PART III.
HALF-TONE SECTION
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THE OMAHA SUNDAY BEE

No Filthy Sensations
THE OMAHA BEE
Best in the West

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WILLIAM T. CANADA GUARD OF A GREAT RAILWAY SYSTEM

How a Young Man From Kentucky Broke Up a Thriving Industry and Made Train Robbery in the West Not Only Unprofitable but Unsafe for the Bandits Who Took Part in the Work

A MAN, blear-eyed, unkempt, dejected, sat with his hands in his pockets at one of the lonely stations at a little mining camp on the Union Pacific railroad one day in the early '70s. The man had just recovered from a protracted "drunk," which was nothing unusual for him. He would not have recovered from it if his money had not given out. Just at the present time he was thirsty, but how to get money, that was the question. All the other denizens of the town were like himself, armed with large and dangerous looking weapons. Furthermore, they always kept one eye on their fellow men, ready at a moment's notice to get their artillery trained on any one who might show a disposition to annex their valuables. While the blear-eyed man was ruminating thus the Union Pacific overland train drew into the station. There was only one train a day then. The blear-eyed man was attracted to the open door of the baggage car. There his eye rested on a large iron chest. Upon the chest sat a large man, and the man had a large rifle in his hand. Presently the train pulled out and vanished on its way to the west.

But an idea had come to the blear-eyed man. He got his "cayuse" and rode away into the wilderness which surrounded the town. A few weeks later the Overland train was held up and robbed by four masked men. One of the men was the blear-eyed man, whose name was George Curry. "Flatnose George," as he was called, was only entering on his career of murder and robbery. The Union Pacific trains furnished a good living to him and the gang of outcast desperadoes which he gathered around him.

It was indeed a grand idea which came to "Flatnose George" that morning when he saw the Overland go through with its iron chest full of gold. The world's history may be searched in vain for other similar opportunities for robbery. The booty of the middle age highwayman was nothing to this. The brigands of later days in Europe made hauls which were mere bagatelles to the loot which the trains sometimes yielded up to those western desperadoes. And the man with the rifle sitting on the iron chest only added zest to their evil occupation. For the bandits of western America feared neither death nor hell. In which respect they differed materially from the robbers of other days, if accounts be true.

Palmy Days for Train Robbers

And so for many years "Flatnose George" and his men plied their trade. It was no unusual thing to hear of a holdup in the desert which stretched between the Missouri river and the mountains. And the robbers generally made their escape. It was an easy matter for the bandits and the railroad was "up against it." The bandits could plan a robbery in some spot remote from human habitation. A red lantern swung across the track at night would bring the engineer to a stop. Then it was an easy matter to "cover" him with a revolver, blow up any safes or iron chests that happened to be in the express car and relieve the frightened passengers of their valuables. Having done this, the robbers could mount their horses and before the outside world knew of the holdup they could be back in their lair at "Robbers Roost" or "Hole in the Wall" in the wilds of Wyoming.

Now, all this was extremely annoying to the men who had financed and built the railroad across the wild country to the Pacific coast. One day General Manager Dickinson of the Union Pacific system called a young man into his private office. The young man was tall, gray-eyed, broad-jawed and firm-lipped. When he stepped out of the office a few moments later he had been placed at the head of the special service of the Union Pacific system, with instructions to organize a service and system of patrol of that system which should prove the same sort of terror to the bandits as the bandits had been for so many years to the railroad. "We want to blot those men off the map," said the general manager. "I think I can do the blotting," said the young man.

The young man was William T. Canada. He had been born in Smithland, Ky., where his parents lived on a farm. He had already had a remarkable career as a man fighter and man hunter. When he was only 14 years old he had enlisted in the army, joining the Third Kentucky regiment. He had served through the war with such conspicuous courage and gallantry that he was a lieutenant by the time he was mustered out, though only 18 years of age. After the close of the war he went to Cairo, Ill., and traveled for a firm there for the next year. Then he came to Nebraska, arriving in Omaha March 6, 1866, when Omaha was still little more than a village. His first work here was driving a team. Then he worked on the newly built Union Pacific line near Papillion for a time. Later he went to Nebraska City, where he lived for some years, engaging in the lumber business with the firm of Ballentine & Sons. He was elected sheriff of Otoe county and held that position for several years, with conspicuous success. Then he returned to Omaha and went to work for the Union Pacific in the special claims department.

Canada Organizes for Action

This is the man who was chosen by the great railroad to be pitted against "Flatnose George" and his desperadoes. This is the man chosen to fight the battles of civilization against civilization's apostates. This is the man who was chosen to patrol 2,000 miles of railway running through an extensive region of country inhabited by the most daring and reckless desperadoes. And this is the man who blotted out the outlaws and made train holdups a thing of the past. "Flatnose George" and all his gang who flourished so daringly and flaunted themselves in the face of civilization so recklessly now occupy space underneath the sod or are visible only with a reassuring foreground of thick steel bars in several penitentiaries.

When the young Kentuckian stepped out of General Manager Dickinson's office with his commission to exterminate the bandits the Union Pacific's available force of men for purposes of protection consisted of only about a dozen detectives. And these were not organized. A robbery might take place far from where any one of them was stationed and the robbers invariably escaped with their booty. The first step taken by the new chief was to reorganize this force. He summoned tried and experienced men from all over the country. He weeded out such as were not competent and placed a reliable man at every division headquarters. But the crowning creation of the whole force was the "bandit chasing train" which Chief Canada built and equipped. It consisted of a stock car specially arranged for the transportation of horses, a baggage car fitted up for dining and sleeping purposes. On the latter a telegraph instrument was fixed, which could be attached to the wires in a moment at any place where a stop was made, thus establishing communication with headquarters. The bandit fighters attached to this train were very carefully picked. They were fearless men, dead shots, acquainted with the ways of the western highwaymen and knowing the western country, its trails and hiding places. The horses provided for the men were the best that money could provide for the service which was required.

Bandits "Call the Bluff"

This train was stationed at Cheyenne and was in readiness to move at sixty miles an hour at any moment, day or night, in pursuit of any bandits who chose to call down the wrath of the Union Pacific upon their heads. Steam was always kept up in the engine; the men and horses were always in the cars, except when they were taking their daily practice runs through the country surrounding their station. But the bandits laughed at these careful preparations and were not slow to "call the bluff" of the bandit hunters. They committed a robbery some 300 miles from where the train was stationed, with the result that within twenty-four hours two of the bandits were "filling a long felt want" six feet under ground.

One of the most famous pieces of work done by Chief Canada and his force of men was the capture of the men who perpetrated the holdup of the Overland Flyer at Wilcox, Wyo. This occurred on June 2, 1899. The train was speeding westward when the engineer was flagged by a red lantern swung across the track ahead. When he came to a stop the robbers "covered" him and compelled him to uncouple his engine and proceed half a mile ahead over a wooden trestle. When the engine was across, the trestle was blown up with dynamite. Returning to the train the bandits demanded to be admitted to the express car. The messenger replied by shooting at them. Thereupon they blew up the car with dynamite. They secured about $3,400 in cash, besides jewelry, and then made their escape.

WILLIAM T. CANADA.

The bandit hunters' train was more than 200 miles away, but by noon of the same day it was on the scene. The eight men mounted in the best possible manner and armed to the teeth were in pursuit of the robbers within eight hours after the holdup. Chief Canada assumed command of the pursuit. A reward of $3,000 was offered for each of the bandits, dead or alive, and the country was notified in every direction. The trail led to the south and was easily followed until the foothills of the mountains were reached, where it led into a river. It was picked up again a few miles further up and the chase resumed. Further on the hunted men had resorted to another means of covering their tracks. They had stampeded a herd of horses and, riding in the midst of the animals, hoped thus to effectually throw their pursuers off the scent. But the hunters were too clever to be foiled even thus. One, who had been an Indian scout, easily picked out the footprints of the horses which carried riders.

Farther on the trail forked, three of the bandits making toward the Robbers' Roost, while the other three struck off in the direction of Hole-in-the-Wall. Two sheriffs and some cowboys re-inforced the bandit hunters at Casper. On the banks of Teapot creek at 3 o'clock on a Sunday afternoon three of the bandits were overtaken. A running fight ensued in which the outlaws shot three of the horses of their pursuers. They got away, but the bandit hunters picked up the trail again and about fifteen miles farther on they entered a deep ravine. Three rifles cracked suddenly and one of the sheriffs fell mortally wounded. The rest of the pursuers quickly got behind rocks and trees, and then ensued a fight between the eight officers and the three outlaws, which lasted two hours. That night the robbers succeeded in stealing away, and when the bandit hunters again sighted them they were across the Powder river and within reach of their stronghold, Hole-in-the-Wall.

Breaks Up the Industry

The bandit hunters returned then to their train. But if the bandits fancied if they had escaped they were mistaken. For the next two years they were pursued with the relentlessness of fate. Chief Canada, with his force of detectives, had them under his eye all the time. One by one they were made to pay the penalty of their crimes.

The robbery at Hugo, Col., in 1900 is another which illustrates the work of Chief Canada's fighting forces. One man was killed by the bandits in this robbery because he produced a revolver when asked to produce his purse. Then they dynamited the express car and escaped. Though the bandit hunters were 600 miles away working on another case they were rushed to the scene and in less than fifteen hours they were in pursuit. The robbers, who proved later to be the "Jones boys," almost as celebated as the James boys, had fled to Kansas. Chief Canada and his men brought them to bay in a farm house after an exciting chase which lasted three days. Mr. Canada called on them to surrender and was answered by a shot. It was then decided to burn the house. One of the outlaws made a dash from a rear window when the flames began to get hot. He was shot before he had run a rod. The other stayed in. His charred body was taken from the ruins.

There has not been an attempt to hold up a Union Pacific train since this robbery. Bandits shun that road, for they know a great gun is held ready at a moment's notice to be discharged at them. They know that the gun never misses fire; they know that they are marked men for the rest of their lives if they tamper with the Union Pacific. For in a little room in the Union Pacific headquarters building sits a tall Kentuckian and at a station out in the west stands a train on which are eight swift horses and eight fearless and heavily armed men. And the telegraph wires are ready to set this mechanism going at any instant. And when it is once set going it is as relentless as Nemesis. It brings death or imprisonment as surely as fate itself.

Only Two Now at Liberty

Of the former Union Pacific terrorizers belonging to the Curry gang there are only two now at liberty. One of these, Bob Lee, alias Bob Curry, has just been released from the penitentiary after serving a ten-year sentence. The other, Harve Logan, alias Harve Curry, was captured by the bandidt hunters in Knoxville, Tenn. He was tried in the United States court there, but in the course of the trial he made good his escape from the sheriff and has never been seen since. George Curry, leader of the gang, "didn't get his hands up quick enough," to use Chief Canada's expression, and was shot at Green River, Utah. Lon Logan, alias Lon Curry, met the same fate. Ben Kilpatrick is now serving a ten-year sentence in the penitentiary. Kid Clark was killed while resisting arrest.

The work of Chief Canada's department is now confined more to detecting thefts from the railroad and in unraveling a thousand details of mysterious disappearances which are common to the handling of freight by a great railroad. But the bandit hunting car is still maintained and is in constant readiness to hurry out on its way to avenge any outrage that lawless men may attempt to perpetrate. But the bandits have disappeared. And it is not likely they will return as long as they have to fear the present force of bandit hunters of the road.

Mr. Canada has lived in Nebraska for the last forty-one years. He has always been active in affairs and a good "mixer." He is a member of the Railway Special Agents' association of the United States and Canada and served one year as president of this organization. He is also a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Mr. Canada is a member of the Elks lodge, than which, he says, there is no finer social organization of men in the world. He is a past exalted ruler of the Omaha lodge, No. 39, Benevolent Protective Order of Elks. He was also a representative of this lodge to the grand lodge. He has taken but little activity in politics, but was a delegate to state conventions on several occasions.

How Some Men Have Stumbled Onto Great Wealth

WHILE it is true that many of the richest gold and silver mines in the world have been discovered by men who were out searching for the precious metals, it is equally true that others have been favored by fortune rather than by forethought. The rise and fall of "Coal Oil Johnny" of a generation ago well illustrates the money craze that swept through the land of the oil fields till a great corporation took control of the petroleum finds and eliminated the element of chance from the discoveries and the output. Bret Harte, in his dramatic poem, "Dow's Flat," tells of a man who had been in very hard luck who started to dig for water, the "derringer hid in his breast," to be used if he failed; but instead of finding what he was after he struck pay dirt and a fortune.

In 1867 Donald Ross, a young Scotch sailor, deserted his ship in San Francisco and, with two companions, green as himself, started for the new placers in the Sierras at the head of Kern river. Failing in their first efforts, the three men crossed through the Tehatchepah Pass and entered the volcano-rutted Mojave desert. Like many before them, they reasoned that a region so worthless and lifeless must have in it the promise of gold. Again they failed, and after some trials made their way into Arizona and on to the head waters of the Little Colorado. Here they had fair success, but the appearance of Cochin and his dreaded Apaches forced all the white men in that region to abandon their claims and fly to Zuni or the far-off army posts for protection. Ross and his friends succeeded in reaching Fort Whipple, from which point Colonel Gregg, then in command of the Eighth cavalry, sent them back to Hardyville, on the Great Colorado. At Hardyville the men bartered their dust for supplies and, learning that Owen's Lake, to the west of the Sierras, was a new and promising goldfield, they determined to try their luck there. With a mule to carry their supplies, but without compass, map or trail to guide them, they started across the 200 miles of desert to the north and west.

In their futile search for water the adventurers were deluded by the mirages of that region, and so wandered into the blistering arroyos along the southern rim of Death valley. Two days after Ross and his friends entered these waterless depths the mule died, and his burden was abandoned. The next day one of the men died; the other, thirst crazed, fled further into the desert and was never heard of again. Any position more desperate than that in which Ross now found himself it would be hard to imagine, but he had not reason enough left to realize it. As crazed as the men who had left him, the poor fellow wandered aimlessly on till all consciousness was gone. When Ross came to he found himself in the camp of a band of Pah Utes, to the south of Owen's Lake. After many days, and when the young Scotchman was able to walk, an Indian guided him to the Sierra Divide, and, pointing down to the emerald expanse of the great San Joaquin valley and the flashing waters of Tulare lake, he said: "White man's land."

About an hour after leaving the Indian Ross found himself in the bed of a rock-banked stream that had its source in the snow peaks to the north. He was hurrying down through the icy waters when suddenly he came to a stop and pressed his hands to his eyes, with the dread that the wild gold dreams of the desert were again mastering his reason. Half the sand at his feet appeared to be gold.

With proof of his find in his pockets Ross made his way to San Francisco, where he soon interested capitalists in his discovery. Within two months he had sold out his interests for $250,000. It is said that he got back to Glasgow some weeks before the return of the tramp steamer from which he had deserted.

Even stranger and more startling than the foregoing was the experience of Captain George Wells in New Mexico. The captain had been a prospector in the "Pike's-Peak-or-bust" days. During the civil war he served on the union side with his old friend Kit Carson. After the war the captain made a number of strikes, but, disliking routine work, he always "sold out for a song," and returned to the old, lonely ways.

In the spring of 1872 the captain found himself in Albuquerque and down on his luck. A man named Murphy, who kept the principal fonda or hotel in the place, offered to grubstake Wells on condition that he should prospect in the Sandia mountains. These mountains rise brown and verdureless to the east of the Rio Grande. Murphy had heard the tradition that in the early days of the Spaniards they had enslaved the Indians and made them work the gold mines in the Sandia mountains. At length the Indians rose in revolt, slew their oppressors and destroyed every vestige of the mines, in which over 200,000 of their fellows had perished.

To Wells, who had a good practical knowledge of geology, the undertaking did not appeal, and then he was incredulous where Spanish or Indian traditions were concerned. But having made the agreement with Murphy, he determined to keep it. With a rifle at his back and a Colt in his belt—Wells carried arms from force of habit, for there was neither game nor danger from attack in the region into which he was going—and his grub and prospecting outfit packed on a little gray burro, he faced the brown serrated peaks to the east.

The desolation of that wilderness of arid peaks and torrid arroyos would have appalled any man not familiar with Nature in its most uninviting moods; but Wells had patience and a purpose. After six weeks of futile, heart-breaking search the supplies gave out, and then the sturdy prospector decided to make his way back to Albuquerque and acknowledge himself beaten.

In the captain's outfit there were ten pounds of blasting powder and a powerful magnifying glass. The only use of the latter so far had been to light a pipe or start a fire. Before loading the burro for the return Wells climbed the wall of the rocky gulch, in which he had camped the night before, in order to take a last look at the field of his failure. He had just reached the lookout and was shading his eyes from the glaring sun, when an explosion that seemed to shake the rock on which he stood roared up from the little canyon. He flew down to where he had left his outfit, but he found it gone, and the little gray burro was blown into shreds.

At once the captain understood the cause of the disaster. He had so placed his magnifying glass on the outside of the pack that the sun's rays became focussed on the powder, and the explosion followed. Feeling that the requirements of the situation could not be met by the most vigorous use of the picturesque profanity, of which he was a past master, Wells sat down with his head between his hands, to think; but thinking was impossible, for the brain that had been so cool on the battlefield was all awhirl.

At length the old soldier rose slowly to his feet and drew his revolver closer within reach. Desperately he looked up at the steel-blue sky, and the shimmering heat waves distorting the upper lines of the canyon. Then his eyes fell to the wreck about him, much of it fragments of rock which the explosion had detached from the wall. He kicked over a shining something and muttered, "D—d pirate eyes!"—pyrites! There were other shining somethings. He picked one up and held it at all angles to the sun. Then his breast heaved, the brave light flashed back to the gray eyes and he called out:

"My God! Gold, and four noughts to the ton!"

And so by blind chance Captain Wells had come upon one of the lost mines which about the middle of the sixteenth century had enriched the viceroys of New Spain, as the present New Mexico was then called.

In every land where gold is found incidents like those just given might be multiplied. Australia has had its share, one of the most amusing being the following:

An Irishman named Whalen, who had been in the British army, went to Victoria in the middle '70s and, with the savings of his wife, bought, not far from Ballarat, a few acres of ground, valuable because of a water pool and a sluggish spring. With mud and gravel taken from the bottom of the pool Whalen made sun-dried bricks and built a cabin for his family. Not far away there were prosperous gold mines, and the Irishman, whose army life had unfitted him for ordinary work, started a bar for the convenience of men who did ordinary work.

Near by there was a little colony of Chinese, who conducted laundries and raised vegetables for the miners. Contrary to their habit, these

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