



Emma Knight at the Knight home, 102 East Allison Street, Stryker, prior to extensive alterations.

- 1886—Knight was chief of Stryker's fire engine.
- November 1886—Attended the first reunion of survivors of the Andrews Raid at McComb and Findlay.
- 1887—Became agent for the sale of William Pittenger's book on the Andrews Raid.
- 1891—The State of Ohio placed an impressive monument honoring Andrews Raiders at the Chattanooga National Cemetery.
- 1896—Knight purchased his final home at 102 East Allison Street in Stryker.
- June 1903—Opened a general repair shop in Stryker.
- April 1912—Knight attended the final Andrews Raiders reunion at Findlay.
- 1914—The surviving Raiders agree to act in a film about the Andrews Raid; the movie never transpired.
- September 26, 1916—Knight passed away at his home and was buried at Oakwood Cemetery, Stryker.

- 1953—The State of Ohio placed markers at Stryker's corporation limits, recognizing the village as William J. Knight's home.
- 1956—Walt Disney released the film "The Great Locomotive Chase," based on the Andrews Raid.
- 1959—The William J. Knight Army Reserve Training Center in Bryan is dedicated.
- 2003—Plaque recognizing Medal of Honor recipients William J. Knight and Aquila Coonrod placed in the Williams County courthouse in Bryan.
- 2004—Medal of Honor marker placed on Knight's grave.

Suggested Reading

Stealing the General, The Great Locomotive Chase and the First Medal of Honor, by Russell S. Bonds, 2007

The General & The Texas, A Pictorial History of the Andrews Raid, April 12, 1862, by Stan Cohen and James G. Bogle, 1999

The Great Locomotive Chase, More on the Andrews Raid and the First Medal of Honor, by W. Craig Angle, 1992

Wild Train, The Story of the Andrews Raiders, by Charles O'Neill, 1956.

The Great Locomotive Chase, by William Pittenger, 1893

Daring & Suffering, by William Pittenger, 1887

Military History of Ohio, Illustrated, Williams County, Ohio, Edition, 1885.

Brochure by Kevin M. Maynard and Richard L. Cooley

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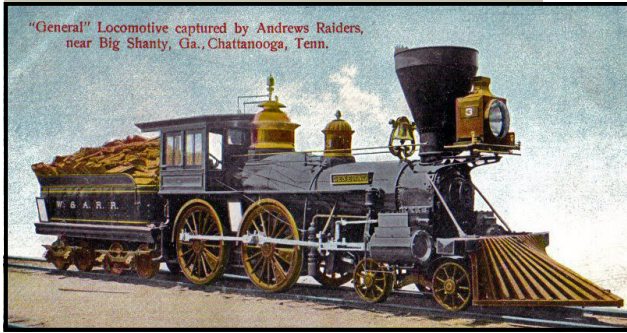
Engineer of the Civil War
"Andrews Raid" or "Great
Locomotive Chase"

Medal of Honor Recipient

William J. Knight
1837-1916



The Andrews Raid



"General" Locomotive captured by Andrews Raiders, near Big Shanty, Ga., Chattanooga, Tenn.

Confederate locomotive "The General"

On April 12, 1862, 20 Union volunteers led by James J. Andrews infiltrated Southern lines in civilian clothes and stole the locomotive "The General" and three boxcars at Big Shanty, Ga. The Raiders planned to make their way north to Chattanooga, Tenn., tearing up railroad tracks, cutting telegraph lines and burning bridges behind them to isolate Confederate troops, communications and supplies, and help bring the Civil War to an end. Hotly pursued by Southerners in "The Great Locomotive Chase," the General eventually ran out of fuel and water, and the Raiders fled to the woods, but all were soon captured and imprisoned. In June 1862, James J. Andrews and seven of the "engine thieves" were executed by hanging. Eight others, including William James Knight, escaped in October 1862 and secretly made their way back to Union lines; the remainder were released in an 1863 prisoner exchange. Hailed as Northern heroes for their part in "the boldest adventure of the war," six of the Raiders became the nation's first Medal of Honor recipients. The Andrews Raid has inspired numerous articles, books and films.

William J. Knight, Engineer of the Andrews Raid

William James Knight's Early Life

- January 24, 1837—Knight was born in East Union Township, Wayne County, Ohio, to Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Knight.
- Knight's parents died before he was five years old, and he was raised by his grandfather, Jacob Knight.
- Circa 1852—Moved to Farmer Township in Defiance County, Ohio.
- It is claimed Knight worked at his grandfather's sawmill, where he learned about steam engines and things mechanical.

Knight's Civil War Service

- August 29, 1861—At age 24, Knight enlisted as a private in Company E, 21st Ohio Volunteer Infantry at Defiance, Ohio, for three years service. He was mustered in on September 19, 1861, at Findlay, Ohio.
- October 31, 1861—Knight was detailed as a first class sapper (combat engineer).
- November and December 1861—Sick in a Cincinnati, Ohio, hospital.
- April 12, 1862—Participated in the Andrews Raid. Knight was engineer of the stolen locomotive, The General. Following the wild 87-mile Great Locomotive Chase, the Raiders were captured and imprisoned.
- June 1862—Eight Raiders executed by hanging in Atlanta.
- October 16, 1862—Knight and seven other Raiders escaped to avoid the gallows.
- November 25, 1862—Knight reached Union lines at Somerset, Ky., following his escape.
- December 1, 1862—Knight returned to his regiment.

- March 13, 1863—Transferred to Company G, 115th Ohio Volunteer Infantry.
- July and August 1863—Home on furlough.
- September 1863—Received the Medal of Honor.
- September 27, 1864—Discharged from service and mustered out the following day.

Knight's Post-War Years

- August 30, 1868—Married Emma Oldfield at Defiance.
- Worked as a railroad mechanic at Logansport, Ind., and as an engineer on the Pennsylvania Panhandle Railroad.
- 1883—Knight's biography appeared in the History of Defiance County; at that time he was a merchant living in Minnesota.
- By 1886, Knight moved to Stryker and gave public lectures on the Andrews Raid.
- June 1886—Received a pension for his military service and for hearing loss suffered at the Battle of Stones River, Tenn.



D. A. Dasset J. R. Porter Jacob Parratt W. J. Knight Wm. Beninger Jas. A. Wilson W. W. Brown
The Survivors of Andrew's Raiders, Andrew's Raiders Monument, National Cemetery. Copyrighted June 1, 1908. L. Engel.

Andrews Raid survivors in 1908 at the Chattanooga monument erected in their honor by the State of Ohio. William Knight is second from left