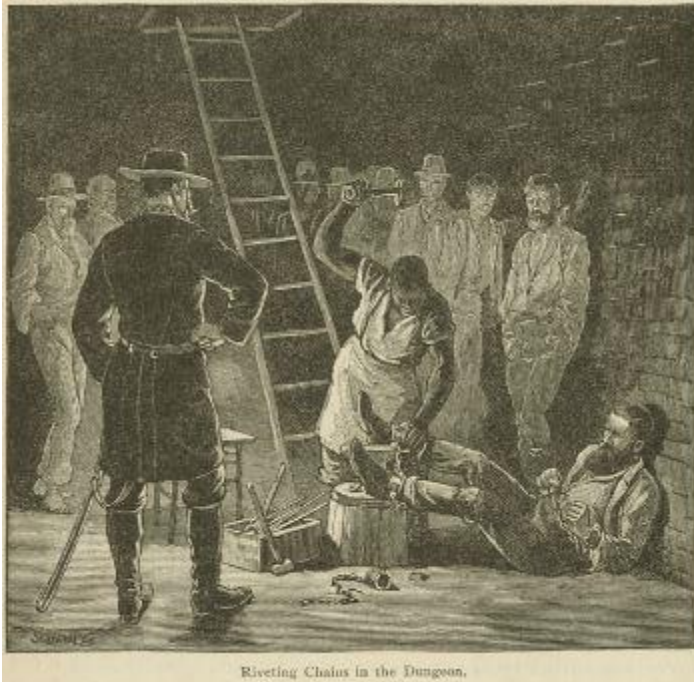
Sam Williams (Confederate): He was only wearing a ragged black coat, a once white shirt and his feet so swollen and bleeding, he could hardly walk. His cheek bones stuck out and his face was pinched with hunger.

A rumor reached the prisoners at Swims' jail on Wednesday June 4 that Andrews had been captured. A short time later a strong guard and a rabble of citizens arrived with Andrews himself leaving blood behind every step.

Alf Wilson: Oh, how our hearts and hopes sank down within us beyond the power of expression. I have seen those dear to me by ties of kindred called away never to return. I have seen comrades die on the field, and without warning sufficient to speak a parting farewell. I have seen a comrade, endeared to me by long association and friendship amid dangers, chained to me and perishing slowly day by day - - his proud spirit broken by disease and hunger, until fever's fitful delirium robbed him of the sense of pain. All this I have seen and felt, yet God, in His inscrutable ways and infinite mercy, never laid upon me the heavy chastening hand of sorrow and anguish that I felt when I beheld the brutal guards bringing in poor, ill-fated Andrews, bound hand and foot in heavy chains. I could have prayed that death had spared me those painful moments, the most harrowing of my life.

Andrews was placed back in "the hole". His comrades shocked at his appearance which was nothing short of ghastly, the most wretched, pitiable human being. A sight that horrified them all. The change was so startling it was hard to believe that it could have taken place in three days.

Alf Wilson: He was bloody, bruised, and speechless. His face pale, haggard, and emaciated. His eyes gave forth a wild, despairing, unnatural light. All in all, he seemed more dead than alive.



Later that evening the trap door opened, and three men descended. First was old Swims carrying a lantern, followed by an officer wearing a sword, and finally William Lewis, the blacksmith who lived nearby. He had kindly sent the prisoners lettuce from his garden. He brought with him a hammer and a pair of crude shackles connected with a heavy chain, and a section of iron to serve as an anvil. Everyone called Lewis "Uncle Billy". One historian described him as one of the most remarkable negroes in Chattanooga. Born into slavery in 1813, he came to Chattanooga

as a young man and learned the trade of a blacksmith and ironworker and set out to build a life for himself and his family. After considerable perseverance, he was able to purchase his freedom and that of his wife for \$1,000 each. He then established his own smithy, bought tools and material, and hired employees, and soon purchased his six-year-old son, for \$400. He next bought freedom for his elderly uncle and aunt (\$150 each), then his two brothers (\$1,000 each), and finally his sister (\$400).

Dorsey: No one spoke as Lewis went to work in the feeble light of Swims lantern. Andrews lay prone on the filthy floor, with no blanket, resting on one elbow to watch the proceedings.

The next day a detail of Confederate soldiers began erecting a scaffold near the jail for Saturday's hanging.

June 7, 1862

Mark Wood and Alf Wilson: As soon as Andrews was brought back, Andrews was chained, hands and feet, and the irons riveted on, the shackles being of immense weight and sufficient to have held an ox.

Mitchel had ordered Brigadier General James Negley to lead units of the 3rd Division to Chattanooga with authority to take the town if prudent. On his way, Negley brushed aside Rebel Calvary through Winchester, Jasper, and Shellmound. On June 7th he commenced a terrifying artillery bombardment on Chattanooga for 3 hours that afternoon and six hours on Sunday the 8th using 4 ½ inch parrot guns.

The approach of Union troops caused panic and the Confederate authorities thought it prudent to relocate Andrews and the eight other raiders to Atlanta just hours before he was to be hung on the constructed gallows.

Alf Wilson: We were soon whirling along on that same accursed railroad, for it brought no pleasant memories to us. Andrews was reminded and taunted at every station of his approaching doom.

Andrews, who was not chained to another asked Wilson to go to the coach's water closet and open the window as wide as possible. Wilson and Wood, chained together, shuffled down the aisle to the closet but to Andrews's disappointment the window would only open about six inches.

The train pulled into Atlanta about four o'clock and the prisoners were taken from the station under heavy guard to the building known as the Concert Hall and climbed the stairs to the second floor. The men sat in silence not wanting to disturb Andrews as he sat in mute reflection.

Dorsey (years later): The clank, clank of the shackles on Andrews's feet as he trudged along on the pavement seems to sound in my ears yet.

The silence was broken as the sheriff, Colonel Oliver H. Jones, came up the steps dressed in a fine, funeral black suit and stood in the open door and spoke gently to the Kentuckian, quite as if he were inviting him to dinner. "Come on, now, Mr. Andrews". Without a word Andrews stood and firmly shook the hand of each of his comrades.

Brown: He was cool until the last, he quietly said,

Andrews: 'Boys, I have often wished to know what lay beyond Jordan; meet me over there.'

He then turned and clanged his way out the door and down the steps to the street below dragging his chains. The eight soldiers watched out the windows as he clumsily pulled himself into an open carriage pulled by two horses. Colonel Jones climbed in beside him and a large detail of mounted soldiers and a motley crowd of citizens followed as they rolled away.

Dorsey: That was the last we saw of Andrews, brave, noble true-hearted Andrews! As grand a man as ever gave up his life for the starry flag of the free.

As the carriage and column of men reached the corner of Decatur and Peachtree Streets Reverend W.J. Scott, pastor of Wesley Chapel was standing there in the broad sunlight. Colonel Jones asked if Rev. Scott would come along and officiate at Mr. Andrews execution to which he politely declined.

Rev Scott: I replied that I disliked witness and execution of the sort and suggested that he procure some other minister.

However, Andrews looked steadily at Rev. Scott and replied in a soft voice replied,

Andrews: I would be glad to have you go.

With the direct appeal from the condemned man, the preacher climbed in the carriage and sat next to Andrews for the mile and one-half ride to the gallows.



Rev. Scott: The carriage was escorted by a file of soldiers on either side and followed by a vast multitude of people of all colors, sexes, and conditions. In reply to questions of mine, Andrews said he had no family, although he added, with a slight tremor in his voice, that he was to have been

married on the 17th of June. Andrews disclaimed all personal enmity to the Southern people saying that he was a Union man and regarded the expedition conducted as a legitimate military expedition and that he was willing to abide by his fate. Upon arrival at the place of execution we found a very large assemblage eager to witness the horrors of the gibbet. I told the prisoner that he was permitted to make a statement, but Andrews said he would prefer to keep silent and asked me to speak on his behalf.

The scaffold was a wobbly platform standing on two posts with a simple trap erected in a natural amphitheater hidden in a dense woods a few yards from a country road. There was a brief delay as Lt. James Barnes of the provost guard sent a boy, fourteen-year-old H.I. McConnell, scampering to the nearby home of Mr. A.K. Spago to ask for a cloth to cover the prisoner's face. He returned with a pillowcase offered by Mrs. Spago. Andrews declined this rather undignified death mask asking instead for a simple handkerchief to cover his eyes.

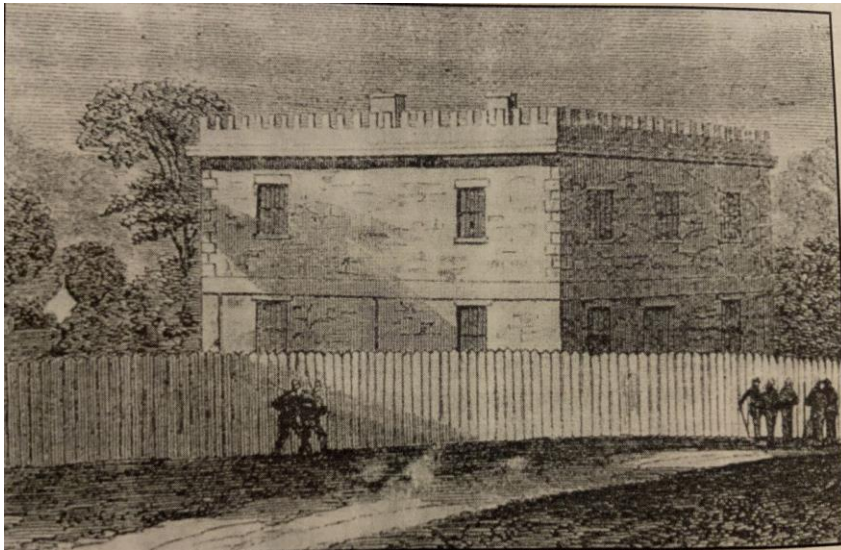
Rev. Scott told Andrews he would not remain to see the execution after he spoke on his behalf. When through the solemn ceremony Scott departed and never looked back. It was just as well as the scene that followed was grisly and the stuff of nightmares. With the noose in place the provost marshal gave the signal and the platform dropped but the cord began to stretch with the gallows swaying and creaking with Andrews dangling feet finding the ground. He kicked desperately in the dust, gurgling, gasping, straining to save his own life. One of the provost guardsmen rushed in and shouldered him to the side, pushing him off the ground and choking him once again. While another guard fell on all fours and began clawing at the dirt beneath Andrews's feet. The gasps of the assembled witnesses gave to cries for mercy while ladies and men alike averted their eyes as the horror continued.

James Squires (W&A railroad man): it was certain his neck had not been broken; he was merely strangled.

On the 7th of June 1862 James J. Andrews was hung in Atlanta near the present-day 3rd and Juniper Streets, NE. The extra weight of the shackles and chains stretched Andrews's rope. With his feet touching the ground, Confederate soldiers had to dig the soil out from under them to complete the task.

As the afternoon light faded, Andrews's body was cut down and placed in a crude wooden coffin. His ankles still chained by Uncle Billy's shackles. The burial party carried him some forty yards down the hill to what one would call a "ready-made-grave." A hole under the roots of a recent storm felled pine tree. The Southern Confederacy newspaper covered it the next day rather matter-of-factly in an article noting; after "a feeling of prayer" and "a few seasonable words of counsel, Andrews was "launched into eternity...". No mention was made of the botched hanging. After the sensational episode the unmarked grave soon became lost under a snarl of blackberry and wild roses.

As Andrews was being lowered in his shallow grave, the eight Ohio soldiers in the Concert Hall were being taken to their new quarters. Mark Wood was sick with fever and kept holding up the bedraggled column. Finally, Alf Wilson picked up his chain mate and carried him the rest of the way. They were marched about six blocks to the Fulton County Jail which stood at the corner of Fraser and Fair Streets (Memorial Drive today). The two-story prison was another brick-walled edifice. It was built in 1855 and was a boxlike structure that aspired to be a castle with a cornice and parapet giving the appearance of a squared-off rook tucked in the corner of the chessboard.



On arriving, given the sturdy construction of the jail and the alertness and abilities of the guard by authorities, the handcuffs, collars, and trace-chains the Ohioans had worn for more than 6 weeks were removed.

Alf Wilson: We had worn them for so long in couples that we would find ourselves

involuntarily, at times, following each other about as if still compelled to do so by chains. In the cell was a big iron cage similar to that which Barnum used to carry his big rhinoceros in.

During the day the raiders were housed in the open part of the cell. At night they were confined to the "rhinoceros cage" sleeping in a tight circle with their heads in the

center resting on a single bed tick of straw. Although it was summer, they lacked blankets and, on some nights, found the iron floor of the cage painfully cold.

In Knoxville, 112 miles up the line away from Chattanooga the court martials were underway. A request to consolidate their cases into one proceeding was denied at the outset. Despite an able defense by Oliver P. Temple and his law partner John Baxter, each day found one more condemned as a spy. The proceedings were convened in the old courthouse and took on an air of indifference suggesting that the outcome was a foregone conclusion.

Pittenger: All this was very well if the object was, as they assured us, merely to put formally on the record our true character as prisoners of war; but it was most heartless if the trial was in earnest, and a matter of life or death.

June 13, 1862

On the eighth day the court was interrupted by threatened advance of Federal forces under General George Morgan to the gates of Knoxville itself. The court was adjourned, and the prisoners quickly removed to Atlanta for safe keeping.

Pittenger: The first movement stopped the trials; the second rendered our speedy removal necessary.

Brown: The trials of the members of our party on the charge of being spies were begun and carried out in the order in which we were captured. Of the twelve raiders that had been transferred to Knoxville and placed on trial, seven had been found guilty of being spies when the trials were interrupted by Union forces before they could be completed. The approach of the Union army at that time caused us to be hurried from Knoxville to Atlanta.

"List of Prisoners sent to Atlanta, Ga., June 13, 1862, from Knoxville, Tenn., by command of Major-General E. Kirby Smith:

NAMES.	RESIDENCE.	CHARGES.
1. Wilson Brown.....	Ohio.	Court-martialled and sentenced.. Engine-stealing.
2. Marion Ross.....	"	" " " "
3. W. H. Campbell.....	"	" " " "
4. John Scott.....	"	" " " "
5. Perry G. Shadrach.....	"	" " " "
6. G. D. Wilson.....	"	" " " "
7. Samuel Slavens.....	"	" " " "
8. S. Robinson.....	"	" " " "
9. E. H. Mason.....	"	" " " "
10. Wm. Knight.....	"	" " " "
11. Robt. Buffins.....	"	" " " "
12. Wm. Pettinger.....	"	" " " "
13. Captain David Fry.....	Green Co., Tenn.....	Bridge-burning and recruiting for Federal army.
14. G. W. Barlow.....	Washington Co., Tenn..	Obstructing railroad track.
15. Thos. McCoy.....	Morgan Co.,	} Prisoners of war.—Federal soldiers.
Peter Pierce.....	Campbell Co.,	
John Barker.....	Estill Co.,	
Bennet Powers.....	Lincoln Co.,	

Alf Wilson: Several days after Andrews's death, we were surprised to hear the balance of our party had arrived in Atlanta. These were the twelve that had been sent to Knoxville for trial and of whose fate until then we had been ignorant. They had been tried by court-martial, but none of them knew what the decision was.

June 18, 1862

Andrews was now eleven days in the grave. With the Knoxville contingent present, the Andrews raiders were now twenty in number in the Fulton County jail. John Wollam was either still at large or dead. Although their day-to-day surroundings had improved since the Swim's dungeon, the rations had not.

Alf Wilson: The food was almost enough to convulse the stomach of a hungry dog. "Man, when forced to it, is as ravenous, reckless, unreasonable, and brutish in his appetite as the lowest form of animal creation.

Dorsey: The day dawned bright and clear in Atlanta. It was a bright and lovely day.

Pittenger: Wednesday, the 18th of June, was a bright summer day. The party in our cell were passing time with games and songs, unsuspecting of trouble.

The morning hours passed playing games and arguing over the course of the war and the enemy's intentions. Several had had troubling bad dreams, especially George Wilson and a few of the others tried at Knoxville. They related nightmares as they flipped cards from a dog-eared deck.

Dorsey: They dreamed of being in muddy sloughs, in mirey places. Some had seen great piles of fresh dug earth, where great trenches had opened in the ground. It was perhaps two o'clock in the afternoon when the games were broken up abruptly, by the announcement, from a comrade standing at a window that a body of cavalry had halted in front of the jail.

Alf Wilson: It was early afternoon about two o'clock when the card playing, and checkers were interrupted by a clatter in the street. A body of cavalry arrived. Officers in charge clomped up the steps with sabers rattling along with the jailers Turner and Thor. Black gowned ministers hovered behind. The northwest cell of the Knoxville contingent was opened and the names of the seven men tried in Knoxville were called. Samuel Robertson was laid low by a blazing fever and had to be helped to his feet. The seven were removed to a separate jail from others with whom they arrived and were read the specifications of the general order of their court-martial.... that "they were spies that lurked in and about the encampments of Confederate forces and were "to be immediately hung by the neck until dead." The seven were:

2nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry (OVI):

Sgt. Major Marion A. Ross
Private George D. Wilson, Company B
Private Charles P. Shadrach, Company K
William Campbell, Civilian

21st OVI:

Sgt. John M. Scott, Company F

33rd O.V.I.

Private Samuel Slavens, Company E

Private Samuel Robertson, Company G

Although the order stated the executions were to be conducted between the 15th and the 22nd day of June once their sentence was read the arms of the men were immediately bound. The Confederate authorities had apparently learned their lesson to give notice with Andrews's escape and there would be no delay this time. The outspoken George Wilson protested.

George Wilson: We would not care so much to be shot as soldiers, but to be hanged like a dog is a burning shame.

Dorsey: They were returned across the hall where George Wilson whispered, "We are to be executed immediately." Wilson delivered words of warning saying that he had been "completely deceived, utterly mistaken in ever thinking that they would be released or exchanged. The rest of you will go the same way."

Brown: Jefferson Davis telegraphed an order to have the seven hanged that had been already tried and one day they were taken out of our room and executed. Everyone met his fate bravely.

From the March 23, 1863, **Judge Advocate General's Report** of the Union Army...

"Among those who thus perished was Private Geo. D. Wilson, Company C, 21st Ohio Volunteers. He was a mechanic from Cincinnati, who, in the exercise of his trade, had travelled much through the States North and South, and who had a greatness of soul which sympathized intensely with our struggle for national life, and was in that dark hour filled with joyous convictions of our final triumph. Though surrounded by a scowling crowd, impatient for his sacrifice, he did not hesitate, while standing under the gallows, to make them a brief address. ***He told them that, though they were all wrong, he had no hostile feelings toward the Southern people, believing that not they but their leaders were responsible for the Rebellion; that he was no spy, as charged, but a soldier regularly detailed for military duty; that he did not regret to die for his country, but only regretted the manner of his death; and he added, for their admonition, that they would yet see the time when the old Union would be restored, and when its flag would wave over them again.*** And with these words the brave man died. He, like his comrades, calmly met the ignominious doom of a felon—but, happily, ignominious for him and for them only so far as the martyrdom of the patriot and the hero can be degraded by the hands of ruffians and traitors."

F.M. Gregg (historian): At about half past four in the afternoon, in the Oakland Cemetery, on the 18th of June, eleven days after the death of their leader, the seven men stood on the gallows. From a joist resting in the forks of two trees hung the

seven nooses. Back of them yawned the trench in which they were to be laid. When George Wilson had eloquently and boldly spoken his mind, the crazy platform on which they were standing was knocked down.



Execution of the seven Andrews Raiders near Oakland Cemetery, Atlanta.
Philip G. Shadrach in the middle and George D. Wilson on the far right saying last words to the gathered crowd.

Again, the bungling manner of preparing the ropes extended the agony, this time for Campbell and Slavens, who being heavier men than that of the others, broke their ropes and fell to the ground. Recovering sufficiently to sit up, Campbell and Slavens were given a cup of water, but little further time to prepare themselves. With new ropes readjusted, Campbell and Slavens were swung out to join their five companions. In rough boxes the bodies were laid in a shallow trench near Memorial St. and South Park St. nearby the Oakland Cemetery in Atlanta on June 18, 1862.

George Davenport Wilson was the son of George and Elizabeth Clark Wilson of Belmont County, Ohio. According to one source he was married once, but divorced in 1861, before enlisting. He had a daughter and a son.

Philip Gephart Shadrach is listed on the military rolls as Charles Perry Shadrach. He was the orphan son of Robert and Elizabeth Shadrach of Somerset County, Pennsylvania. Orphaned, he was separated from his siblings at a young age. He never married. The Raiders knew him as Perry.

June 19, 1862

Present at the hanging were four young boys between eight to ten years of age. Smith and Tom Clayton and their cousins Andrew and Tom Semmes. Andrew and Tom were the twin sons of Confederate Brigadier General Paul J. Semmes who was later mortally wounded in the Wheatfield at Gettysburg. The Clayton boys' older sister Sallie tried to dissuade the youths from attending the hanging, but they decided to take a break from their summer enterprise of collecting leaches for local physicians to come see the execution of the hated Yanks anyway. The two young Toms lost their nerve and turned back. Sallie writes in her memoirs that "about midnight that night the young witnesses sent up howls loud enough to have brought the entire police department. One poor little fellow insisted that all seven of the men were sitting on the foot of his bed and no one could comfort them, and it was ever so long before they could be sufficiently made to sleep."

After the hangings, word reached the surviving raiders of their comrades botched executions.

Dorsey: The thought of being decently executed was bad enough but being hanged twice or strangled with our feet dangling on the ground made our pending doom a sickening nightmare.

After the executions Pittenger encouraged and led the men in prayer and songs. The singing resumed in the jail but rather than patriotic songs and homesick ballads, the program was rather filled with "Rock of Ages" and Jesus, Lover of my Soul and other hymns and songs of dark despair and hopelessness...

Alf Wilson: I bowed my head like all the others, but I wasn't sure it would do any good. I believe in the efficacy of earnest Christian prayer, but prayer in a Confederate prison seemed to have less effect than anyplace I have been before or since been.

The spiritual matters were assisted on occasion by Reverend McDonnell. The men said he often began by asking that the "poor prisoner lives be spared - - but only if it was in the best interest of the Confederacy."

Alf Wilson: This prayer did not suit us exactly.

Robert Buffum placed little stock in the power of prayer. But the irreverent Bay State private had been rattled by the abrupt hangings of his companions. The irreverent Buffum knelt and bowed his heavy bearded head and prayed as best he could...

Buffum: Lord, we are taught to pray for our enemies, therefore we pray Thee to have mercy on these god damned Rebel sons of bitches, for they know not what they do.

Dorsey participated in the religious services that Pittenger led, though he found them nothing more than a way to pass the time.

Dorsey: My heart was not in it. The prayers and hymns did nothing more than to reconcile the prisoners to their fate – convincing them that “a haven of rest, peace and happiness awaited us” – and thereby lessening their resistance and muffling any plans to escape. Soldiers situated as we were had far better have devoted their attention to fighting their way out than to have resorted to any form of religious entertainment or pastime.

Al Dorsey: An ever-increasing number of our companions believed in the maxim that God helps those who help themselves.

In seeking possible relief, the desperate prisoners decided to exhaust all possible avenues, even seeking a pardon from the man many northerners considered to be the devil himself. A written request would be directed to the Confederate President Jefferson Davis explaining the facts of their case and asking for mercy.

A lengthy and heated debate occurred over the proposed letter writing. Finally, a version was apparently acceptable to all and sent dated June 18, 1862, although likely written a day or two later. Although it was signed by all present some objected but, in the end, felt it was worth a try as it could hardly make things worse. Dorsey signed for the illiterate Jacob Parrott.

The long hot summer continued but their situation following the executions improved. The Knoxville five were moved in with the eight by the jailer, Mr. Turner. This made their number now thirteen. Turner was a much more honest broker than the hated Swims. With him they were able to sell off their clothes and unnecessary articles they could spare for food and tobacco. Knight, who was the beneficiary of Andrews Prince Albert coat, sold it off and purchased some apples, onions and of course tobacco. They spent most days in the Georgia heat shirtless and sometimes shed trousers both to cool themselves and preserve their clothing in case of a possible escape.

Late June, 1862

At the end of June, the monotony of incarceration was broken when the jailer, Mr. Turner asked the raiders if any of them knew a man by the name of John Wollam? The Yankee captives, not wanting to compromise a friend if he was still at large or being questioned, denied knowing him when suddenly Wollam strode into view and in a hearty voice said... *“Boys, don’t go back on me now!”*

Dorsey: Wollam walked through the door shaking the hands with each of us with an ear-to-ear grin yanked leftward by a fist sized chaw of tobacco in his jaw. He was quite a spectacle. Shirtless, in a straw hat, with black trousers held up by suspenders running over his bare shoulders, and a heavily abused pair of boots. He was sunburned from nose to waist. His face was as slick as a peeled onion. He seemed almost as glad to return to prison with the boys as he would have been to have returned home.

Wollam had floated down the Tennessee River and was soon clear of Chattanooga. He made slow progress hiding his dugout by day and travelling only under the dark

of night. He travelled this way for days even passing at night one of General Mitchell's gunboats which was in reality a converted captured Confederate barge. When in sight of a Union encampment near the Mussel Shoals he came out into the open to join his comrades and was surprised by a returning Rebel reconnaissance party and was unexpectedly captured by Confederate soldiers where he was taken to a nearby camp. With incredible misfortune he was recognized as one of the engine thieves by a Confederate officer involved in his original capture in early April.

The Raiders were pleased to see their friend but terribly disappointed by his recapture as they had hoped he could have reached Federal lines and saved them in some way by inspiring a military action or an exchange.

For Wollams part, he wanted to know which one of the boys had turned state's evidence? Someone in the group tried to explain what Dorsey called "Pittenger's witness business", but Wollam did not want to hear any of it. Wollam said, *"Yes but by God, they say outside he turned state's evidence."*

There was no use to talk to Wollam about good faith. From what he had heard outside, his mind was made up, and no amount of persuasive eloquence ever changed it. He lived and died believing Pittenger had played false.

July 4, 1862

Daniel Dorsey: The day was warm and sultry, and the Rebel flag hung lifelessly down from its perch as if drooping its head in acknowledgment of guilt, as if in fact it were weighed down with the blood of the innocent, and ashamed to flaunt its guilty face before the world.

The raiders sang the Star-Spangled Banner with enthusiasm but the activities they witnessed out their jail window in Atlanta were otherwise sparse and unenthusiastic. The raiders watched the meager celebration out the iron-barred windows as a small party of officers arrived. William Knight addressed one of the colonels mockingly...

Knight: Say mister, can't you let me go down the street and see the parade? I'm patriotic and want to help celebrate?

Rebel Colonel: Well hardly, the officer replied, not at all amused.

Knight responded: I intend to celebrate the next Fourth of July at home!

The colonel growled, *"You'll celebrate it in hell."* Though the response haunted Knight for weeks, the Yankee locomotive engineer would be one of those that eventually escaped, and he would indeed spend July 4, 1863 on leave at home.

The remainder of the summer passed with no further mention of incidents and with no response from President Jefferson Davis to their letter.

August 17, 1862

In August someone conceived the notion of writing again but this time through proper military channels. A heated debate ensued not only as to the efficacy of such a plea but the wisdom of sending a request at all. Sending such a letter now with the executions having been two months concluded may only serve to bring unwelcome attention to a matter that had been concluded with “all” the engine thieves thus already hanged!

Those in favor of a second appeal won out in a vote and a second letter was prepared by Pittenger. This time addressed to Confederate Major General Braxton Bragg dated August 17. The appeal was handed to G.W. Lee the provost marshal in Atlanta who dutifully sent it General Bragg. Bragg forwarded it to Adjutant General Jasper S. Whiting at Richmond, who endorsed it to G.W. Randolph the Confederate Secretary of War who in turn submitted it to President Jefferson Davis on September 2nd. With it, Randolph provided a recommendation that the surviving raiders be *“respited until further orders and detained as hostages for our own people in the hands of the enemy.”* The irritable Davis, not feeling the claim of mercy or humanity ignored Randolph’s suggestion and replied in a note:

Confederate President Jefferson Davis: Inquire whether there is anything to justify a discrimination between these and the others who were executed for the same offense. *J.D.*

Captain G.W. Lee, who took over as provost marshal in late June, inherited the task of holding and punishing the Andrews Raiders. He contacted his predecessor to find out why the fourteen of the engine thieves were respited while the others were executed... but the only officer who could solve the conundrum was General E. Kirby Smith who signed the execution order. Captain Lee chose not to inquire with General Smith as he presumably had bigger problems to contend with.

As August crept into September the captive raiders developed additional diversions to fend off their boredom and depression while yet endeavoring to continually plan their escape. They did their utmost under the circumstances to keep physically fit and strong in the confined space as their short rations would allow.

Dorsey: Despite the range of activities, we noticed the slow but unmistakable change in ourselves. Voices became weaker, bodies thinner, and eyes glassy and increasingly distracted. “We were dying by inches.”

September 22, 1862

Following the battle of Antietam, Lincoln announced the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation causing an explosion of fury among the Southerners and the Confederate government.

Alf Wilson: The Negroes...seemed to take a lively interest in the Proclamation and were never so pleased as when they could speak to us on the sly about it.

Pittenger: Over time we found we had friends and allies in two black servants, John and Kate who brought our food and water. They whispered information heard from guards and smuggled newspapers in the bottom of our food trays. They assisted us by every means in their power and seemed willing to take any personal risk on our behalf.

Although Atlanta remained untouched or threatened as summer passed into fall, the far away war raged closer as the news of bloody battles and Confederate casualties piled up. The arsenals and other industries in town could hardly keep pace with the ceaseless demand of the hungry grey army. Atlanta's citizens began to feel the pain and pinch of the distant conflict by the prohibitive costs of commerce, scarcity of goods, theft, crime, skulkers, slaves, runaways, refugees, transients, desperadoes and the growing list of grim casualties and war dead. It was no longer just something one read about in newspapers; Atlanta verged on chaos.

October 14, 1862

For the captives own emancipation, signs were shifting the other way. Kate and John overheard Captain Lee inform the guard that he expected to receive an order for the execution of those raiders at any time. The Raiders received the disturbing news and just like that the days of idle confinement and uncertainty as to their future and fate were over.

Alf Wilson: If we had any hope of getting beyond those prison walls except on a death cart to the gallows, the blow must be struck at once.

Dorsey: Our time had come, and everything went to prove it. There was no longer any doubt of the proper course to pursue.

Hasty preparations began for their departure. They used a borrowed needle and threads liberated from the bed-ticking to mend their clothing and patch and reinforce their shoes as possible with the material at hand. Captain Fry a loyalist from Tennessee placed in the cell with some of the Ohioans was put in charge of the escape attempt. A detailed plan of attack and a role for each man was worked out to move on the jailer and the guards. They would attack when the jailer and servants came to remove the empty dinner trays. Fry would subdue the jailer and Buffum would take his keys and then open the other cell doors. They would descend the stairs dividing into two parties to rush the front and rear doors, overpower the guards outside and head for the fence and then to the woods that lay about one mile beyond in any direction. The Raiders planned to go out the night of October 15 but a soft soaking rain that afternoon gave them pause.

Dorsey: Rightly or wrongly, the wet leaves and ground would allow dogs to track us more easily. The next 24 hours was a day of awful suspense – the longest I ever put over in my life.

October 16, 1862

The raiders spent the day in a self-taught class on escape, evasion, and wilderness survival. They discussed and debated what direction to take, how to throw the dogs off the scent, how to approach a house in search of food, how to cross rivers and streams and the likely whereabouts of Union forces.

The supper hour arrived and to the captive's relief, the guard had not been reinforced as was overheard. The usual detail was posted outside, a sergeant and six men. The prisoners would have the advantage of numbers and hopefully surprise though they faced locked doors, armed guards, and all were in a weakened condition.

Dorsey: We felt that it was probably the last day on earth for some of us. Some would surely be killed in the fight with guards and who it would be no one could tell.

They shook hands warmly and traded farewells and best wishes all around. Messages were left in the hands of different comrades to be passed to family and friends if they were killed or left behind in the attempt. Captain Fry led the group in a prayer closing the benediction just as Mr. Turner came up the stairs with the two servants bearing their supper trays.

The jail cells were served one by one as always. The Raiders divided their small meals eating a bite or two for strength and pocketing the balance for a morsel to consume later. After a time, Turner returned to the northeast cell and unlocked it so that John and Kate could retrieve the trays and give them fresh water. Just as they passed in, Fry, Knight and Brown stepped quickly through into the narrow hall blocking the door. The rest of the party followed surrounding a confused Turner. He was alone. No guards had followed him, and the watchman Thoer, was nowhere in sight. Pleasantries were exchanged between Fry and Turner.

Captain David Fry: "A pleasant evening" to which Turner agreed as more men slipped outside. "We feel like taking a little walk this evening. We have been in here long enough, and you know that we will all be hanged soon if we remain, and we are going out."

Buffum: Oh, yes, Mr. Turner let us have those keys; those boys want to go too, gesturing toward another cell.



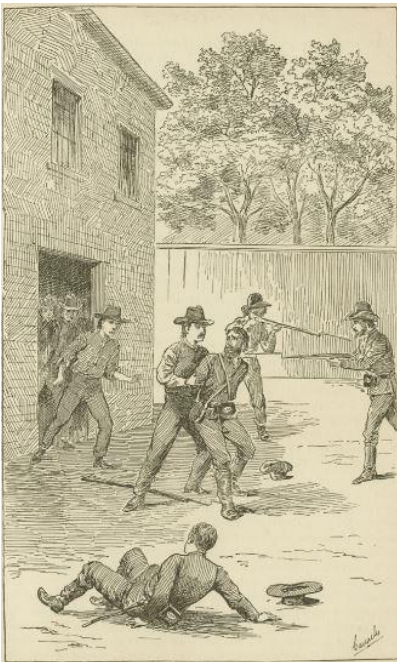
Fry suddenly seized the wiry jailer in an iron grip from behind and clapped his hand over his mouth to muffle his cries. As they skittered down the stairs Buffum stayed like a man, one raider would say years later to unlock the doors of the other cells. The servants, John and Kate, remained perfectly silent

until the noise outside convinced them that they might as well contribute their share.

The melee that ensued would later be described in great detail by the Raiders, but no two of the fourteen accounts would be alike.

Knight got between a party of guards who were playing cards and their muskets that were leaning against the building and they scrambled away in a flutter. William Bensinger subdued another guard seizing him by the throat as John Porter wrestled his musket away.

Alf Wilson: The jail yard skirmishes were a free-for-all scrap wherein several guards were knocked down and roughly handled. None seemed to be able to get a shot off in the confusion.



Wollam and Hawkins grabbed bricks and bottles from the trash and hurled them at the sentries as they ran to the gate. Casting aside the makeshift weapons they ran for the high fence topped with pickets and scrambled over and down into the unfamiliar streets of the city below. They ran pell-mell through yards and gardens, hurdling picket fences and tearing through brush. No shots were fired until the fugitives were nearly to the tree line and those fell short or whizzed by harmlessly in the fading light.

Back at the jail, those that failed to make it out of the yard in the first chaotic seconds were trapped by the guard and arriving reinforcements. Buffum had lingered too long opening cells and was captured by a fleet-footed Rebel in the streets. Due to his poor eyesight, Pittenger returned to the cell of his own accord.

Pittenger: It was a wild and exciting spectacle. Company after company of soldiers came up. The bells of the city were ringing, and shots were being fired rapidly, while loud commands and screams were mingled in. I feared that many of our number were or would soon be killed.

Pittenger's fears were unfounded. Ten of fourteen Raiders made it out of the city and into the forest. Within 48 hours the sick Elihu Mason and his comrade Bill Bensinger were rounded up by men pursuing with blood hounds.

Captain Lee ordered a widespread merciless search for the fugitives. River ferries, key crossroads and railroads were picketed with guards. No sign of cordiality was exhibited.

Provost Marshal Lee: Don't take one of the villains alive. Shoot them down and let them lie in the woods.

His anger and embarrassment were understandable. It was his duty to explain the escape to the War Department. The remaining inmates were interrogated to reveal their comrades plan and direction. The Raiders only reply was that Atlanta was in the middle of what was left of the Confederacy, and they planned to travel toward the outside.

The startling escape of the Bridge Burners was reported in the Southern Confederacy the next day. It was believed that they would be quickly recaptured.

October 25, 1862

A week later the band was still at large, and the paper reported that *“the escape of these men was the most mysterious thing in the history of this section”* the Southern Confederacy wrote: *“Their escape from jail was known and men were after them in less than half an hour. Mounted men were quickly beyond any point they could have reached, and the most ceaseless activity and vigilance was displayed night and day scouring the country watching in every direction and not trace whatever of them has been found.”*

October – November 1862

On October 14, 1862, hearing from a negro attendant that they would all soon be hanged, the fourteen Ohioans remaining in the Fulton County prison in Atlanta devised a plan and escaped on October 16, 1862. Although six were quickly recaptured, eight others, travelling in pre-arranged pairs went in different directions to reunite with Federal forces. By this time however, the Confederate forces had considerably pushed back the Union lines. For those fugitives going north and west the Federal lines were almost four hundred miles.

After General Mitchel took Huntsville and the raid on Chattanooga failed, Mitchel pleaded with General Buell to reinforce him at Huntsville through to east Tennessee with his 35,000 men so that they could take the thinly defended Confederate forces in Chattanooga and then move on Atlanta. Mitchel had 10,000 men with General Morgan having 9,000 at Cumberland Gap. The railroad was open, the troops were in good spirits and the weather was good for campaigning. It seemed the end of the war was in sight. Buell refused. After a month of fretting with imagined difficulties, Lincoln's delight soured to disappointment. On July 8, General Halleck telegraphed Buell the Presidents message...

President Lincoln: Your progress is not satisfactory. You should move more rapidly.

Buell was stunned by the rebuke such that he did not respond for three days. In early August Buell sent a message to Washington with a litany of excuses. A portion of his message read...

Gen. Don Carlos Buell: I will march upon Chattanooga at the earliest possible day, unless I ascertain certainly that the enemy's strength renders it imprudent.

Twelve days later General Braxton Bragg moved a 30,000-man column via a 776-mile circuitous route from Mississippi through Atlanta to Chattanooga. Although still overmatching the Confederate force, four days later Buell ordered an all-out withdrawal of the hard-won territory of Tennessee and by September was in Bowling Green Kentucky without the rebels firing a shot. The result for the escaped Ohioans would be a drastic lengthening of their route to safety. It would be an arduous journey through rugged wilderness terrain avoiding normal travel routes to reunite with their units.

The fugitives, **John Reed Porter** and **John Wollam**; **Daniel Allen Dorsey** and **Martin Hawkins**; **William Knight** and **Wilson Brown**, and **Mark Wood** and **Alf Wilson** were all in a weakened condition, with tattered shoes, ragged clothes, no maps, provisions, weapons, transportation, or friends. Incredibly all eight, in these prearranged pairs, rose to meet the challenge.

Porter teamed up with **Wollam** who by this time had assembled considerable experience in the business of breaking out and running for his life. Early in the pursuit, the pair stopped running to cover themselves with leaves and brush to wait for night fall. Then they headed northwest to find the Tennessee River. Their only food the first twelve days were the morsels saved from their last few meals. They hid in caves and thickets by day huddling together to keep warm as November arrived.



The Fugitives Entering a Cave.

On two occasions they broke into homes where families were absent finding corn bread and meat for their trouble. After twenty-two days they reached the Tennessee River and travelled three nights by canoe without food. Subsequently they travelled another forty miles on foot until a skiff was secured whereby, they floated again until near Corinth. On November 18, 1862, they spotted several wagons driven by soldiers wearing blue coats and emerged from the woods just four miles from Corinth.

John Porter: We were soon in the midst of a squad of the Ninth Iowa, but we still bore the resemblance of dilapidated rebels. We were taken to a Union officer that accused us of being Confederate spies.

A lieutenant of the 20th Ohio was less skeptical, but the provost marshal of Corinth remained unconvinced and sent them before General Grenville Dodge.

John Porter: After a short interview he (General Dodge) recognized our true character and soon had a full detail of our adventures. We went to the Quarter-Master's department, drew our clothing, took a general clean up, robed ourselves in army blue. We felt that we were no longer fugitives and wanders, but free men.

Daniel Allen Dorsey and Martin Hawkins would reach safety that same November 18 along a different route to a different end point. Dorsey and Hawkins struck northeast instead of west. Though the toil of their story is much the same through five weeks of mountainous forest and scrub terrain, desperate close calls and debilitating hunger, their lives were likely saved by an Underground Railroad of slaves and loyalist along the way. Making it through Georgia and past the Tennessee River they took through the Cumberland mountains on foot.

Dorsey: The lofty peaks, the wide landscape, the rising and setting sun were doubly solemn in the profound silence, and amid the mighty forest of that region. I can never forget the beauty of nature associated with so much peril.

Stumbling from weakness and lack of sleep through the darkness they would drop to the ground at night foraging for fallen persimmons to eat. They crossed into Kentucky in mid-November. They had three straight meals for the first time in seven months. A Union friendly host found them passage on a wagon going to Lebanon Kentucky for salt. Their journey afoot suddenly and happily ended.

Dorsey: I would like to tell how the old Star-Spangled Banner looked to me as we saw it floating grandly in the evening breeze at Lebanon on that day – the 18th of November 1862 – but the language fails me.

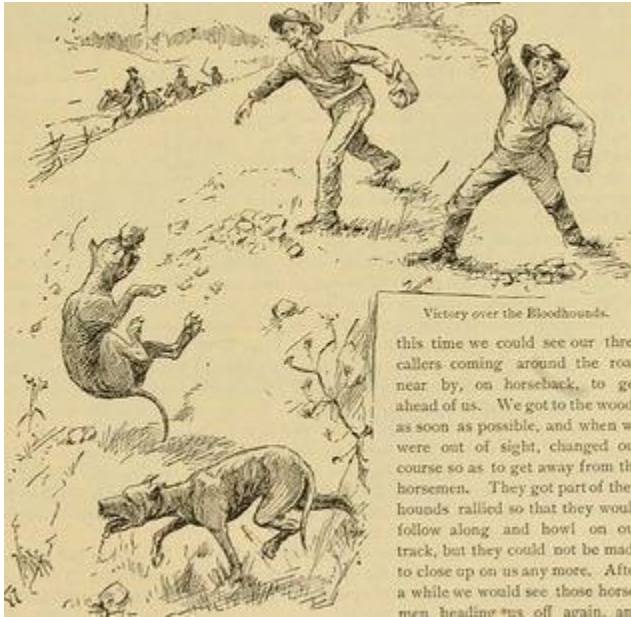
Like Porter and Wollam they were not cordially received. One commander doubted their story. Nonetheless they were sent to a barracks where they met soldiers from their own company. One soldier cried out in amazement, “Dorsey is that you?”

Dorsey: From these friends we learned all about our comrades in arms: who had fallen in battle, who had been wounded, discharged, and something about friends at home.

Dorsey would rejoin his regiment just in time for the bloody year-end battle at Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

William Knight and Wilson Brown were the engineers and the first to board the General in April. They were first in the rush from their cell to attack the guards and reach the shelter of the woods. They initially made slow progress carrying the sick Sergeant Elihu Mason. Mason pleaded they leave him in the woods and to save themselves. Seeking shelter in a farmhouse their breakfast was interrupted by men searching for the fugitives. At this point they had no choice but to abandon Mason and make a run for it. The hounds were turned loose after them.

Knight: We fended off the dogs with rocks at close range and again took off into the woods. As Southerners used to say after a battle, we won the victory, but we evacuated the ground.



From there they travelled more than 300 grueling miles through the Blue Ridge and Smokey Mountains along a route similar to that of Dorsey and Hawkins some distance to the east. They arrived at Federal lines near Somerset, Kentucky in late November.

Wilson Brown: How we subsisted 47 days and nights on chestnuts, roots, and green corn – how we travelled by the north star as a guide – how we waded swamps, swam rivers, climbed mountains and how we were pursued by bloodhounds and blood thirsty rebels – how we were secreted in a

cave by East Tenn. Patriots – how we finally reached Union lines in rude condition – every word true but it reads like a romance.

Mark Wood and **Alf Wilson** followed Wilson's plan to reach the protection of the United States military by journeying due south. Wilson's plan was so counterintuitive as to be brilliant. Alf proposed that he and Wood strike due south to escape Dixie by heading for the Union blockade ships in the Gulf of Mexico down the Chattahoochee River. He told his English born friend that it would be easier than travelling overland at night maintaining bearings and it would be in exactly the opposite direction from which Rebels would be searching for them. The plan seems crazy even now but, in the end, they would reach the safety of Union blockade ships more than a week earlier than their north and westbound comrades.

The two spent a harrowing first night dodging Rebel cavalry and concealing themselves in the brush as search parties were formed to scour the woods. Despite dropping from fatigue both experienced a wild, almost childish joy at being free from the gloom of prison and the bright but distant prospect ahead of seeing family, friends, and home.

They had a long way to go and little hope of encountering anyone that might sympathize with their plight as those travelling north. In the ragged clothing they had the unmistakable jail-bird look. As they sat under a great tree and ate their last breadcrumbs saved in their pockets Wilson surveyed his comrades condition...

Wilson: The miserable garments he wore did not cover his nakedness. His face was begrimed with dirt almost set in the skin. He had become thin and emaciated with fever and had a ravenous appetite; his eyes were sunken in his head and seemed to have the wild, unnatural glare of a madman, which at times almost made me shudder. And I suppose my own appearance was no more prepossessing than his.

From their self-inspection it was concluded that it would be unsafe to approach any house or be seen by any human being. Wilson only knew from their jailhouse consultations that the Chattahoochee River lay west of Atlanta and flowed south. They set out navigating southwest by the stars to the river. After many nights of travel their confidence was boosted by encountering the Atlanta and West Point Railroad known to parallel the river. However, after four more nights searching for the river believed to be nearby and subsisting only on raw ears of corn, they could hardly continue.

Wilson: Mark Wood crawled along on his hands and knees for a considerable distance in order to spare his blistered feet. What's a fellow's life but a curse to him when he has to drag it out in this way? I would rather be dead and done with it. I sometimes wondered like Job of old, why my afflictions were so great.

The river was found, and they waded in cooling their blistered feet and drinking their fill. A skiff was found, and they spent the next three weeks paddling by night and hiding by day. Sleep was hard to come by thanks to their gnawing hunger and swarms of hungry mosquitoes.

Wilson: I could while sleeping see in my dreams, the tables spread and groaning with loads of good things to eat: bread, meat, cheese, coffee, biscuit, and butter were all within my reach. But the waking reality was all too different - - nothing but the ears of hard corn they found almost indigestible.

One night a ferry boat line stretched across the river knocked them from their boat. As the river churned through rapids below, they had no choice but to abandon their craft and take up on foot again hobbling their way through the rocky terrain. They hung to the tree line as they came upon the smokestacks of the city of Columbus still almost 200 miles north of the Gulf of Mexico. They could hear the clattering of hundreds of workmen and their hammers. Continuing to the river they procured several different boats. The first being a leaky concern that required constant bailing. As they floated by countless creeks and inlets the scenery became monotonous as the landscape flattened and the mountains gave way to fields and marshes. Hunger remained their principal enemy.

Wilson: When I look back and think of those long hungry nights and days, I wonder how it was possible that we kept up. I do not think I could withstand the same deprivation again, although a man does not know what he can endure until he tries it.

As they drew into open river and marsh area Wilson and Wood covered their bodies with mud and moss from the banks to protect their skin from the sun and skeeters. Although large numbers of moccasin snakes were seen swimming and, on the banks, their greatest terror was the alligators. They would awake from a daytime nap to find every hammock and log around them covered with gators.

Wilson: A ferocious, hungry dangerous looking beast. They would watch us listlessly and lazily with eyes almost shut, looking hungrily and quizzically out of one corner of their wicked peepers.

Their prospects for eating versus being eaten improved considerably when some lines and fishhooks were found in a vacant cabin near the river and they soon enjoyed a meal of raw catfish. Further down, the widening and slowing river indicated that they were nearing the gulf.

After another night's travel they found themselves on a sandy shore lined with orange, lemon, and palm trees. Knowing nothing of rising and falling tidewater, they were dumbfounded to find their boat two hundred yards from where they left it. After dragging their boat back to the water's edge, they paddled toward an island of small dead trees in the distance. At a sand bar, Wood reached down, picked up what appeared to be a muddy stone, cracked it open and ate from it. Wilson thought his hungry friend had finally lost his mind.

Wood: Taste this, I think I have never tasted anything so delicious.

Their feast on oysters was cut short when it was slowly realized that the island of dead trees in the distance were the masts of a number of ships anchored in the sound just beyond the island. They rowed out into the bay at a lively rate.

Wilson: We were now nearing the ships very fast, and were a little anxious to see their colors, as we had become so suspicious of everybody and everything that we half feared running into the clutches of our enemies. But we were not long in suspense, for suddenly a little breeze sprang up, and I shall never, no, never forget my joy on seeing the old flag, the glorious old stars, and stripes, as they unfolded to the ocean breeze and seemed to extend their beneficent protection on us, after nearly eight months of terrible bondage. We could see the field of blue, studded with golden stars, and stripes of white and red! Yes, it was our flag, old *E Pluribus Unum!*



We threw down our paddles in the boat and stood up and yelled and screamed and cried like a couple of foolish boys lost in the woods. We could not restrain ourselves.

Now they manned their paddles with newfound strength and steered a course for the nearest of the three ships visible. They could see the port holes, muzzles of cannon and officers and men near the deck rails in blue uniforms.

The ship was the U.S.S. Somerset. A 521-ton side-wheel steamer with 110 souls and six guns aboard. Her

skipper was Lieutenant Commander Alexander F. Crosman and here were Wilson and Wood paddling like forlorn castaways from a faraway landlocked jail in Atlanta.

Crosman: Come to there!... Who in the hell are you, and what are you paddling under my guns in this manner for?

Wilson taken aback by the interrogation replied meekly:

Wilson: We are two men trying to get back to God's country, among friends.

It was then that Wilson became aware again of their strange appearance.

Wilson: We had been so overjoyed and excited, that we had forgotten to pull off the old moss, which covered our nakedness and protected us from the sun from our backs, and we must have looked like scarecrows or swamp dragons. Crosman demanded additional information where upon I told him that Wood and I were enlisted Federal soldiers from the command of General O.M. Mitchel in Tennessee.

Crosman: You're a damned long way from camp!

A long way indeed. They were more than 400 miles from Atlanta with most of that stretch being winding river. From the present encampment of the Third Division, they were nearly 700 miles.

Wilson: We are fugitives from a Confederate prison in Atlanta. We are famished having travelled through mountains, forests and winding river to seek protection under the Old Flag.

At this Crosman reached out a hand to help them aboard himself. The sailors aboard were horrified at the appearance of the two castaways.

Once aboard they went to Crosman's cabin where they were fortified first with a few swallows of brandy and then sent for their first wash with soap and water in seven months. Arrangements were made for them to transfer to a nearby cruiser bound for the blockading squadron at Key West, Florida and then on to Washington DC. With letters of introduction from Crosman and a hearty supply of his best tobacco, Crosman saw them off with a hearty farewell handshake and wishes for a safe voyage and better fortune in the future.

As they rowed across to their new steamer, they took note of the name on the stern. Stars and Stripes. Alf Wilson climbed aboard and stood alone at the rail. He was clean, well-fed, wearing fresh clothes, and most of all, safe from any danger. His mind was filled with gratitude and amazement at the change in his present condition and his future prospects. Tears welled up in the young Ohio soldier's eyes as, for the first time in his life, gazed out on the ocean.

Late October 1862

Alf Wilson and Mark Wood were taken to Florida and then transferred up the coast to Washington where they gave testimony that others yet remained imprisoned in

Atlanta. With the departures of eight to the gallows and eight to the woods, the Andrews Raiders that once met in Shelbyville, Tennessee under a gathering storm, twenty-four in number, were now reduced to a mere six in the Fulton County jail.

The eight escapees returned promptly to active duty in their 2nd, 21st and 33rd Ohio regiments. The Buckeye regiments would be exposed to vicious fighting in Murfreesboro, at Mississippi Ridge, and Chickamauga in the months to come not to mention bearing the hardships of the winter and early spring campaigns.

Porter: After a few days rest, I was ready for duty.

Considering the long trek to freedom following the lengthy harsh confinement in Confederate prisons the soldiers of Andrews Raid showed a remarkable resiliency and an eagerness to return to their units and share in the hardships.

The six Yankee soldiers left behind in the Fulton County Jail spent the next days in fearful apprehension of retribution, trials, and execution. After the initial irritations of the escape wore off, they received a more humane and mild treatment and were soon moved to a Rebel barracks two blocks away and kept under constant guard by a company of Rebel soldiers.

In early December, without warning a delegation of Confederate officers arrived calling the prisoners into line with great manifestations of friendliness announcing:

Confederate Officer: "You have all been exchanged, and all that remains is to send you out of this territory."

The order of transfer informed Brigadier General Winder, commanding at Richmond, that the transferred prisoners *"have been confined here for some time and are many of them a desperate bad set of men."*

The six Raiders, along with the Tennesseans, departed that same evening for Richmond. Some of the Raiders took their last look at Atlanta. Others would return to the city two years later in the company of General Sherman.

After a three-day frigid box-car ride they arrived in Richmond and were marched to Libby Prison. It was the first time in many months the Raiders saw men in the dark blue uniforms of the United States. Libby prison was an encouraging sign as it was known to be the place where prisoner exchanges were completed. But the next morning they were called out and marched down the road to the more fearful and permanent quarters of Castle Thunder, a former tobacco factory. The commandant of Castle Thunder was Captain George W. Alexander. The hard case ruled his grim domain like a dastardly storybook character imposing a rigorous, heartless security. His sentries were watchful for a chance to shoot any inmate that moved to close to one of the windows. The local papers praised the faultless system he employed.

Water here was generally available, but the rooms frigid, the floors filthy, the latrines open and putrid, and the enclosed yard used not for exercise but for executions by firing squad.

Pittenger: Our party six in number, and the nine remaining Tennesseans – Fifteen in all – were confined during the months of December and January. We did not suffer from crowding or lack of air as in the Swims dungeon; but other evils endured, especially cold and hunger – were scarcely less tormenting than the inflictions of the vilest of all dens.



Castle Thunder, Richmond, Va.

In early February the Raiders were moved from their cell into a large upper floor. The great room had a stove, and the constant torture of the cold could be held at bay. Another six weeks were spent in confinement here with the opportunity to read the Richmond newspapers. In the last weeks of confinement, the six raiders survived an outbreak of smallpox, continued deprivations, despondency, nightly robberies, fist fights and a menial labor that was meant more for

pain and demoralization than for any actual result.

March 17, 1863 – Order for Repatriation Initiated

On March 17, 1863, as the Irish-born prisoners at Castle Thunder were marking St. Patrick's Day an officer abruptly entered and barked an order: *"All who want to go to the United States, fall into line, and come to the office."*

Pittenger: There was a rush and a scramble to the middle of the floor, and no line was ever formed more promptly.

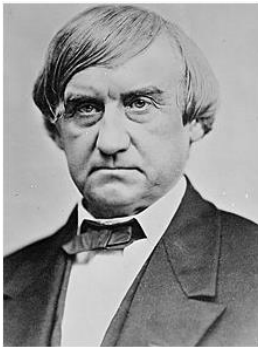
The names were taken, checked and the paroles signed for the prisoner's departure. After a night of fitful sleep, the six Raiders along with more than 300 other prisoners were marched from the yard of Castle Thunder and taken by train to City Point for exchange. The bulk of the prisoners were taken to Annapolis Maryland for parole processing and release, but the Raiders were able to convince Federal authorities that they had been detailed on a special mission, that lives were still in danger, and that they should proceed directly to Washington to report to the War Department.

March 19, 1863

The repatriated Yankees arrived in Washington on Thursday March 19, where they were given shelter but much to their chagrin placed under guard. They were given ample blankets for the night and fed generous quantities of soft bread, boiled beef, and strong, hot coffee. With the restrictions on their movement soon lifted, they spent the next few days in leisure and comfort, eating, resting, attending church service, and walking the muddy streets of the young capital.

March 24, 1863, Raiders Deposition before the Judge Advocate General

Upon hearing of their arrival, Secretary of War Stanton directed the Judge Advocate General of the Army, Joseph M. Holt to investigate the curious matter of the failed railroad raid in Georgia and prepare a comprehensive report. After an initial consultation, the next day a justice of the peace swore in William Bensinger, Robert Buffum, Elihu Mason, Jacob Parrott, William Pittenger and William Reddick. A phonographer was present to take down their testimony. After being sworn in, each man gave a deposition summarizing the raid. Mason had again taken ill suffering from a recurring ailment and was unable to attend to give deposition.



Judge Holt was well impressed by the six soldiers and their story. His report reflected both his admiration and his conclusion that the failure of the mission had been unavoidable.

Judge Holt: The expedition thus failed from causes which reflected neither upon the genius by which it was planned, nor upon the intrepidity and discretion of those who had engaged in conducting it. But for the accident of meeting the extra trains, which could not have been anticipated, the movement would have been a complete success and the whole aspect of the war in the South and Southwest would have been at once changed.

Holt praised Jacob Parrott for his firm refusal to betray his country or his comrades despite the horrible flogging he endured. Parrott's subdued and modest manner while narrating his part of the expedition showed him to be wholly unconscious of having done anything more than perform his simple duty as a soldier.

Stanton: Such Spartan fortitude, and such fidelity to the trusts of friendship and to the inspirations of patriotism, deserve an enduring record in the archives of the Government, and I will find it, I am sure, in the hearts of a loyal people.

March 25, 1863 – The Nation's First Medal of Honor Awarded

Two days later the Raiders reported to the War Department for an audience with the Secretary of War. Edwin McMasters Stanton, the second most powerful man in the Union, was a native Ohioan from the same hometown of William Pittenger and Perry Shadrach - Steubenville. The raiders were ushered through an anteroom past others, including two waiting generals and into Stanton's office. Stanton cordially greeted them shaking the hand of each man asking them to sit.



Stanton: I have been aware of your mission for some time but believed that all may have perished. In October upon learning that some among your party survived, retaliation was threatened if any more men were hanged and since all has been done within my power to secure your safe exchange. You will find yourself great heroes when you get home!

Pittenger: He warmly added many kind words about the high appreciation of our services by the government. Coming from the Secretary of the War of a great nation, to private soldiers, was most flattering.

Stanton was particularly impressed by Private Jacob Parrott offering him a complete education believed to mean an appointment at the United States Military Academy at West Point. Parrott politely declined saying...

Parrott: As long as the war lasts, I do not wish to go to school, but would rather go back and fight the Rebels who had used me so badly.

Stanton broke into a broad approving smile and told the young private...

Stanton: If you want a friend anytime, be sure to apply to me.

Stanton then excused himself for a moment to retrieve a half dozen of the newly minted Medals of Honor. Returning, he presented the first of the medals to Jacob Parrott.

Stanton: Congress has by recent law ordered medals to be prepared on this model, and your party shall have the first. They will be the first that have been given to private soldiers in this war. The other five then received their medals: Sergeant Elihu Mason, Corporal William Pittenger, Corporal William Reddick, Private William Bensinger, and Private Robert Buffum. Stanton also gave each a present of \$100 and ordered that they each man be reimbursed for all expenditures and compensated for the value of any arms and property taken from them by the Confederates.



With the ceremony complete Stanton asked about their future plans. All six expressed a desire to return as soon as possible to the ranks of the army. Stanton approved but offered each a commission as a lieutenant in the regular army. Grateful for the commission, the Raiders nonetheless expressed a preference for such an appointment in the volunteer service to which Stanton promised to request that Governor Tod of Ohio provide equivalent commissions

in their own regiments.

Closing the meeting the Secretary bid them a hearty goodbye and sent them next door to the White House where they had been invited to meet with the President of the United States.

March 25, 1863, was a busy day for Abraham Lincoln. They made the short walk east to the White House and ascended to the second floor again bypassing the waiting room throng of callers. The six were introduced by the commissioner of the prisoner of war exchange, Major General Ethan Allan Hitchcock. Their names being given, the President shook hands of each with an unaffected cordiality and good fellowship difficult describe and not missing the identity of a single man.

He had heard their story in all its details. He talked with each, asking questions, and making shrewd comments on all that they had to say.

Pittenger: I remember telling him that we were very glad to see him, though we had been hearing a great many things not complimentary about him for the past year.

President Lincoln: Indeed, there are a good many people up here that say about as bad things of me.

All remained standing for the brief visit. The President spoke with casual frankness to the six about their adventures, the military situation, and the political winds of the day. Lincoln grasped the hand of each in both of his own hands as they departed telling them each how thankful he was that their lives had been spared.

Pittenger: We left him, exceedingly proud of the honor the greatest man in the nation (or world) had conferred upon us.

Lincoln was recorded speaking with much feeling about the men afterward to a reporter saying...

President Lincoln: Their bearing and their apparent unconsciousness of having taken their lives in their hands, with the chance of death all against them, present and example of the apparent disregard of the tremendous issues of life and death which is so strong a characteristic of the American Soldier.

After some days of relaxation in Washington, the six Andrews Raiders boarded the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad to home and their units. They had been gone over a year with their lives in peril much of that time. They endured incarceration and deprivation in Chattanooga, Knoxville, Madison, Atlanta, and Richmond. They watched eight of their comrades marched away to be executed and eight others pull off a daring escape saving their lives. They pleaded with President Jefferson Davis to spare them and nine months later accepted the congratulations and thanks of President Abraham Lincoln becoming the first men in American history to be awarded the Medal of Honor.

More Medals of Honor

The eight Raiders that escaped and others would get their medals too, but bureaucratic snarls would delay several. Through a request of their commanders, Secretary of War Stanton ordered those members of the 21st Ohio: Wilson Brown, William Knight, John Reed Porter, Alf Wilson, and Mark Wood along with Daniel Dorsey and Martin Hawkins of the 33rd to be accordingly awarded the MOH in September 1863. Marion Ross and Samuel Robertson's medals were also posthumously awarded at that time. For some reason, or perhaps no reason, John Wollam was left of the list, but the oversight was remedied, and his medal was bestowed the following July in 1864. John Scott was posthumously awarded the medal in 1866 and Samuel Slavens medal was posthumously delivered to his wife Rachel in 1883.

In the end, only half of the eight men that forfeited their lives would receive the Medal of Honor. As civilians, James J. Andrews and William Campbell were not eligible for the award¹. George Wilson and Perry Shadrach to this day would never receive the medal. It appears never to have been requested on their behalf until 2007.

During the Raiders long absence from duty, the 2nd, 21st and 33rd Ohio Infantry Divisions were reorganized into the newly formed Army of the Cumberland. Command losses on the battlefield and the consequences of the reorganization may have led to an administrative lapse for Private Shadrach and Private Wilson resulting in them being forgotten.

Shadrach in fact was treated just the opposite. Back in his hometown of Steubenville, Ohio, the fallen private's name was omitted from being inscribed on a court-house-square monument to the town's war dead. Apparently, some folks figured he did not deserve to be there, listed among the fallen, blue-uniformed heroes. After all, Shadrach had been hanged as a spy. No honor in that.

Ron Shadrach: Indeed, among Shadrach family lore, he apparently was believed to have been a traitor and a spy. As a young boy, upon being shown his name 'Charles P. Shadrach' on a bronze plaque at the Ohio State house (circa 1963) I had many questions to my great aunt Mae what it was about. Aunt Mae would only first begrudgingly say that *"it wasn't good thing"*. As I pressed her for information, she would only go on to say that *"we weren't really related"*. On the ride back to Cleveland from Marysville with my dad, I asked if he knew what it was all about. He replied that he only knew that *"it was something that happened down south and that this Shadrach was a black man"*.

Epilogue on General Mitchel

In July 1862 General Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel could no longer stomach Buell's refusal to support his plans to drive east in Tennessee and south into Georgia and

¹ In May 2023 a letter was sent requesting that the president considers James Andrews and William Campbell posthumously for the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

so resigned his command and asked to be reassigned. He was reassigned to command the Department of the South headquartered in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. It was here in October that General Mitchel contracted yellow fever and died. His body was carried North for burial but not before a remarkable reunion of sorts with two of the Ohio volunteers he had sent behind enemy lines.

Alf Wilson and Mark Wood were at the same time making their way up the coast to Hilton Head where they boarded the 208-foot transport '*Star of the South*' departing for New York. The two were shocked and saddened to learn that the coffin containing their former commander had been taken aboard for the trip northward.

Alf Wilson: I believe he died in the thought that our lives had all been sacrificed. And if he did die, so believing, it was a cause of pain and sorrow to him, for his was a noble, humane, and sensitive nature – a soul of honor.

Remarkably, every one of the Ohio volunteers that survived the ill-fated Andrews Raid also survived the Civil War. All would return to their ranks for at least a period of time, with most seeing combat before the wars end.

Raiders Post Repatriation Military Action

More than half of the surviving Raiders were engaged in the Federal defeat at Chickamauga in September 1863. Entire regiments were cut off or left behind in the frantic withdrawal due to Confederate flanking movements. Men of the valiant 21st and 33rd Ohio stayed behind to protect the retreat as hospitals and the wounded were evacuated. Armed with a handful of newer Spencer revolving rifles the 21st withstood and repelled several attempts by the Rebels to compel them from their position allowing the Union force to retreat. The Rebels fourth advance was again beaten back by the 21st, this time in hand-to-hand combat using the bayonet. As the Rebel force regrouped, they noted that not a shot had been fired at them. The Yanks were out of ammunition! The Rebels quickly surrounded them in a 5th advance. The action saw 116 men of the 21st including Wilson Brown, Elihu Mason, John Porter and Mark Wood and John Wollam of the 33rd rounded up in the rout.

Brown and Wood were among those of the wounded released in an exchange a few days later. Brown would give a false name fearing that he would be tried under the old spying charge. Elihu Mason, shot in the hip as the 21st made its courageous stand would hobble through another 14 painful months of imprisonment before being exchanged in December 1864. Porter and Wollam seemed destined for another long stay in prison, but they would instead prove their talent as escape artists. Wollam, identified as one of the Raiders was returned to Atlanta and forced to wear a ball and chain through the ensuing winter. Other Union prisoners didn't initially understand the reason for this prejudicial treatment.

3rd Ohio Calvary Prisoner: Comrade Wollam was a man of few words, but a braver or more patriotic soldier never enlisted in the cause of humanity and country.

In February 1864, Wollam slipped his irons and escaped from Atlanta and rejoined his regiment in Chattanooga. In the months to come he would return to Atlanta in the company of General Sherman.

John Porter's escape would take longer. He spent the winter in a Danville, Virginia prison where he survived a smallpox epidemic and participated in efforts to escape by tunneling. In May 1864 while he was enroute to the notorious Andersonville prison he managed to escape from a train of cars. He was recaptured 3 days later and imprisoned at Columbia where he again tried to tunnel out. At the end of June, he was again enroute by train for Andersonville when near Augusta, Porter and his companions cut their way through the bottom of a box car using a table knife they filed down to make a saw. After 26 days on the run, he made it to the Western & Atlantic Railroad near Big Shanty where he jumped aboard a south bound train and reunited with his old regiment near Marietta at the gates of Atlanta after a ten-month absence.

September 2, 1864 – George Wilson's Defiant Prediction

Just as George D. Wilson had defiantly predicted on the gallows June 18, 1862, the Stars and Stripes were raised over the city of Atlanta on September 2, 1864.

June 19, 2018

It's not clear why Private Wilson and Private Shadrach were left out of the award for the Medal of Honor historically except having never been recommended, they could not have been considered. Some museums and websites falsely report that all the Raiders received the Medal of Honor. One website falsely claimed that Shadrach was disqualified for the medal because he had enlisted under an assumed name. Certainly, this does not explain why Private Wilson would have been left out or why raider Ovid Smith who enlisted under a false name, received the honor without even making into Georgia or participating in the raid. These false statements have greatly hindered the process.

On October 3, 2007, legislation was introduced on behalf of Private Shadrach and Private Wilson among several other soldiers waiving the time limitation so that the Medal of Honor could be awarded.

The Legislation passed both the Congress and the Senate and was signed by President G.W. Bush on January 28, 2008, authorizing them for the Medal of Honor. On May 16, 2012, President Obama awarded the Medal of Honor to the other soldiers listed in the legislation but excluded Private Shadrach and Private Wilson. The rationale for the decision to omit Private Shadrach and Private Wilson was requested of President Obama. Instead, the President referred the matter back to the Department of the Army to start the process over.

The Army requested that Form DA 638 (Recommendation for Award) be submitted for Private Shadrach or Private Wilson. The Shadrach Family submitted

Recommender Form DA 638 on behalf of both soldiers to the Department of the Army Awards and Decoration Branch in Fort Knox, Kentucky. Over several years a large compendium of information supporting Private Shadrach and Private Wilson for the Medal of Honor was developed and submitted adhering to the protocol for MOH recommendations. The compendium dated February 15, 2016, may be reviewed at: <http://www.shadrachandwilsonmoh.com/>.

Sometime shortly after November 11, 2015, evidence indicates that the Awards and Decoration Branch in Ft. Knox, Ky. forwarded a recommendation of approval to the Senior Army Decoration Board (SADB) at the Pentagon. The SADB reviewed and vetted the material and recommended that the Secretary of Army (SECARM) request that the President make the award. Sometime before February 3, 2016, the SECARM requested President Obama make the award but then Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) Ash Carter, returned the recommendation to the US Army Human Resources Command (USAHRC) without explanation.

It was reported that President Trump and Vice President Mike Pence were advised of the Medal of Honor recommendation for these men and that a favorable indication was acknowledged in early 2017. However, rumors indicate that Civil War Medal of Honor cases are not a priority to more current recognitions.

We appreciate your continued support for a just determination on behalf of these men. We should not forget them, just as we should not forget the selfless acts of our recent fathers, brothers, mothers, and sisters lest they too become tomorrow's forgotten patriot heroes.

Shadrach Family National Archive Letters

About a dozen letters were discovered by Brad Quinlin in the National Archives written post war for Private Shadrach's younger sister, Elizabeth, who could not read or write. Elizabeth applied for his back pay, bounty, and commutation of rations while in the Rebel prison. That is, the pay he would have been due from the time he was last paid up until his execution by the Confederates. Letters were exchanged over the course of twenty years. Initial letters were sent just to identify Private Shadrach as Elizabeth was orphaned at birth with the death of her mother. The siblings hence were raised apart from each other. Ultimately, payment was refused by the government with one reviewer noting her to be an opportunist. These letters may be found in the MOH Compendium document [MOH Request to DOD, February 15, 2016](#) referenced above.

Finally, I leave you with a Cincinnati newspaper article - message from the Governor of Ohio, dated January 6, 1866 responding to a message from the Provost Marshall

of Atlanta, dated December 18, 1865. See below and at: [Record of Provost Marshall, Atlanta, December 18, 1865 and the Governor of Ohio January 6, 1866.](#)

Ron Shadrach

Cincinnati Newspaper Article – January 1866

Transcription

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR.

State of Ohio Executive Department,
Columbus, January 6.

To the General Assembly of the State of Ohio:

Gentleman— In transmitting the inclosed communication to the General Assembly, I feel that some expression of my own ideas would be both natural and proper. The courage and constancy to the sacred cause of the Union, and that grand principle of organized freedom which it— best of all Governments of the world- has ever exemplified, and which these noble martyrs displayed in their lives and by their death, most certainly deserves our remembrance and commemoration. They suffered, for all our sakes, defeat, imprisonment, insult, and, in the end, ignominious death. They sleep afar in unhonored graves. But the end is not yet. Their graves, as their memories shall hereafter be bedecked by glistening gems- the warm tears of gratitude- by patriots of every section who may visit them. The very people, and their children, who have scoffed, reviled, and murdered them, shall learn to love and honor these patriot heroes who so nobly died for them no less than for us. Whether these national tributes will suffice for their honor, or whether their native State should evince some more formal token of her gratitude, is for the General Assembly to consider and decide.

With myself (were I a member of your August body), the difficulty would be to decide, not whether they deserve our grateful homage, but, in the multitude of like cases, what honor we can bestow upon their heroism which shall preserve a fit proportion to those which are also due others: for in the sudden promptings of our ardent admiration for such cases of devoted heroism that are presented to our contemplation, we must not forget the innumerable instances of like virtues signalized in and by this war. Our trouble here is our chief glory. Heroic suffering and heroic deaths have been so frequent and sublime- so frequent in the numbers and so sublime in the degree- that our difficulty is to know what to do for the few who may be specified, while we are unable to find or to number that vast multitude who have done and suffered, and therefore deserves likewise.

Having thus shown the difficulty, and being wholly unable to solve it, I respectfully submit the claim to your consideration for such action as you may deem it best to follow.

Very Respectfully,

CHARLES ANDERSON.

OFFICE OF PROVOST MARSHAL,
ATLANTA, GEORGIA, DEC. 18, 1865.

Governor: I take the liberty of writing you a short letter in regard to the removing of seven soldiers from the State of Ohio, who were hung in this place. They belonged to the party

that was sent out by General O. M. Mitchel. The same party that captured the engine at Big Shanty and endeavored to run through to our lines and were captured near Chattanooga, and afterwards hung at this place. If the people of Ohio knew as much about this execution as I have learned since I have been here, they would certainly send for their remains and take them home and bury them at the State Capitol and erect an appropriate monument over their remains. I have in my possession a small piece of the post on which the beam lay from which they were hung.

I have forgotten the date of their execution but can find it out without much trouble.

I think Ohio should remove them from this place where their graves are sneered at by every passing rebel, with such remarks as "I saw them fellows start to Hell," "I saw their necks stretched," and other epithets of like character.

If Ohio knew what they had to endure for a long time previous to their execution- say nothing of the awful day upon which they were hung-the heroism displayed by most of them- she would certainly honor them enough to remove their remains from Atlanta to Ohio.

The names of the seven Ohio boys hung are: William Campbell, George D. Wilson, Marion Ross, Benj. G. Shadrick, Samuel Slovens, S. Robinson and John Scott.

Hoping that something may be done to remove their remains, I have the honor to be

Yours, L. L. Parker