

# THE CAMDEN CHRONICLE.

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## A RACE WITH TIME.

A TALE OF A STAFF CORRESPONDENT OF THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE.

"Running battle in the streets of Summitville between citizens and bandits last night. Several people killed. Plan to loot town."

The message came in from an Indiana town late one afternoon. The office expert on time tables went to work at once and figured out that there was just time to catch the famous world's fair flyer which ran between Chicago and New York. The staff correspondent with telegraph operator and an assistant, was sent post-haste to catch that train, with instructions to get off at Valparaiso and take an accommodation train which left Summitville half an hour later. He was to get an account of what had happened there, and get it into the office by telegraph before midnight without fail.

At the station in Chicago it developed that the flyer was not scheduled to stop until it reached Cleveland. An interview with the engineer developed that the train slowed up at Valparaiso for some purpose or other, and that a quick man, who was willing to run some chances, might get off there.

"I guess there won't nobody stop you boys," said the engineer as he swung up into the cab. "We're slowed down at Valparaiso so a man can jump off if he has a mind to."

On the way down through the Indiana sand dunes, with the big mogul engine doing its 50 miles an hour, a local time table was found which showed that the time of the accommodation train had been changed. Instead of leaving half an hour after the flyer was due, it was scheduled to pull out for Summitville in less than ten minutes.

"Yes," said a railroad man who happened to be on board, "and the depots are nearly a mile apart, at that."

As the flyer began to slow up at Valparaiso the three men who were bound for Summitville jumped off the rear coach and ran to the station. Not a hack or other public vehicle was in sight.

Backed up to the depot platform was a light delivery wagon with a lanky white mare hitched to it. The three men clambered into the back of this wagon and started at a gallop for the other station, in front of which the accommodation train was already standing. As the old mare started on a jump the terrified boy ran out of the station depot and just managed to catch the tail-board of the wagon. In a minute he was in the drivers' seat. Fortunately he was a youth who could rise to an emergency.

"Five dollars if you get us to that station in time," he was told, and a peeled hickory switch put added vigor into the mare's leaps. Right through the center of the town went the wild race, and people hung out of the windows and ran into the streets to watch the chase. Every time a crossing was passed the whole outfit bounced high into the air and "A dollar more if you drive a little faster" some one gasped as it struck the ground again. For the accommodation train had already got steam up and was beginning to show plain signs of impatience.

Boy and mare both did their best and the three men were just able to climb on the rear platform of the accommodation train as it pulled out for Summitville.

What happened to the grocer's boy when he got back with his jaded mare is still an unsettled question. Nor did the boy or the people who watched with startled eyes the flight of the gaunt white mare even now know what was the emergency which made the mad chase necessary. There were three cars on the accommodation train to Summitville. In them there were perhaps 30 people all told. A quick canvass of the train proved that not a person on board had even heard of any disturbance at Summitville, which village the train was not due to reach until 10.30 o'clock. By that time of the night it was likely that everybody in town would be sound asleep. To wake them up and wait to get their stories would mean a long delay and probably make it impossible to get a long telegram into the office by midnight. A council of war was held and the three men determined that something must be done to hurry things along.

Finally a telegram was prepared and sent to the mayor of Summitville, asking him if he would be kind enough to meet the train when it reached the depot on a matter of great importance connected with the battle of the previous night.

At a station a few miles above Summitville a man got on the train who, on being questioned, proved to know, in a general way, the story of the fight. He told in a graphic way how the bandits had come into the village, only to fall into the ambush which had been carefully prepared for them.

As soon as the staff correspondent had got the leading facts clear in his mind he started to write his story.

"Now," he said, "if the mayor doesn't go back on us, and we get a telegraph wire, we'll pull through all right."

"I'll get a wire if I have to climb a pole and cut one down," said the operator of the party.

At last the poky train came puffing up to the little red station at Summitville. It was several minutes late, but the first glance showed that great excitement prevailed about the station. Right nobly had the mayor of the village responded to the telegraphic appeal which had been sent him.

He stood at one end of the station platform. Next him was the town marshal, wearing a huge star and conscious that he was the hero of the exciting battle of the night before. In the same row were the town aldermen and most of the other dignitaries of the village—men who had been "laying out nights," armed to the teeth, for nearly a week, waiting for the raid which had finally come.

The three men leaped from the train and each rushed to his work. One of the correspondents began with the mayor and went down the line as rapidly as possible, getting his story from each. The other ran into the station and sat down at once to complete the story he had begun on the train. The telegraph operator jumped into the little room where the astonished railroad operator and agent were sitting and took his place at the telegraph instrument. There was no time to be lost.

"Here, gimme hold of that key," said the man from Chicago, and the Hoosier instantly obeyed.

With the speed of an expert he commenced to call Chicago. He wanted to get a wire leading directly into the office of his newspaper. But some one was persistently interrupting. He listened long enough to catch what was wanted.

It was the operator in the office of a rival newspaper which had got wind of the battle at Summitville too late to send down a correspondent.

"Rumor pitched battle in the streets of Summitville," ran the query. "Send good story, 2,500 words, if correct."

The man at the Summitville key smiled viciously, looked around for an instant without saying anything, and then rattled his key fiercely for a moment.

"Say," he said, finally, "the other papers just asked about a pitched battle of some kind down here. I told them they must be mistaken. That everything was quiet and peaceful here to-night. Nothing doing except an ice-cream party up to the parsonage. I asked 'em if they didn't want a good story on that."

"All right," said the staff correspondent, handing over a dozen pages of "copy." "Start that as soon as you can get a loop into the office." A moment later and the story was running into the office as fast as an expert could send it over the wires. The second correspondent had interviewed practically every prominent citizen of the village, and what he had written followed fast on the first. By a few minutes after midnight more than 4,000 words were in the office, and a few minutes later the story had been put in type and was on the presses.

When the operator at Summitville had sent "30" over the wire, which is the telegraphic way of saying "good night," the mayor of Summitville gave further evidence of his desire to be accommodating. He found good sleeping quarters for the Chicago men and invited them to stay over Sunday and take dinner with him.

### A BIG PRICE FOR BEANS.

How a Station Cafe Highwayman Suffered for Extortion.

A good many years ago I was connected with a morning newspaper in an Illinois city, says a writer in the St. Paul Dispatch, and our custom was to go to the restaurant in the railroad station for our midnight lunch, that being the only place open at that time of the night.

There were three morning papers, so quite a number of the newspaper boys made the place a rendezvous, and we used to sit and talk over all the things that had happened and a good many that had not.

This restaurant was run by a man named Cull, and he had held up enough trains with his lunch counter to make himself pretty well fixed in this world's goods.

One night when we were all gathered there the 12.07 train pulled in, and among others there was a passenger who regaled himself with a plate of beans.

The lunch counter, in Cull's absence, was in charge of a young man who had his eye distinctly on the main chance.

The conductor called "all aboard!" and the man in great haste asked what he owed.

"Fifty cents."

"What! Fifty cents for a plate of beans?"

"That's the price."

"You're joking—how much?"

"Fifty cents goes."

"Well," said the man, as he paid the money in with little evidence of temper "that's a thundering price for beans."

And again as he went through the door he turned and said impressively—"a thundering price for beans."

Cull's trouble began with that moment.

While we were still sitting there the railroad operator brought in a telegram to Cull, who had come in the meantime, and was chuckling over the profit on those beans.

Cull read the telegram. All it said was: "A thundering price for beans. John Q. Smith." But on the envelope was the significant inscription, "Collect 25 cents."

This was the opening shot. From every station between that town and St. Louis came the rail to Cull, "A thundering price for beans," and each time Cull got madder and madder over the "collect 25 cents." In the morning Cull notified his boy not to receive or pay for any more telegrams, and also read the riot act to the telegraph company.

The next day our friend John Q. Smith started in on a new game. He would pack a dozen choice bricks in a box, with the same old message inclosed and ship them to Cull. This he did by both freight and express, "charges collect," until Cull was fairly frenzied with rage.

Now at the time Cull was playing the market through a Chicago broker, and it happened that there was a sudden and severe slump. The broker wired Cull to put up more margins. Cull's boy, under instructions, declined to receive the message. Getting no answer to his telegram, the broker closed Cull's account at a whopping loss.

This was the last straw. Cull went plum crazy in earnest this time. He was taken to the asylum and spent the rest of his days there.

He used to sit day by day, with his head between his hands, repeating by the hour the five fatal words: "A thundering price for beans!" "A thundering price for beans!" "A thundering price for beans!"

### RESULTED IN A MISTRIAL.

A Huntingdon special of last Saturday says:

"The jury in the Chambers case was discharged this morning after having been in session one week. The case resulted in a mistrial, the jury standing seven for equal and five for conviction. Judge Bond then heard the counsel in a short talk for bail and Chambers' bond was fixed at \$10,000, which he made in twenty minutes and was released."

Chambers, it will be remembered, was charged with the killing of Jim Allen last year. Between forty and fifty witnesses were examined, and the case has been hotly contested.

W. G. Shyar, the miller at J. W. Hastings & Co.'s roller mill, at Big Sandy, fell from a platform in front of the mill to the ground, a distance of fifteen feet, sustaining internal injuries. He is in a critical condition.

## CASTORIA

For Infants and Children.

The Kind You Have Always Bought

Bears the Signature of *Wm. D. Galt*

### GOOD ROADS ASSOCIATION.

To Meet at Jackson June 21 and 22 and Show How It Is Done.

Judge L. E. Davis has received the following letter, which is signed by S. D. Hays, D. W. Herring, F. B. Fisher, R. F. Spragles, A. W. Stovall and J. E. Mercer, committee of the commercial club of Jackson. The letter explains itself, and we hope that Benton County will have a strong delegation of representative men at the good roads convention:

"The National Good Roads Association is now in the South with a special train furnished by the Illinois Central Railroad Company at a cost of about \$25,000, and equipped with all the modern machinery and appliances for the building and construction of good roads, and accompanied by skilled and experienced road builders. They held a State convention for Louisiana at New Orleans on April 29, and are now visiting points in the State of Mississippi, and will hold a similar convention at Jackson, Miss., on the 14th of June. On the 17th of June they will arrive in this city and immediately begin the construction of a mile of good road in the suburbs of this city. On the 21st and 22nd of June they will hold a good roads convention for the State of Tennessee, at which this subject will be discussed by distinguished and well trained men from other portions of the United States and Canada.

"The governors of Mississippi and Arkansas are invited to be present. The United States Senators and Congressmen from this State, the mayors of the towns and cities, and the chairmen of the county courts in this State have been formally invited to be present on that occasion, and to bring with them a delegation of not less than three nor more than five members, to be by them selected from representative men in their respective counties. It would be well for them to arrive here earlier than the 21st, in order to see the actual construction of the specimen road; for if roads can be constructed in the way and at the cost claimed by this association, it solves the road problem, and in our judgment is one of the most important matters than can be presented to the citizens of this State. The railroads leading into Jackson will make a rate of one fare for the round trip on this occasion.

"We are a committee appointed by the commercial club of this city, and under its direction are now extending to you this formal invitation.

"We trust to receive from you an early reply to this letter, signifying your intention and purpose to be present, and your willingness to appoint delegates from your county. Governor McMinn has been requested to issue a proclamation calling attention to this convention, and will deliver the opening address."

There was quite a serious cutting affray at Bible Hill in Decatur County last week. As the result of which a man by the name of John Hamilton was killed. Hamilton was considered a very bad man. There was an old trouble between the parties. Lige Hagle, the man who did the killing, is at present under arrest.

THE CHRONICLE clubs with the St. Louis Republic at \$1.75; the Home and Farm at \$1.25, and the Nashville Banner at \$1.75.