

Lesson 7

READ THIS STORY #1, Basic

The Little General

If you are a railroad buff, you may remember seeing a Disney movie about a locomotive chase that occurred during the Civil War. That engine, known as the “Little General,” is on display in Kennesaw. That city was once called Big Shanty.

Big Shanty was a construction camp built to shelter and feed workers who were building the railroad. It was also a training camp for the state militia.

On April 12, 1862, twenty-two Union spies cautiously boarded the train while it was stopped at Big Shanty. Their plan was to destroy supply lines to Confederate armies by burning all the bridges on the rail line.

But it was not an auspicious day for the raiders. Nothing went right. First, the train accidentally left the station without the conductor. So he and a group of men pursued it.

Second, no one foresaw that there would be continuous rain, making it almost impossible to burn the bridges.

The last straw was when the engine ran out of power.

The raid failed. Some of the raiders were captured and hanged. Some of them escaped, and six others were exchanged as prisoners of war.

After the war, attorneys for two states argued for years about which state should have possession of the “Little General.”