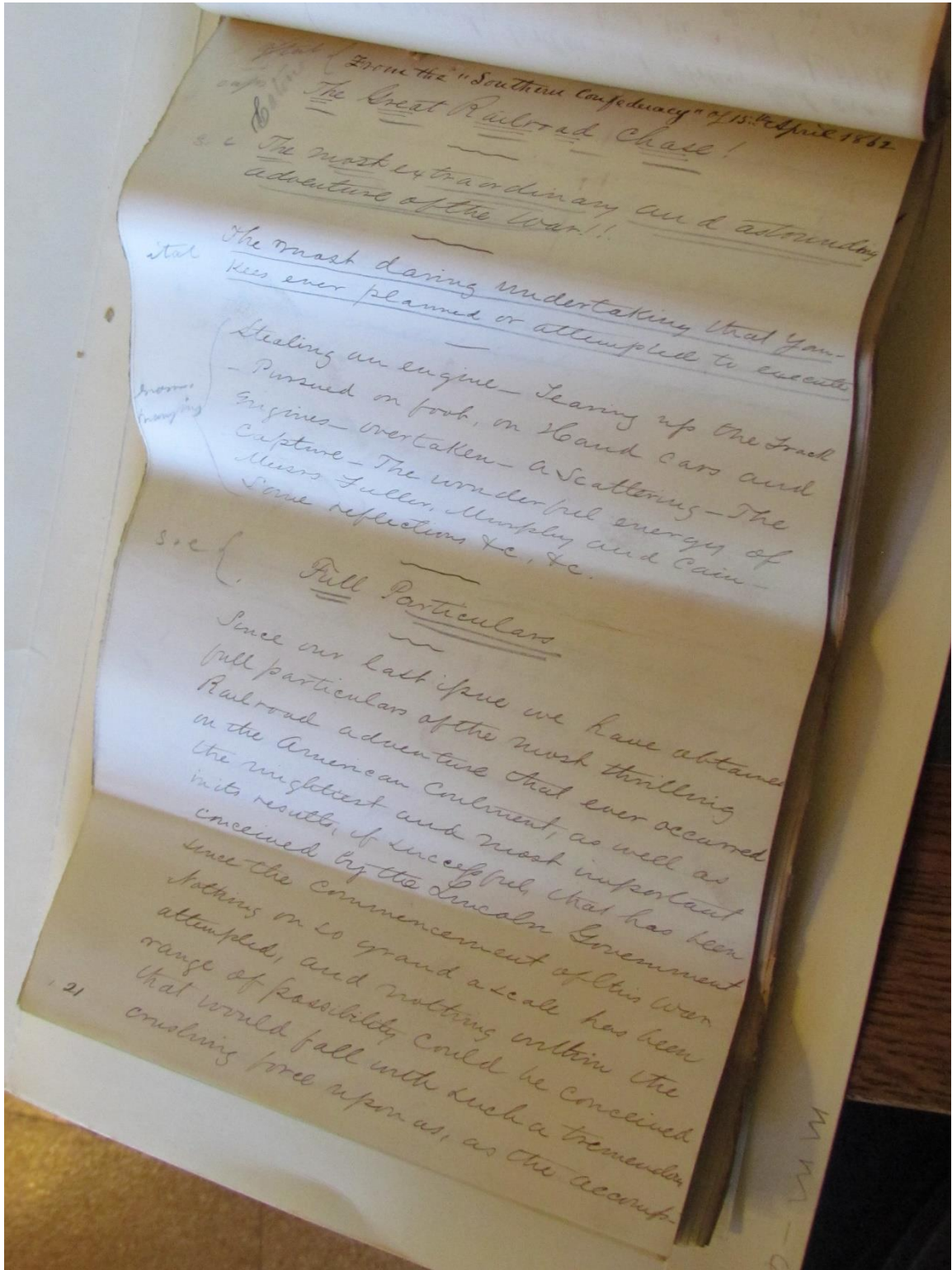


Southern Confederacy Article
April 15, 1862

The Great Railroad Chase!



From the "Southern Confederacy" of 15th April, 1862

The Great Railroad Chase!

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*The Most Extraordinary and Astounding Adventure of the War!!*

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The Most Daring Undertaking that Yankees ever planned or Attempted to Execute

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*Stealing an Engine—Tearing Up the Track—Pursued on foot, on Hand Cars and Engines—Overtaken—a Scattering—The Capture The Wonderful Energy Messrs. Fuller, Murphy, and Cain— Some Reflections, etc. etc.*

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Full Particulars

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Since our last issue we have obtained full particulars of the most thrilling railroad adventure that ever occurred on the American continent, as well as the mightiest and most important in its results, if successful, that has been conceived by the Lincoln Government since the commencement of this war. Nothing on so grand a scale has been attempted, and nothing within the range of possibility could be conceived that would fall with such a tremendous crushing force upon us as the accomplishment of the plans which were concocted and dependent on the execution of the one whose history we now proceed to narrate. Its *reality—what was actually done*—excels all the extravagant *conceptions* of the Arrowsmith hoax, which fiction created such a profound sensation in Europe.

To make the matter more complete and intelligible, we take our readers over the same history of the case which we related in our last, the main features of which are correct, but are lacking in details, which have since come to hand.

We will begin at the breakfast table, in the Big Shanty hotel at Camp McDonald, on the W. & A. RR, where several regiments of soldiers are now encamped. The morning mail and passenger train had left here at 4 A.M. on last Saturday morning as usual, and had stopped there for breakfast. The conductor, W. A. Fuller, the engineer, J. Cain—both of this city—and the passengers, were at the table, when some eight men, having uncoupled the engine and three empty box-cars next to it from the passenger and baggage cars, mounted the engine, pulled upon the valve, put on all steam, and left conductor, engineer, passengers, spectators, and the soldiers in the camp hard by, all lost in amazement, and dumbfounded at the strange, startling, daring act.

This unheard-of act was doubtless undertaken at that place and time upon the presumption that pursuit could not be made by an engine short of Kingston, some thirty miles above or from this place; and that, by cutting down the telegraph wires as they proceeded, the adventurers could calculate on at least three or four hours' start of any pursuit it was reasonable to expect. This was a legitimate conclusion, and but for the will, energy, and quick and good judgment of Mr. Fuller and Mr. Cain,

and Mr. Anthony Murphy, the intelligent and practical foreman of the wood department of the State-road shop, who accidentally went on the train from this place that morning, their calculations would have worked out as originally contemplated, and the results would have been obtained long ere this reaches the eyes of our readers—the most terrible to us of any that we can conceive as possible, and unequalled by anything attempted or conceived since this war was commenced. Now for the chase!

These three determined men, without a moment's delay, put out after the flying train on foot, amid shouts of laughter by the crowd, who, though lost in amazement at the unexpected and daring act, could not repress their risibility at seeing three men start after a train on foot, which they had just witnessed depart at lightning speed. They put on all their speed and ran along the track for three miles, when they came across some track raisers who had a small truck car, which is shoved along by men so employed on railroads on which to carry their tools. This truck and men were at once "impressed." They took it by turns of two at a time to run behind this truck and push it along all up grades and level portions of the road, and let it drive at will on all the down grades.

A little way further up the fugitive adventurers had stopped, cut the telegraph wires, and torn up the track. Here the pursuers were thrown out pell-mell, truck and men, upon the side of the road. Fortunately, "nobody was hurt on our side." The truck was soon placed on the road again, enough hands were left to repair the track, and with all the power of determined will and muscle, they pushed on to Etowah Station, some twenty miles above. Here, most fortunately, Major Cooper's old coal engine—the "Yonah"—one of the first engines on the State Road, was standing out fired up. This venerable locomotive was immediately turned round upon her old track, and, like an old racer at the tap of the drum, pricked up her ears, and made fine time to Kingston.

The fugitives, not expecting such early pursuit, quietly took in wood and water at Cass Station, and borrowed a schedule from the tank-tender upon the plausible plea that they were running a pressed train loaded with powder for Beauregard.

The attentive and patriotic tank-tender, Mr. Wm. Russell, said he gave them his schedule, and would have sent the shirt off his back to Beauregard if it had been asked for. Here the adventurous fugitives inquired which end of the switch they should go in on at Kingston. When they arrived at Kingston, they stopped, went to the agent there, told the powder story, readily got the switch key, went on the upper turnout, and waited for the down *way freight train* to pass. To all inquiries they replied with the same powder story. When the freight train had passed they immediately proceeded to the next station, Adairsville, where they were to meet the *regular down freight train*.

At some point on the way they had taken on some fifty cross-ties, and before reaching Adairsville they stopped on a curve, tore up the rails, and put seven cross-ties on the track, no doubt intending to wreck this down freight train; which would be along in a few minutes. They had out upon the engine a red hand kerchief as a kind of flag or signal, which, in railroading, means another train is behind, thereby indicating to all that the

regular passenger train would be along presently. They stopped a moment at Adairsville, and said Fuller, with the regular passenger train, was behind, and would wait at Kingston for the freight train, and told the conductor thereon to push ahead and meet him at that point. They passed on to Calhoun, where they met the down passenger train due here at 4.20 P.M., and without making any stop, they proceeded on, on, and on.

But we must return to Fuller and his party, whom we have unconsciously left on the old "Yonah", making their way to Kingston. Arriving there, and learning the adventurers were but twenty minutes ahead, they left the "Yonah" to blow off while they mounted the engine of the Rome Branch road, which was ready fired up, and waiting for the arrival of the passenger train, nearly due, when it would have proceeded to Rome. A large party of gentlemen volunteered for the chase; some at Acworth, Alltoona, Kingston, and other points, taking such arms as they could lay their hands on at the moment, and with this fresh engine they set out with all speed, but with "great care and caution," as they had scarcely time to make Adairsville before the down freight train would leave that point. Sure enough they discovered this side of Adairsville three rails torn up, and other impediments in the way. They "took up" in time to prevent an accident, but could proceed with the train no further. This was most vexatious, and it may have been in some degree disheartening, but it did not cause the slightest relaxation of efforts, and as the result proved, was but little in the way of the *dead game* pluck and resolutions of Fuller and Murphy, who left the engine and *again put out on foot alone*. After running two miles they met the down freight train one mile out of Adairsville. They immediately reversed the train, and ran backwards to Adairsville, put the cars on the siding, and pressed forward, making the time to Calhoun, where they met the regular down passenger train. Here they halted a moment, took on board a telegraph operator and a number of men, who again volunteered taking their guns along, and continued the chase. Mr. Fuller also took in here a company of track hands to repair the track as they went along. A short distance above Calhoun *they flushed their game* on a curve, where they doubtless supposed themselves out of danger, and were quietly oiling the engine, taking up the track, &c. Discovering that they were pursued, they mounted and sped away, throwing out upon the track as they went along, the heavy cross-ties they had prepared themselves with. This was done by breaking out the end of the hindmost box-car, and pitching them out. Thus "nip and tuck" they passed with fearful speed Resaca, Tilton, and on through Dalton. The rails they had taken up last they took off with them, beside throwing out cross-ties upon the track occasionally, hoping thereby the more surely to impede the pursuit; but all this was like tow to the touch of fire to the now thoroughly aroused, excited, and eager pursuers. These men, though so much excited and influenced by so much determination, still retained their well known caution, were looking out for this danger, and discovered it, and, though it was seemingly an insuperable obstacle to their making any headway in pursuit, was quickly overcome by the genius of Fuller and Murphy. Coming to where the rails were torn up they stopped; tore up the rails behind them, and laid them down before till they had passed over that

obstacle. When the cross-ties were reached they hauled to and threw them off, and then proceeded, and under these difficulties gained on the frightened fugitives. At Dalton they halted a moment. Fuller put off the telegraph operator, with instructions to telegraph to Chattanooga to have them stopped, in case he should fail to overhaul them. Fuller pressed on in hot chase, sometimes in sight, as much to prevent their cutting the wires before the message could be sent, as to catch them. The daring adventurers stopped just opposite, and very near to where Col. Glenn's regiment is encamped, and cut the wires; but the operator at Dalton *had put the message* through about two minutes before. They also again tore up the track, cut down a telegraph pole, and placed the two ends of it under the cross-ties, and the middle over the rail on the track. The pursuers stopped again, and got over this impediment in the same manner they did before—taking up rails behind, and laying them down before. Once over this, they shot on, and passed through the great tunnel at Tunnel Hill, being only five minutes behind. The fugitives, finding themselves closely pursued, uncoupled two of the box-cars from the engine, to impede the progress of the pursuers. Fuller hastily coupled them to the front of his engine, and pushed them ahead of him to the first turn-out or siding, where they were left, thus preventing the collision the adventurers intended. Thus the engine thieves passed Ringgold, where they began to fag. They were out of wood, water, and oil. Their rapid running and inattention to the engine had melted all the brass from the journals. They had no time to repair and refit, for an iron horse of more bottom was close behind. Fuller and Murphy, and their men, soon came within four hundred yards of them, when the fugitives jumped from the engine and left it—three on the north side and five on the south, all fleeing precipitately, and scattering through the thicket. Fuller and his party also took to the woods after them. Some gentlemen, also well armed, took the engine and some cars of the down passenger train at Calhoun, and followed up Fuller and Murphy, and their party in the chase, but a short distance behind, and reached the place of the stampede but a very few minutes after the first pursuers did.

A large number of men were soon mounted, armed, and scouring the entire country in search of them. Fortunately, there was a militia muster at Ringgold. A great many countrymen were in town. Hearing of the chase, they put out on foot and on horseback in every direction in search of the daring but now thoroughly frightened and fugitive men.

We learn that Fuller, soon after leaving his engine, in passing a cabin in the country, found a mule, having on a bridle but no saddle, and tied to a fence. "Here's your mule," he shouted, as he leaped upon his back, and put out as fast as a good switch well applied, could impart vigor to the muscles and accelerate the speed of the patient donkey. The cry of "Here's your mule," and "Where's my mule?" have become national, and are generally heard when, on the one hand no mule is about, and on the other, when no one is hunting a mule. It seems not to be understood by any one, though it is a peculiar Confederate phrase, and is as popular as Dixie from the Potomac to Rio Grande. It remained for Fuller, in the midst of this exciting chase, to solve the mysterious meaning of the national byword or phrase, and give it a practical application.

All of the eight men were captured, and are now safely lodged in jail. The particulars of their capture we have not received. This we hope to obtain in time for a postscript to this, or for our second edition. They confessed that they belonged to Lincoln's army, and had been sent down from Shelbyville to burn the bridges between here and Chattanooga, and that the whole party consisted of nineteen men, eleven of whom were dropped at several points on the road, as they came down to assist in the burning of the bridges as they went back.

When the morning freight-train which left this city reached Big Shanty, Lieut.-Col. R. F. Maddox and C. P. Phillips took the engine and a few cars, with fifty picked men, well armed, and followed on as rapidly as possible. They passed over all difficulties, and got as far as Calhoun, where they learned the fugitives had taken to the woods, and were pursued by plenty of men with the means to catch them, if it were possible.

One gentleman who went upon the train from Calhoun, who has furnished us with many of these particulars, and who, by the way, is one of the most experienced railroad men in Georgia, says too much praise cannot be bestowed on Fuller and Murphy, who showed a cool judgment and forethought in this extraordinary affair unsurpassed by anything he ever knew in a railroad emergency. This gentleman, we learn from another, offered on his own account, \$100 reward on each man for the apprehension of the villains.

We do not know what Gov. Brown will do in this case, or what is his custom in such matters but if such a thing is admissible, we insist on Fuller and Murphy being promoted to the highest honors on the road, if not by actually giving them the highest position, at least let them be promoted by brevet. Certainly their indomitable energy and quick, correct judgment and decision in the many difficult contingencies connected with this unheard-of emergency have saved all the railroad bridges above Ringgold from being burned. The most daring scheme that this revolution has developed has been thwarted, and the tremendous results which, if successful, can scarcely be imagined, much less described, have been averted. Had they succeeded in burning the bridges, the enemy at Huntsville would have occupied Chattanooga before Sunday night. Yesterday they would have been in Knoxville, and thus had possession of all East Tennessee. Our forces at Knoxville, Greenville, and Cumberland Gap would ere this have been in the hands of the enemy. Lynchburg, Virginia, would have been moved upon at once. This would have given them possession of the valley of Virginia and Stonewall Jackson could have been attacked in the rear. They would have possession of the railroad leading to Charlottesville and Orange Court-House, as well as the Southside Railroad leading to Petersburg and Richmond. They might have been able to unite with McClellan's forces, and attack Joe Johnson's army, front and flank. It is not by any means improbable that our army in Virginia would have been defeated, captured, or driven out of the State this week.

Then reinforcements from all the eastern and south-east portions of the country would have been cut off from Beauregard. The enemy have Huntsville now, and, with all these designs accomplished, his army would

have been effectually flanked. The mind and heart shrink back appalled at the bare contemplation of the awful consequences which would have followed the success of this one act. When Fuller, Murphy, and men started from Big Shanty on foot to catch that fugitive engine, they were involuntarily laughed at by the crowd, serious as the matter was, and to most observers it was indeed most ludicrous; but that foot-race saved us, and prevented the consummation of all these tremendous consequences.

One fact we must not omit to mention is the valuable assistance rendered by Peter Bracken, the engineer on the down freight train which Fuller and Murphy turned back. He ran his engine fifty and a half miles (two of them backing the whole freight train up to Adairsville), made twelve stops, coupled to the two cars which the fugitives had dropped, and switched them off on sidings; all this in one hour and five minutes.

We doubt if the victory of Manassas or Corinth were worth as much to us as the frustration of this grand coup d'état. It is not by any means certain that the annihilation of Beauregard's whole army at Corinth would be so fatal a blow to us as would have been the burning of the bridges at that time by these men.

When we learned, by a private telegraph dispatch a few days ago, that the Yankees had taken Huntsville, we attached no great importance to it. We regarded it merely as a dashing foray of a small party to destroy property, tear up the road, &c., *à la* Morgan. When an additional telegram announced the Federal force there to be from 17,000 to 20,000, we were inclined to doubt it, though coming from a perfectly honorable and up right gentleman, who would not be apt to seize upon a wild report to send here to his friends. The coming to that point with a large force, where they would be flanked on either side by our army, we regarded as a most stupid and unmilitary act. We now understand it all. They were to move upon Chattanooga and Knoxville as soon as the bridges were burned, and press on into Virginia as far as possible, and take all our forces in that State in the rear. It was all the deepest laid scheme, and on the grandest scale that ever emanated from the brains of any number of Yankees combined. It was one that was also entirely practicable on almost any day for the last year. There were but two miscalculations in the whole programme: They did not expect men to start out afoot to pursue them, and they did not expect these pursuers on foot to find Maj. Cooper's old "Yonah" standing there all ready fired up. Their calculations on every other point were dead certainties, and would have succeeded perfectly.

This would have eclipsed anything Captain Morgan ever attempted. To think of a parcel of Union soldiers, officers and privates, coming down into the heart of the Confederate States, for they were here in Atlanta and at Marietta (some of them got on the train at Marietta that morning, and others were at Big Shanty); of playing such a serious game on the State road, which is under the control of our prompt, energetic, and sagacious Governor, known as such all over America; to seize the passenger train on his road, right at Camp McDonald, where he has a number of Georgia regiments encamped, and run off with it; to burn the bridges on the same road, and go safely through to the Union lines; all this would have been a feather in the cap of the man or men who executed it.

Let this be a warning to the railroad men and everybody else in the Confederate States. Let an engine never be left alone a moment. Let additional guards be placed at our bridges. This is a matter we especially urged in the Confederacy long ago: we hope it will now be heeded. Further, let a sufficient guard be placed to watch the Government stores in this city, and let increased vigilance and watchfulness be put forth by the watchmen. We know one solitary man who is guarding a house, of nights, in this city, which contains a lot of bacon. Two or three men could throttle and gag him, and set fire to the house at any time; and worse, he conceives that there is no necessity for a guard, as he is sometimes seen off duty for a few moments, fully long enough for an incendiary to burn the house he watches. Let Mr. Shackelford, whom we know to be watchful and attentive to his duties, take the responsibility at once of placing a well-armed guard of sufficient force around every house containing Government stores. Let this be done without waiting for instructions from Richmond. One other thought: The press is requested, by the Government, to keep silent about the movements of the army, and a great many things of the greatest interest to our people. It has, in the main, patriotically complied. We have complied in most cases, but our judgment was against it all the while. The plea is that the enemy will get the news if it is published in our papers. Now, we again ask, what's the use? The enemy get what information they want. They are with us and pass among us almost daily; they find out from us what they want to know by passing through our country unimpeded. It is nonsense, it is folly, to deprive our own people of knowledge they are entitled to and ought to know, for fear the enemy will find it out. We ought to have a regular system of passports over all roads, and refuse to let any man pass who could not give a good account of himself come well vouched for, and make it fully appear that he is not an enemy, and that he is on legitimate business. This would keep information from the enemy far more effectually than any reticence of the press, which ought to lay before our people the full facts in everything of a public nature.