

# The General Locomotive Chase Monument

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## Locomotive Chase Monument

The Andrews Raid of April 12, 1862 delivered the first Union soldiers into north Georgia and led to an exciting locomotive chase which lasted seven hours and included about two dozen men. It actually began during the spring of 1862 as the Northern forces advanced on Huntsville, Alabama, heading for Chattanooga, Tennessee when a civilian spy by the name of James J. Andrews led a Union raiding party behind Confederate lines to Atlanta. The force stole a locomotive and racing northward, destroyed track, telegraphy lines and bridges toward Chattanooga, Tennessee.

The exciting event become known as the Andrews Raid. They intended to knock out the Western and Atlantic Railroad which supplied Confederate forces at Chattanooga.

The twenty-two volunteers were taken from three Ohio infantry regiments and wore plain clothes as they slipped through the lines to Chattanooga and entrained to Marietta. Two of the men overslept on the morning of April 12th as the Andrews party boarded the northbound train and traveled eight miles to Big Shanty (Kennesaw). While crew and passengers ate breakfast, the raiders uncoupled most of the cars. At about 6 a.m. they steamed out of *Big Shanty* aboard the locomotive General, a tender, and three empty boxcars.

Three railroad men noted the action and began their pursuit, eventually overtaking a platform car. Meanwhile, the Andrews raiders steamed out of the Big Shanty depot aboard the locomotive the General. For the next seven hours and 88 miles, Anthony Murphy and William Fuller persisted in their chase, first suspecting the train thieves to be Confederate deserters. Andrew's men cut the telegraph lines and pried up rails.

Murphy and Fuller switched locomotives and picked up more men to keep up the chase. When the train theirves reached the Oostanaula River near Resac, that attempted to burn the bridge, but the pursuers were too close behind and could only take on only a little water and wood. At about 1 p.m. it ran out of steam two miles north of Ringgold, as the Southerners aboard the Texas, caught up.

All of the raiders were rounded up, but only eight (Andrews included) were tried as spies and executed in Atlanta. The rest either escaped or were exchanged. Nonetheless, the Union train thieves in the Andrews Raid were hailed in the North as heroes, receiving the Medal of Honor. Today, a monument marks the site of the final stop of the Locomotive Chase, approximately one mile north of the Ringgold Depot on the former Western and Atlantic Rail Line.