

## **General Roy Stone and *The New York Times***

By  
The Rambler

*In 2007, the New York Times made its archives available online from 1851 to 1980 with the early years for free. The Highway History page immediately thought of The Rambler, who always prefers to do his research on the cheap. He agreed to research the life of General Roy Stone as revealed in the Times, stressing that he was agreeing to do so only because it was free and he could work in his pajamas.*

On October 3, 1893, General Roy Stone opened the Office of Road Inquiry (ORI) in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He had a \$10,000 budget and one employee, a stenographer. His modest agency grew into the Federal Highway Administration, while his work to convince America that it needed good roads led, after many a twist and turn, to the Eisenhower Interstate System.

Even so, General Stone is best known today because of his important role in the Civil War. Many Civil War histories mention him, often in considerable detail. Visitors to Gettysburg National Military Park can walk along Stone Avenue, named after Major Roy Stone to commemorate his heroic efforts on the first day of battle, July 1, 1863, when he and his new Pennsylvania Bucktails held off the oncoming Confederates while Union reinforcements rushed to the battlefield.

After the war, General Stone lived in western New York with his wife Mary and two children before moving to New York City. He became a prominent New Yorker who often was called on for challenging assignments and big projects. As a result, his name appeared often in *The New York Times*. These references provide a unique look at General Stone's life, particularly his life between the Civil War and the ORI, to supplement the biographical information in the Highway History page's "Portrait of a General" at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/stone.cfm>

### **During the Civil War**

As best the Rambler can determine, Roy Stone first appeared in the *Times* on August 5, 1862. In a list of wounded and killed from General Truman Seymour's Division, Major Roy Stone of the First Pennsylvania Rifles is listed as wounded. This apparently is a reference to his actions on June 30 at New Market, Virginia. Under attack from forces led by General Robert E. Lee, Major Stone's Bucktail Brigade fired volley after volley before retreating to a position where the Union forces could reunite. He moved his forces along Long Bridge Road to join General George A. McCall. Moving ahead to locate the enemy, General McCall and Major Stone ran into a column of Confederate soldiers who captured the General. Major Stone turned his horse around and escaped, but a bullet struck his hand as his horse reversed course.

General Stone's Civil War activities would be referenced in the *Times* on December 10, 1893, in an article about the work of the War Department's War Records Office. To that date, the office had published 49 volumes, each nearly 1,000 pages long, of documents from the war. The occasion of the article was the pending publication of "an exhaustive compilation from official records of the casualties on both sides of the war." Based on facts rather than opinions, the volume would show beyond controversy, "that much of the hardest fighting of the war was between the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia":

One thing clearly shown is the overshadowing importance of the battles of Gettysburg and Chickamauga, the greatest battles the Confederate and Union Armies, east and west, ever fought.

Stating that the Pennsylvania reserves "was the only division in the Union armies composed entirely of troops from one State," the article listed the Pennsylvania regiments, including "the One Hundred and Forty-ninth (Col. Roy Stone)." At Gettysburg, the article continued, the Pennsylvania regiments that suffered the greatest losses were the 101<sup>st</sup> (335) and Colonel Stone's 149<sup>th</sup> (336).

For more information on General Stone's Civil War activities, see the footnotes accompanying "Portrait of a General" for references to books and articles recounting his exploits.

["Brig.-Gen. Seymour's Division," August 5, 1862  
"A Book of War Revelations," December 10, 1893]

### **Staunch Grant Man**

General Stone next appeared in the *Times* on May 14, 1872, if the Rambler's search skills can be trusted. [Editor's note: They can't.] He was listed as the second district delegate from Cattaraugus County to the Republican State Convention that was to be held in Elmira the following day. The convention would decide whether to support reelection of President Ulysses S. Grant, who had taken office in March 1869, or the liberal Republican Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*.

On May 15, the *Times* carried an item datelined May 11 in Cattaraugus County indicating that Greeley "receives but little sympathy in this county." General Stone is among the six "stanch [sic] Grant men" the county had chosen as delegates. The brief article added that the second district convention unanimously supported President Grant, "instructing its delegates to use every effort to secure his renomination, and unqualifiedly condemning all attempts to break up the Republican Party by the nomination of so-called Liberal Republicans."

With Grant representing the Radical Republicans, the Democratic Party joined with the Liberal Republicans to choose Greeley as their nominee. Grant, despite concerns about

corruption among the men he appointed to government positions, won reelection by a popular vote of 56 percent to 44 percent.

In October 1874, General Stone was a rival, at least briefly, for the seat in the U.S. House of Representatives held by Congressman Walter L. Sessions. The Republican Convention for the 33<sup>rd</sup> District, meeting in Salamanca, gave Sessions 66 votes out of 100, with General Stone receiving 17 and a third candidate, 13. According to a brief article in the *Times* on October 3, 1874, “The nomination was then made unanimous.” General Stone was among those addressing the convention, but the *Times* did not quote his remarks. Sessions, who had won his seat in November 1870, lost his reelection bid in 1874, and returned to private life as a lawyer, with a brief return to the House (1885-1887).

[“Additional Delegates to the Republican State Convention,” May 14, 1872  
“Cincinnati Candidates at a Discount—Gen. Grant Sustained by the Masses,” May 15, 1872  
“Republican Nominations,” October 3, 1874]

### **Polar Hayes**

Later that year, the *Times* reported on November 23, 1874, that General Stone was one of the speakers at a reception for Dr. Isaac I. Hayes, the Arctic explorer, at the Arcadian Club. Nicknamed “Polar Hayes,” Dr. Hayes was a young surgeon from Pennsylvania when he participated in his first polar exploration via Greenland, known as the Second Grinnell Expedition under Dr. Elisha Kent Kane (1853-1855). In 1861, Dr. Hayes led an expedition in search of the Open Polar Sea—an ice free zone across the North Pole that ships would be able to navigate between Europe and Asia. He claimed to have seen it, but could not prove his sighting of a navigation route that, as we now know, did not exist. He was an author, a surgeon during the Civil War, a lecturer, and from 1875 to his death of heart disease on December 19, 1881, at the age of 49, a member of the State Assembly representing New York City.

[“Reception to Dr. Hayes by the Arcadian Club,” November 23, 1874]

### **The Saddle Back Plan**

In the years before the New York Subway, New York City’s growing population required more than the street-cars and omnibuses providing transit service. The idea of a subway, similar to London’s subway, was considered, but proved controversial. While the subway concept was under debate in the State legislature, an entrepreneur named Charles T. Harvey convinced the 1866 legislature to pass an amendment allowing him to build a railroad to be operated “by means of a propelling rope or cable attached to stationary power.”

Harvey’s West Side & Yonkers Patent Railway Company built an experimental elevated railway line using Harvey’s invention for cable operation. It was one-half mile long,

along Greenwich Street from Battery Place to Cortlandt Street. The advantage of an elevated rail line was that it provided public transit service with minimal disturbance to existing buildings, sidewalks, and streets, while freeing the vehicles from ground traffic that was limited by the speed of horses moving in a heavily congested environment.

The official demonstration on July 3, 1868, was successful, and the company planned to extend the line from the Battery to Kingsbridge in Yonkers. However, financial and legal difficulties halted expansion of the “Patent Railway.” The difficulties led to Harvey’s departure from the company, a switch to steam locomotives, and reorganization of Harvey’s company, which became the New York Elevated Railway. A rival company founded by Dr. Rufus H. Gilbert obtained a franchise for his design. John Anderson Miller described the concept in his book *Fares, Please! A Popular History of Trolleys, Horsecars, Streetcars, Buses, Elevateds, and Subways* (Dover Publications, 1960):

His plan provided for tubular iron roadways suspended above the streets by Gothic arches springing from the curb lines. Cars were to be propelled through the tubular passageways by atmospheric or other power. [Miller, p. 74-75]

The financial panic of 1873 halted the Gilbert proposal.

With progress limited on the new elevated service, the city’s Common Council approved Section 606 of the Laws of 1875 to establish a Rapid-Transit Commission to select the routes of additional lines beyond those chartered to the two existing companies, the Gilbert Elevated Railway Company and the New York Elevated Railroad Company. On September 18, 1875, the *Times* reported on the commission’s meeting the day before, during which the commissioners heard from advocates of several plans. The article mentioned that Roy Stone appeared on behalf of his Saddle Back proposal.

Stone had invented the system for use on elevated tracks. As explained in “Portrait of the General,” Stone built a temporary line for the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876, linking Agricultural Hall and Horticultural Hall:

The track was supported by a single row of iron columns, resting on foundations of timber. The length of the road was 500 feet, and the greatest height above the bottom of ravine thirty feet. The car ran on three rails. One of these occupied the centre of the track, and was laid along the top of a triangular truss. At the base of this truss, and on either side of it, were laid two rails. The car thus moved on three rails—one in the centre and two on the sides. The bottom of the car was concave, and fitted over the central rail, while the sides extended several feet below the line of the centre of the car, and had wheels attached to them, which ran on the side tracks horizontally, instead of perpendicularly, as is the case on ordinary rails. Thus the wheels on the central rail were the bearing wheels, while those on the sides were the guiding wheels. The wheels had rubber tires, which caused them to run smoothly, and deep flanges, which prevented them from running off the track. The locomotive was also constructed in a curious manner. The engine was placed above the tender, and was fed with water and fuel from

below. The arrangement of the tender was the same as that of the car, so far as the running gear was concerned. [Ingram, J. S., *The Centennial Exposition, Described and Illustrated*, Hubbard Bros., 1876, p. 692-693.]

(No, the Rambler can't understand that description, either! If you are so inclined, feel free to consult the Rambler's transit history counterpart, the Rumbler, for an explanation.) [Editor's note: The Rumbler is part of the Rambler's "evil twin" fantasy. Don't waste your time searching for the Rumbler archive.]

The Rapid-Transit Commission completed its initial work in October. The commissioners passed on General Stone's Saddle Back plan, instead favoring the rights of the two existing company and establishing new lines for elevated public transit. The *Times* summarized the commission's specifications on October 7, 1875:

In streets not over thirty-six feet wide, the one-legged plan of single tracks following the line of the curb may be adopted. In streets of more than that width, the tracks must be taken over the middle of the roadway on transverse girders carried from columns placed along the curbs, or, in certain exceptional cases, placed in part along the middle of the thoroughfare. By way of stimulating these companies to occupy the field before any competitor has time to construct a road along a route parallel with theirs, the Commissioners propose to invite the subscription of stock toward the formation of a corporation to be known as the Manhattan Railway Company. As the two existing companies have been given the only routes worth having, it is hardly probable that capitalists will contend very warmly for the honor of organizing a rival concern, chiefly designed to stimulate the others to keep their promises to the public.

As near as can be determined, General Stone's demonstration of his Saddle Back Plan in Philadelphia did not lead to a commercial application of his invention.

According to Miller, the New York Elevated Railway Company moved quickly on its line:

By 1876 the company was proudly advertising that it ran forty trains a day from the Battery to 59<sup>th</sup> Street. The regular fare was ten cents, but a special rate of five cents was in effect between 5:30 and 7:30 in the morning, and between 5 and 7 o'clock in the evening. As the hour approached when the lower rate went into effect long lines of waiting people used to gather on the stairs leading up to the elevated stations. Then, when the price card was turned around at the ticket window, they surged forward with great pushing and shoving. [Miller, p. 75-76]

Although "The EI" was popular with riders, it was unpopular with adjacent property owners. Miller explained why:

Whenever a new line was proposed, or an extension to an old one, strenuous opposition arose. The "horrors" of elevated railroad operation were eloquently

described by the “antis.” Horses would be frightened and run away. Fire would be started by sparks from the locomotives. People in the streets would be burned by hot ashes dropped down upon their heads. [Miller, p. 76]

In addition, the tracks were ugly and the trains were noisy. These and other problems led the city to reconsider the controversial idea of building a subway.

(The Rambler will note that highway builders who have faced objections for decades from pro-transit forces can take some grim comfort in knowing that transit, whether below ground or above it, once had its opponents.)

[“The Rapid-Transit Commission,” September 18, 1875  
“Rapid Transit,” September 25, 1875  
“The Report,” September 7, 1895  
“Plans of Rapid Transit,” September 26, 1875  
“The Rapid Transit Commission,” October 6, 1875  
“The Manhattan Railway” and “The Report,” October 7, 1875”]

## **Steam Explosions**

By the 1880’s, entrepreneurs were installing a steam heating system for homes and buildings in New York City. In 1880, two of the competing companies combined under the name New York Steam Heating Company. While steam heating was in its infancy, the company had to deal with street explosions, such as a series of explosions that occurred in mid-June 1890. The explosions damaged the steam heating company’s pipes, the pipes of other companies, and adjacent properties and bystanders.

An article in the *Times* on June 13, 1890, stated that the day before, a worker with the heating company had caused an explosion of a gas pipeline at the corner of Broadway and Fulton Street. The company had completed placing its pipe about 14 feet below the surface, and workers began filling the hole. As the hole filled to 3 feet from the surface, where intersecting gas lines were placed, a worker slipped and his lantern fell into the hole. Leaking gas took fire, creating a blaze that was difficult to control because of the smoke and extreme heat.

While the New York Steam Heating Company and the gas companies exchanged claims that the other was responsible, Commissioner of Public Works Thomas F. Gilroy dispatched a team to investigate. (Gilroy served as Commissioner (1889-1893) before becoming Mayor (1893-1894).) The team consisted of Chief Engineer George W. Birdsall, Engineer Horace Loomis of the Bureau of Sewers, and General Roy Stone, Inspector of Street Openings for the Bureau of Water Purveyor.

They reported to the Commissioner of Public Works on June 18:

After sifting all the statements the commission expresses the opinion that the cause of the accident can be traced directly to the New York Steam Heating

Company, whose excavations had been open so long that it had caused the joints of the gas mains to open allowing the escape of gas in large quantities and the failure to properly support the drip attached to the gas main in the first instance and the final breaking of the same by dumping a cart load of dirt upon it.

The steam company's pipes, according to the report, had been "a constant source of inconvenience and danger to the public." Further, Birdsall, Loomis, and Stone found that "the system of jointing is imperfect, and that leaks and explosions are frequent; that the high temperature and pressure affects everything within range; that there is a discharge of noxious gases from the manholes, and that the water in the distributing mains is heated."

The danger was highlighted by an article on the same page of the *Times* about another explosion at Broadway and Fulton Street the day the report was released. It was the third such explosion in a week at an intersection "which seems fated to be the scene of such exhibitions." Although the explosion did not damage the pavement, it did send steam into the buildings on one side of Fulton Street, causing the evacuation of all occupants and damage to everything inside.

The article quoted a report by William Webb, the general foreman on sewer repairs, who found that the company's pipes were "utterly defective, that they should be taken out of Broadway and other streets now crowded with other pipes, and that other locations for steam pipes be designated, and that a more perfect system of jointing be put in place." Unless these problems could be corrected, the company's charter should be revoked because as then constituted, the company's work was "a common nuisance, prejudicial to public health, destructive of property, and actually dangerous to life."

As for the report on the explosion the previous week, the *Times* quoted Mr. Prentiss, the superintendent of the New York Steam Heating Company, as saying that the report was unfair and contrary to the facts.

(In 1932, Consolidated Gas acquired approximately 75 percent of New York Steam's common stock, and on March 8, 1954, the New York Steam Company fully merged with Consolidated Edison.)

["A Broadway Gas Geyser," June 13, 1890  
"The Broadway Explosion," June 14, 1890  
"Last Thursday's Accident," June 19, 1890]

## **A New Shoal**

The steamship Vincenzo Florio of the Florio-Rubattino Line left the Wall Street ferry dock on the morning of July 9, 1884, bound for the Mediterranean. As it passed between the foot of Whitehall Street and Governor's Island, the ship struck an underwater obstacle near Diamond Reef and began leaking from compartment No. 2. It anchored at the site overnight, then put into Erie Basin for repairs.

At first, steamship, harbor, and United States Coast Survey officials were confused about the obstacle the Vincenzo Florio had struck. An initial examination confirmed a depth of only 22 feet instead of the 26 feet expected at nearby Diamond Reef in the ship channel. Finally, officials realized the shoal had been discovered in 1881 and carefully investigated. The *Times* reported on August 3, 1884, that in 1881, General John Newton, Chief of Engineers of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, had Assistant Engineer, General Roy Stone, to conduct the review. Using divers, General Stone located the barrier, as described in his report dated April 4, 1881:

The shoal extends on the 26-foot curve about 250 by 100 feet. Its greatest length is across the river in a line from Trinity Church, New-York, to Atlantic Mills, Brooklyn.

The *Times* also quoted his description of the shoal as consisting of “loose, unnatural small stones, brickbats, cinders, &c., in ridges and heaps and was undoubtedly formed by dumpage of ballast and refuse, though not apparently at a recent date.”

The *Times* had covered General Stone’s report shortly after he completed it. On April 13, 1881, the *Times* reported that General Newton had transmitted General Stone’s report to the Board of Pilot Commissioners the day before. The article, which summarized “Gen. Ray [sic] Stone’s” report, concluded: “The Pilot Commissioners placed the communication on file.” Based on General Stone’s report, a buoy marking the position of the shoal had been placed.

Following the plight of the Vincenzo Florio in 1884, the *Times* explained that the buoy had “frequently been carried away by the ferry and other river boats.” However, the shoal was well known to all pilots and masters navigating the stream. The *Times* article added that officials planned to ask Congress for funds to remove the debris.

[“A New Shoal in the Harbor,” April 13, 1881  
“Sprung a Leak,” July 11, 1884  
“Rocks in the Harbor,” July 22, 1884  
“No Sign of the Rocks,” July 23, 1884]  
“The Shoal Near Diamond Reef,” August 3, 1884]

### **Fifth Avenue Fraud (or Not)**

Contractor waste, fraud, and abuse have been part of the construction industry for millennia. (The Rambler hastens to add that he is referring only to the rotten apples that the good contractors have been trying for centuries, unsuccessfully, to eliminate from the profession so they would stop spoiling the “barrel.”)

To anyone who challenges the assertion that contractor abuse is an age-old phenomenon, the Rambler will cite Mark Twain’s travel book *The Innocents Abroad*, published in 1869. While describing his tour of Greece, Twain recounted an incident involving Xerxes, the King of Persia (picture Iran on today’s map) who lived from 519 to 465 B.C.

Xerxes is best known today for his supporting role in the hit film *The 300* (released in 2006). The film depicts how [SPOILER ALERT FROM THE RAMBLER: THE FOLLOWING SUMMARY CONTAINS SPOILERS SO SKIP TO THE NEXT PARAGRAPH IF YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW HOW THE BATTLE OF THERMOPYLAE TURNED OUT] an extremely muscular force of 300 computer generated motion-capture Spartans blocked Xerxes' computer generated motion-capture army in the narrow pass at Thermopylae in 480 B.C. Although the Spartans were overcome after 7 days of off-and-on battles, the delay helped the Greek forces build up their strength and confidence to defeat Xerxes (portrayed by computer generated Rodrigo Santoro) the following year.

The incident described by Mark Twain took place in 482 B.C. in the Hellespont, a narrow strait that is known today as the Dardanelles in northwestern Turkey. (As an aid to today's readers, the Rambler will point out that 482 was BEFORE 480 in those days, so Xerxes still thought his mighty army, not yet computer generated, was going to defeat the Greeks.) With that background, here is Twain's account:

Within the Hellespont we saw where the original first shoddy contract mentioned in history was carried out, and the "parties of the second part" gently rebuked by Xerxes. I speak of the famous bridge of boats which Xerxes ordered to be built over the narrowest part of the Hellespont (where it is only two or three miles wide). A moderate gale destroyed the flimsy structure, and the King, thinking that to publicly rebuke the contractors might have a good effect on the next set, called them out before the army and had them beheaded. In the next ten minutes he let a new contract for the bridge. It has been observed by ancient writers that the second bridge was a very good bridge. Xerxes crossed his host of five millions of men on it, and if it had not been purposely destroyed, it would probably have been there yet. If our government would rebuke some of our shoddy contractors occasionally, it might work much good.

(Today, the Federal Highway Administration employs the somewhat less fearsome tactic of debarment for rotten apple contractors.)

Rotten apples have been part of highway construction in the United States from the start, including construction of the National Road authorized in 1806 as a portage route from the Potomac River at Cumberland, Maryland, to the Ohio River at Wheeling, Virginia (now West Virginia). This paragraph by historian Billy Joe Peyton raises themes that feel familiar, rotten-apple-wise, even today:

Contractors were expected to follow specifications, but the quality of work varied from contract to contract . . . . Many [contractors] had outstanding reputations and performed admirably, while others took shortcuts, scrimped on materials, or showed little pride in workmanship. Potential problems might be attributed to any number of things, such as inexperience, mismanagement, shortage of funds, or an overriding desire to open the Road at all cost. [Peyton, Billy Joe,

“Surveying and Building the Road,” in Raitz, Karl, editor, *The National Road*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, p. 142]

The subject of contractor abuse arises because of the repaving of Fifth Avenue in New York City in 1886. “For 150 years,” wrote Moseette Broderick in *The Grand American Avenue: 1850-1920*, “people the world over have equated success in the United States with an address on Fifth Avenue.” Lined with luxurious homes built by Astors and Vanderbilts and the shops to serve them, Fifth Avenue was a destination for tourists who came to stroll along “the most expensive street in the world.” [Broderick, Moseette, “Grand Avenue” in Cigliano, Jan and Landau, Sarah Bradford, editors, *The Grand American Avenue: 1859-1920*, Pomegranate Artbooks, 1994, p. 3]

The State Legislature approved the Fifth-Avenue Repavement Bill in May 1885. It called for repaving the avenue from 9<sup>th</sup> to 90<sup>th</sup> Street, with the exception of the section between 32<sup>nd</sup> and 37<sup>th</sup> Streets, which already had been repaved. To avoid problems, the legislation included “every possible safeguard,” as the *Times* put it in an article on June 25, 1886. The article added that the law called for “the best obtainable kind of pavement, requiring the use of granite blocks of the most approved pattern.” (Known as “Belgian blocks” because they were first used in Brussels, the blocks for New York City were quarried in New England. They were favored in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century for their ability to withstand impacts from metal wheels and reduce residual dust and mud.) The contract was awarded to Mathew Baird in September 1885 for \$429,559.50.

By June 1886, concerns were being raised about the quality of Baird’s work. Although the project was under the supervision of Commissioner of Public Works Rollin Squire, the Commissioners of Accounts reported to Mayor William R. Grace on the results of an investigation by Engineer George T. Balch and Assistant Engineer E. E. Coryell. They had identified numerous frauds in Baird’s performance of the contract, including failure to roll the roadbed as required in the contract and not meeting the specifications for the concrete base and granite blocks. The investigation also concluded that the inspectors employed by Commissioner Squire had not performed their tasks properly. Balch and Coryell estimated that Baird had saved about \$75,000 on his contract.

In August, Mayor Grace had removed Squire from office and appointed General Newton to take his place. He replaced the inspectors Squire had appointed and added Coryell to the inspection team.

In September, General Newton ordered Baird to suspend his work to allow for a team of impartial engineers to examine the charges made by Balch and Coryell. The *Times* summarized the results on October 23, 1886, stating that the experts determined that “while there are some variations from the terms of the contract, the differences are not such as are substantial in their nature and extent.” The article concluded:

Gen. Newton yesterday removed Engineer Coryell, from the position of Supervising Engineer over the repavement of Fifth-avenue, and appointed Roy Stone in his place.

To the extent that the *Times* search engine can be relied on, the project faded from the pages of the newspaper after this article. The Rambler, who may be biased in this matter, speculates that the project was completed successfully and that General Stone did his work efficiently.

[“Right Under His Eyes,” June 25, 1886  
“Squire Changes His Mind,” June 30, 1886  
“Charges Sent to Albany,” August 18, 1886  
“Critics and Constructors,” September 14, 1886  
“The Fifth-Avenue Pavement,” September 15, 1886  
“Contractor Baird’s Savings,” September 15, 1886  
“Suspending the Work,” September 17, 1886  
“Contractor Baird Sustained,” October 23, 1886]

### **Gedney’s Channel**

In 1834, a Coast Guard vessel under the command of Thomas R. Gedney discovered a channel leading into New York Harbor that would greatly improve ship movements. The channel was named after Gedney.

By the 1880’s, the increasing use of steel for ship’s hulls resulted in bigger ships that required deeper harbors. The need to deepen Gedney’s Channel was clear from the number of ships that ran aground while passing through Lower New York Bay. The need was clear, but the best method of deepening the channel was not. The annual report of the Chief of Engineers, United States Army, to the Secretary of War for 1886 stated that:

The exposed position and frequent storms on the bar, the great depth of water, and other unfavorable conditions, made it a difficult matter to decide upon the best mode of deepening Gedney’s Channel.

It was not expected that ordinary clam-shell and dipper-dredges could be used there to advantage and therefore in drawing up the specifications for the work[,] provisos were inserted requiring bidders to furnish plans and descriptions of the plant they proposed to use, and also a proviso that, if after the plan had been in use a reasonable time, and had not obtained good results, the contract should be annulled, and the contractor should be reimbursed a fair amount for his outlay.

The *Times* reported on December 10, 1884, that the three-man committee (Daniel Barnes, S. W. Carey, and E. S. Whitman) appointed by the New York Produce Exchange to urge Congress to fund channel dredging did not believe that the \$200,000 appropriated for Gedney’s Channel would be adequate. (The Produce Exchange was established in 1860 to provide a single location for the buyers and sellers of produce to meet and conduct business.) The committee’s report concluded:

There is a narrow cut in Gedney's Channel through which ships drawing 26 feet may pass on ordinary tides and favorable circumstances, and there is still more water on "spring tides." Pilots affirm that they can take out as deep draught ships now as ever they could. The frequency with which steamers of 24 feet draught and under strike the bar, and the discrepancies between the last Government survey in 1881 and the surveys of Commander Taylor and of private surveyors more recently made, must be taken as evidence that in the interval a shoaling has occurred in other portions of Gedney's Channel.

As the requirements of commerce and of travel tend increasingly to larger and deeper draught steamers, in order that New-York may hold her supremacy against all competition, Sandy Hook bar should have as much water as it is possible to acquire.

The committee rejected construction of a system of jetties as "preposterous," and believed that ordinary dredging of an area of 500 feet by about 4,000 feet would be "too stupendous to be considered," according to the *Times* article.

The Corps advertised for bids, which were opened on January 15, 1885. The lowest bid, submitted by the firm of Morris and Cumings, proposed to use clam-shell dredges and centrifugal pumps at 35 cents per cubic yard. Aside from determining that the bid was irregular, the Corps was intrigued by a bid from "Roy Stone, of New York." The 1886 report described the bid as:

. . . deepening the channel by means of what he [General Stone] termed "hydraulic plowing," a process which consists in stirring up the material composing the bottom by means of a strong jet of water thrown against the sandy bottom during the ebb tide, which the projector thought was strong enough in Gedney's Channel to carry away the material so loosened.

Despite concerns about the proposed method of dredging, the Corps awarded the contract to General Stone on February 7, 1885:

As Mr. Stone's offer carried with it no obligation of payment on the part of the Government, unless he should deepen the channel to 28 feet for a width of 200 feet to begin with, and as it was certain that the ordinary means of dredging could not be successfully used in a place so much exposed to sea-action as Gedney's Channel is, it was decided to accept Mr. Stone's bid; but as very little confidence was felt in the success of this process, though it seemed expedient to give it a trial, the time for completing his contract was limited to June 1, 1885, and, if at that time satisfactory results had not been obtained, the contract was to be annulled without any payment being made to the contractor.

General Stone began the dredging on March 24, 1885. However, the Corps' concerns about the proposal proved valid, as the *Times* noted on July 5, 1885, in an article about

the Corps' work. Referring to Major G. L. Gillespie, engineer in charge of improvements of certain rivers and harbors in New York and New Jersey, the article stated:

Last Fall the corps of Engineers under Col. Gillespie made an excellent survey of a large area of the outer bay for the purpose of ascertaining the exact character of its entrances, what changes had taken place, and what improvements were needed. This was followed by the Engineering Department giving out the contract for dredging Gedney's Channel to Gen. Leroy Stone. Gen. Stone's scheme only partially succeeded, and his contract was annulled. While it was determined that his system of steam plowing was admirably adapted for some purposes, yet in this channel it was found that there was not enough scows to carry away the material loosened.

Major Gillespie's annual report to General Newton was less charitable, as the *Times* explained on August 5, 1885. The Major recounted the difficulties that beset General Stone on this contract:

From the outset the method was unsuccessful, and after a short time an induction pipe was substituted for the water jets, which was expected to draw the material up to the surface of the water and thereby give it a better chance of being carried off by the current.

This, however, proved no more successful than the first method, and on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May, 1885, Mr. Stone was released from the contract at his own request. No money was paid him by the Government. [*Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers, United States Army, to the Secretary of War for the Year 1886, Part I, 49<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2d Session, House of Representatives, Ex. Doc 1, pt 2, vol II., Appendix E, 1886, p. 730-731*]

When Morris and Cumings declined to accept the contract based on the company's earlier bid, the Corps readvertised for bids. Bids ranged from 33 cents to \$1.50 per cubic yard, with General Stone having submitted the low bid. Because the General was "unable to prove his ability to execute the contract, his bid was thrown out."

An article in the *Times* on August 9, 1885, stated that Major Gillespie's report had not received enough attention:

It shows plainly that some method for permanently deepening and maintaining the channel should be adopted as soon as possible and expeditiously carried out. The experiment of dredging in Gedney's Channel is practically a failure. The deposits on the bar are dug up and swept off only to be brought back, and the work is one that would have to be continued indefinitely, and then with unsatisfactory results. In fact the contractor who undertook the job on condition of receiving pay only when a channel 28 feet deep and 1,000 feet wide had been attained gave up the task as hopeless.

The Chief of Engineers would struggle for years to keep Gedney's Channel open for all traffic.

["The Needs of the Harbor," December 10, 1884  
"Improving the Lower Bay," August 5, 1885  
"The Entrance to Our Harbor," August 9, 1885]

### **Tracks for Trucks**

In the late 1880's, trucks were a major problem in New York City. The trucks were pulled by horses in that era, but their weight was hurting the horses and damaging city pavements. On July 2, 1889, the *Times* addressed the issue:

Expert-testimony is not needed to prove that no form of pavement yet invented can stand the heavy traffic that goes on every day in the business districts. Along all the streets and avenues on which traffic is heavy, ruts and hollows are silent but conclusive witnesses to the faults of cobblestone and granite-block pavements.

General Newton's Department of Public Works estimated that as many as 70,000 trucks were engaged in daily business in the city:

They earn on an average of \$450 per day, or a total of \$100,000,000 per year, which is larger than the combined freight earnings of all the railroads that come to this city.

Only steel, the *Times* stated, "can be permanently satisfactory." It explained this conclusion by reference to General Newton's troubleshooter:

Such was the conclusion reached by Gen. Roy Stone, General Inspector of Street Pavements, more than two years ago. Gen. Newton, then Commissioner of Public Works, readily shared his views. They found that a system similar to that which they had in mind had been put in operation in Glasgow, but not with entire success. The rails used there were so smooth that injury to horses from slipping on them almost counterbalanced the advantages secured in the way of easy traction. By consultation and otherwise they devised a rail with shallow grooves running its length and so notched across as to prevent a horse from slipping. One of the large steel companies reported upon the model that a special roller would be needed to make the rail at a cost perhaps of \$3,000. With this equipment rails could be turned out at about the cost per pound of steel car rails.

The article explained that in 1887, the proposal had been submitted to Mayor Abram S. Hewitt (1887-1888), who liked the idea. (Hewitt, a reform Democrat, had two main opponents in his 1886 election, one of whom was future President Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt, as he expected, lost, much to his relief since he had scheduled a trip to

England 4 days later to marry his second wife, Edith Carow (following the death of his beloved first wife from complications following childbirth aggravated by Bright's disease). He came in third largely because Republicans had voted for Hewitt out of fear that if they voted for Roosevelt, the Labor party candidate, Henry George, a populist and advocate of the single-tax scheme, might become Mayor. George came in second.) With one modification (the rail should be depressed enough to leave the surface of the street level), Mayor Hewitt submitted the proposal to the Board of Aldermen. On November 12, 1887, the Committee on Streets and Public Works decided to authorize a section of tramway to be laid on a portion of Hudson Street. A *Times* article on November 13, 1887, listed the advantages:

Among its advantages, as claimed, will be the reduction of traction, or pulling, force required to move a load on the level to eight pounds per ton, as against 33 pounds on the best stone pavement; reduction of wear and tear of vehicles and roadway in like proportion; avoidance of blockages by reason of higher speed and heavier loading and consequent reduction in number of teams required for a given traffic; relief to Broadway and Fifth-avenue by drawing the heavy traffic to other streets; relief of street car lines from obstruction by wagons; absence of noise and the possibility of laying a smooth and noiseless pavement in residence streets without attracting a destructive business traffic.

The article listed several objections and the answers to them:

Objection to the cost of a tramway system is met by the fact that a new pavement in a wide avenue like that in Fifth-avenue would cost \$180,000 per mile, while a double line of tramway would be built and the present pavement relaid for \$50,000 to \$60,000 per mile. The objection that horses might slip on the rails is said to be avoided by the peculiar arrangements of the surface for that purpose.

The article of July 2, 1889, described the outcome:

The Aldermanic Committee on Public Works reported back the Mayor's communication with a resolution to carry it into effect over an experimental section on Hudson-street, in the neighborhood of the heaviest traffic. Some of the Aldermen at this stage became suspicious that the project might hide a scheme for private enrichment, and as the relations of the Mayor with the Aldermen were such that he could not plead with them, and as Gen. Newton would not, the resolution failed to pass.

The article did not explain what "scheme" the Aldermen feared – and the Rambler has not been able to find other information on this point. At the time, however, the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen were in a dispute over the board's authority on municipal matters. That is apparently why Mayor Hewitt submitted the proposal but did not feel he could plead with the Aldermen for their support.

However, an article on February 2, 1888, did provide additional details on what was then a recent event:

[The] question of an experimental tramway . . . was considered by the Board of Aldermen last November. At that time a resolution was offered by Alderman [Alfred R.] Conkling recommending the establishment of an experimental tramway in Hudson-street, between Duane and Canal streets, which, notwithstanding the fact that it was approved by the Department of Public Works, was lost on a division of the Board of Aldermen on Nov. 29.

This February 1888 article was prompted by a petition submitted by over 40 residents of Fifth Avenue to Mayor Hewitt. They asked “for a system of tramways in the streets parallel to Fifth-avenue, so that the heavy traffic which now fills the avenue with noise and wears out all too rapidly the costly pavement so recently laid may be diverted into other channels.” Deputy Commissioner Smith of the Department of Public Works told the *Times* “that he thought it would be hard to find a street parallel to Fifth-avenue which is as level and free enough from street car tracks and other surface obstructions to be suitable for a tramway.” After considering several options, he said he feared “that no tramway could be constructed which would divert altogether the heavy traffic from the smooth level roadway of Fifth-avenue.”

Although the Department of Public Works would not be authorized to move forward, General Stone would remain committed to the idea of steel tracks. He would periodically return to the idea of steel track roads, as discussed in later sections of this article. The later sections will show that General Stone had patented a design for the tracks, and it is possible the Aldermen were concerned that he was promoting the idea for his personal gain.

[“To Save the Horses,” November 13, 1887  
“Would Save Fifth-Avenue,” February 2, 1888  
“Tracks for the Trucks,” July 2, 1889

### **Southern Society Dinner**

General Stone took a break from his work on February 22, 1890, to attend the Lenox Lyceum for an event sponsored by the Southern Society. The *Times* article on February 23 about the event described it as “the annual dinner of an association of gentlemen who have brought North with them the tradition of that past when a Southerner’s house was his guest’s house, their quarrels his quarrels, and their happiness the supreme aim of his endeavor.”

The featured speaker was former President Grover Cleveland, who had been defeated in his 1888 reelection bid by Benjamin Harrison. Speaking on “The Birthday of George Washington,” the ex-President referred to the first President as “the most thorough American that ever lived.” Additional speeches included “The Negroes in the South” and

“The West and the South.” (President Cleveland became the only President to serve two non-consecutive terms by defeating President Harrison in 1892.)

General Stone was included in a long list of those in attendance for the event.

[“Southern Society Dinner,” February 23, 1890]

### **Aqueduct Commission**

On August 22, 1890, Walter Howe drowned while swimming at Bateman’s Beach near his summer home in Newport. Although Howe was an excellent swimmer, he appears to have been overcome by cramps and drowned before he could signal for help. He was 42 years old and left behind a wife and two children.

In 1888, Mayor Hugh L. Grant had appointed Howe to New York City’s Aqueduct Commission. The commission had been chartered in June 1883 “to provide new reservoirs, dams, and a new Aqueduct, with the appurtenances thereto, for the purpose of supplying the city of New York with an increased supply of pure and wholesome water.” With a seat on this important commission vacant, Mayor Grant needed to name a replacement. It would have to be a Republican, which Howe had been, because city law required a certain party distribution.

On September 5, 1890, the *Times* reported that Mayor Grant had received a petition from a number of prominent men recommending General Stone for Howe’s position “on the ground that he has rendered the city important services, ‘which are little known to the general public and have never been adequately recognized or appreciated.’” Cornelius N. Bliss, a wealthy merchant, Republican Party activist, and future Secretary of the Interior (1897-1899) under President William McKinley, and other members of the Union League Club also submitted a petition on General Stone’s behalf. Endorsement by the Union League Club suggests that General Stone was a member, but *The Rambler* cannot confirm that (so don’t quote him).

(The Union League Club was an influential social service organization, founded in 1863 to help preserve the Union. It helped establish the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1870, played a role in the founding of the American Red Cross, helped erect the Statue of Liberty, and played a role in bringing down the “Boss” Tweed ring. According to the club’s Web site, “Theodore Roosevelt managed his early political career from the Club’s chambers,” while early members included J. Pierpont Morgan, John Jay, William Cullen Bryant, President Chester A. Arthur, and Thomas Nast.)

The *Times* reported on October 1, 1890, that despite these endorsements, Mayor Grant chose Henry W. Cannon as Howe’s replacement. Cannon, a member of the Union League Club, was president of Chase National Bank and had been Comptroller of the Currency under President Arthur. The *Times* explained:

Mr. Cannon is a member of the Union League Club, and some members of the anti-Platt Republicans of that organization are said to have urged his appointment. That he is not a Platt Republican is demonstrated by his appointment.

This was a reference to members of the New York Republican Party who opposed Senator Thomas C. Platt, the party “boss.” (Platt had served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1873 to 1877 and in the United States Senate from March to May 1881, before resigning along with Senator Roscoe Conkling in protest of President James Garfield’s Federal appointments in New York, and from 1897 to 1909. In addition to helping pass the Greater New York bill in 1898 that created the modern, multi-borough New York City, he used his position as Republican boss to promote a political rival, Theodore Roosevelt, as President William McKinley’s running mate in 1900.) Since Bliss was a prominent anti-Platt Republican, the Rambler would speculate that General Stone also was anti-Platt.

[“Death of Walter Howe,” August 23, 1890  
“Gen. Roy Stone in the Field,” September 5, 1890  
“Walter Howe’s Successor,” October 1, 1890]

### **The New-York and Long Island Railroad Company**

In the mid-1880’s, business and civic interests began to consider the idea of linking New York City and Long Island by rail. (As just noted, New York City and Long Island were separate jurisdictions, not yet part of a single multi-borough city as at present. New York City consisted of the island of Manhattan.) Under New York State’s General Railroad Act of 1850, a group of Long Island businessmen formed the East River Tunnel Railroad Company in 1885 for that purpose. The company reorganized in 1887 as the New-York and Long Island Railroad Company, incorporating on July 30, 1887, under the 1850 Act. Financier Malcolm W. Niven was the leader of the investors who formed the company. Clifton Hood, in his history of the New York Subway, explained the company’s goal:

Spread across several big islands (Manhattan, Long, and Staten) and parts of the mainland in New Jersey and what is now the Bronx, the New York region was split by such major waterways as the Hudson River, the East River, and New York Harbor, all of which disrupted the movement of people and goods. Of all the railroads that served this booming metropolis in 1887, only one, the New York Central, entered Manhattan; all the others terminated on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River or the Long Island side of the East River. There were no bridges or tunnels across the Hudson between New Jersey and Manhattan; indeed, the closest bridge over the Hudson River was located seventy-five miles upstream in Poughkeepsie. The Brooklyn Bridge, completed in 1883, was then the only direct connection across the East River. The absence of such bridges and tunnels prolonged passenger journeys and raised transport costs.

The New York and Long Island Railroad intended to correct this situation. It was conceived as a terminal railroad that would carry freight and passenger traffic

across the East River, mainly between New York Central's depots in Manhattan and the Long Island Railroad's terminal in Queens County. [Hood, Clifton, 722 *Miles: The Building of the Subways and How They Transformed New York*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993, p. 163]

Hood added that the "long, convoluted history" of this project "reveals some of the engineering, financial, and political problems that thwarted New York's early underwater transit projects." [p. 162] Although Hood, for some reason, was not interested in General Stone's role in these events, the *Times* covered the General's significant role, much to the Rambler's relief.

On August 6, 1887, the *Times* reported that "promoters of the scheme to build a tunnel under the East River from Hunter's Point to Fourth-avenue are exhibiting vigor and perseverance." General Stone, who was the Chairman of the Directors of the New-York and Long Island Railroad Company, had been taking soundings between Hunter's Point in Queens and the New York shore:

With here and there a fissure, none of which is deep enough to occasion serious trouble, the divers have found the bed of the river composed of solid rock like that at Flood Road.

In view of the recent improvements in mining and quarrying machinery these conditions are most favorable to the project. Dynamite and compressed air have so reduced the expense, that tunneling through rock can be done cheaper than through any other formation. The new aqueduct is an example.

The reference is to the New Croton Aqueduct, which the Aqueduct Commission had approved to increase the city's water supply. Construction began in 1885, with the aqueduct opening in 1890 while construction continued. The article stated that the aqueduct tunnel, which was wide enough for a single-track railway, cost about \$500,000 a mile:

It is assumed that the cost of a tunnel large enough for a double-track road would not be double the cost of the aqueduct tunnel. Conceding that as an outside estimate, the tunnel would be far cheaper than a bridge.

The *Times* described the route the company had identified:

Beginning at or near Borden-avenue and Hayward-street in Long Island City, it is intended to follow Borden-avenue to the river and to cross in a direct line to about Thirty-fourth street. Following Thirty-fourth street the tunnel will go to Fourth-avenue, whence branches will connect with the Grand Central Railroad Station and the New-York Central freight depot at Thirtieth-street and Ninth-avenue. A third branch may be extended to the Hudson River tunnel.

(Colonel Dewitt Clinton Haskin, an engineer from California who had worked on the Union Pacific Railway, began construction of a tunnel under the Hudson River in 1874, starting at 15<sup>th</sup> Street in Jersey City, New Jersey. Construction was delayed by legal and financial problems, but resumed on May 5, 1887, prompting the reference in the *Times* article. Financial problems again halted the project, which was completed in 1908 by William G. McAdoo's company.)

The tunnel, the article explained, "would establish connections between the railroad systems of the nation and the 400 miles now in operation on Long Island."

Canvassers for the company "began to skirmish around yesterday" seeking consent of property owners. "If half of them consent, the legal requirements will be fulfilled, and the organization of the company and prosecution of the work will immediately follow. General Stone, the article stated, "is giving the matter his closest attention."

On January 29, 1888, the *Times* informed readers that the company had petitioned the city's Common Council "for leave to construct a railroad tunnel for freight and passenger traffic under the East River and under the city, connecting Long Island City, the Grand Central Station, and, by the Hudson River Tunnel, the New-Jersey railroads."

General Stone participated in a hearing on January 28, 1888, conducted by Alderman James P. Fitzsimmons, chair of the Committee on Railroads. Everett P. Wheeler, president of the Reform Club, one of the directors of the company, and a long-time Democratic political activist, opened the discussion "with an address in which he set forth the benefits of a comprehensive system of tunnel communication between Long Island and the New-England, New-York, and New-Jersey railway systems." The *Times* summarized Wheeler's view that, "The feasibility of the plan was unquestioned." Appleton D. Palmer, the company's counsel, insisted that the time was right for "some radical and comprehensive plan for handling and transporting the rapidly-increasing commerce of the city," as the *Times* phrased it.

Committee members raised a concern that would be repeated in subsequent discussion of the proposal, namely that the tunnel would "tend to divert a large part of its present commerce from New-York." It would not, they were told. O. W. Barnes, another company director and a member of the Aqueduct Commission, told the committee that New York's harbor was so superior that there was little danger traffic would be diverted to Long Island. Further, he said, the tunnel would not only facilitate commercial business in the city but reduce its cost.

General Stone also addressed the point as well as a rumor being spread to undermine the company:

President Stone said that there now came 400 wagons daily with produce from Long Island, at an expense of not less than \$2,000 a day. This traffic would be transacted through the tunnel in half the time now consumed and at half the expense. The story that a harbor for ocean steamers was to be established at Fort

Pond Bay as part of the tunnel scheme, and that between them, the tunnel and the new harbor, a large portion of the foreign commerce of the country would be diverted from the city, he denounced as absurd.

On January 30, 1888, the company presented a petition to the Brooklyn Common Council for freight shipments on specified surface roads to be used only between midnight and 5 a.m. The petition covered a double line of tracks where needed, along with sidings, turnouts, and switches, as well as connections with side tracks on private property. The company also wanted the privilege of cutting across private property at the angles and curves needed after due compensation to the private owners. The council referred the petition to its Committee on Railroads.

On the afternoon of February 3, the Committee on Railroads of New York City's Common Council held another hearing on the proposal. According to a *Times* article on February 4, the meeting "attracted a large attendance of interested parties. But none of the expected opponents of the scheme appeared." The *Times* quoted General Stone's presentation extensively:

Gen. Leroy [sic] Stone, President of the company petitioning for the franchise spoke of the objections which have been urged against it. These were the attraction of population from New-York to Long Island by improved transit thereto, and the diversion of commerce to a rival port at Montauk Point by opening a connection with the West through the city. "As to the first," said Gen. Stone, "in our view of the matter, it is only by means of cheap and accessible suburban homes that the vast business of this centre can be done at a cost that will not drive it away altogether. If all the people engaged in business and labor here were compelled to live on this island it is true that rents and real estate would advance for the time, but that advance would be a tax on business that would soon send it elsewhere and New-York would begin its decline. Commerce always, and manufacture of late, seeks the centres of communication, but they make those centres too valuable to be homes for their employes [sic] and they demand free outlets for that purpose to cheaper districts. The expenditure of some millions for labor in construction and the like addition to taxable values in the city would be items worth counting in immediate benefits.

"Regarding the diversion of commerce to the end of Long Island, it is impossible to consider the matter seriously when we compare Fort Pond Bay, a little notch on the north side of Montauk Point, open to all the winds that blow from the northeast to the west, approached through dangerous islands and shoals, barren of all means and appliances for storage or shipment, and utterly defenseless in time of war, with the great harbor of New-York completely land-locked, with a sea approach stretching, without island or shoal, from Montauk to the Bermudas and Hatteras, with a hundred miles of water front, and its costly equipment of wharves, warehouses, and elevators, and with safety assured by its defenses, or, as a last resort, by blocking the channels at Sandy Hook against an enemy's ships; but the climax of unreason is reached when all these advantages are to be

sacrificed in order to attain the disadvantage of carrying freight 100 miles further by rail for shipment at double the cost of water carriage. For passenger service, if there was ever an object in having an ocean line from Montauk it was not to save the five hours difference in time by rail, but to make a quicker passage by means of larger steamers than could cross Sandy Hook bar and to avoid delaying for tide there. This object is no longer of importance, since the deepening of the bar is progressing so rapidly that vessels of greater draught than any now in use may soon cross at any stage of the tide.

“Our greatest business need is that of better facilities for freight transfer, collection, and distribution. It costs now \$100,000,000 per annum to do this work. As the city becomes more crowded the cost increases, and but for the relief afforded in the water transfer by car floats our streets would before this have been completely blocked and traffic driven elsewhere. The crowding of freight stations into the water front injures both railways and shipping; the removal of those would largely put an end to the street blockages which are so costly and vexatious, and if each important road could have a central station in the heart of the city, with branch stations in various localities and a general junction for transfers, the problem of cheap city transportation would be solved. Manifestly this cannot be done on the surface without ruining the city for everything else. Beneath the surface it might apparently be done at a moderate cost and without harm to any interest. Even the truckmen would not suffer, for the improvement in facilities would bring such increase in business as to keep them fully employed. Upon the question of cost of depot and storage room below ground it is interesting to note that chambers can be excavated alongside a tunnel railway to the height of 18 feet for \$2 per square foot of floor surface, or at the rate of \$5,000 per city lot of 25 by 100 feet, a price much below the value of ground on the surface, and that, measured in cubic contents, such chambers would cost only \$3 per yard against at least \$10 for the same space in buildings well situated above ground. This saving in storage of such goods as may be kept below ground would amount to many millions annually, while the saving in insurance alone would be a very considerable sum.”

R. K. Cortis, formerly the New York agent for the White Star Line, and Commodore W. H. Thompson, former commander of the *Britannic*, agreed with General Stone that freight and passenger shipment from an ocean harbor at Montauk would be impractical and expensive. The *Times* reported that the cost of shipping freight from New York to Montauk would be as great as shipping the freight from New York to Liverpool in England.

In March 1888, the *Times* covered discussions between the company and the Committee on Railroads regarding a franchise fee. On March 10, the *Times* explained that General Stone “claimed that his company should not be placed on the level of surface railways, for whose benefit the city had assumed great expense.” Palmer, the company’s counsel, objected that the Common Council did not have the legal authority to charge the company:

“How would 3 per cent. on the gross receipts do?” asked Chairman Fitzsimmons. “It wouldn’t do at all,” replied Mr. Palmer, “but 3 per cent. on the net receipts might do.”

[“Gross” versus “net” represents a significant difference, as Hollywood movie studios have long understood. “Gross” revenue refers to the total ticket sales, while “net” refers to the profit a film makes. (In the case of the proposed tunnel, the difference was between total receipts from fares versus the company’s profit.) Because of studio overhead (such as paying for flops), few films ever make a “profit,” so wise negotiators seek a percent of gross rather than net. In case any Hollywood moguls are reading this article, the Rambler wishes to make clear that he is willing to sell the movie rights to “General Roy Stone and *The New York Times*” for an upfront payment plus a percentage of gross to be negotiated.)

While Palmer agreed to discuss the matter with the company’s incorporators, Alderman James J. Mooney entered the meeting room:

Alderman Mooney . . . called upon Mr. Stone to explain an article that had been printed to the effect that an attempt had been made to blackmail the company by an emissary of the board. Mr. Stone said that no officer of his company knew anything on that subject.

The *Times* reported on March 17 that on the day before, the New-York and Long Island Railroad Company had assured the Committee on Railroads that the company would pay the city 3 percent of its gross receipts in lieu of all taxes in return for approval to tunnel the East River and under the city. Wheeler tried to get the amount reduced to 2½ percent, but the company agreed to the 3 percent.

[“The North River Tunnel,” May 22, 1887

“In and About the City – The East River Tunnel,” August 6, 1887

“Under the East River – Another Tunnel Project Advocated, January 29, 1888

“A Night Freight Line,” January 31, 1888

“The East River Tunnel – Answering Some of the Objections to the Enterprise,” February 4, 1888

“Looking for Compensation,” March 10, 1888

“The Long Island Road’s Offer,” March 17, 1888]

### **Cool Effrontery**

On April 17, 1888, the Aldermen reached a decision on the bridge company’s proposal. The *Times* coverage the next day highlighted a “most astonishing contest” that took place during discussions.

The majority report, signed by Aldermen Mooney, William Tait, Joseph Murray, and William P. Rinckhoff, rejected the project, largely because of the concern that the project would benefit Long Island at the city's expense:

Innumerable attempts to divert the traffic of this city to other localities have from time to time been made . . . in the interest of private individuals and corporations and to the advantage of our rivals . . . and always against the earnest protests of our city authorities; but the application under consideration surpasses in cool effrontery any project of a like character ever called to their attention. Reflection is lost in amazement in contemplating the possibilities for evil to this city and its interests that are contained in the application of this railroad company and certain to befall the city if the proposition is favorably considered by those whose first duty it is to avert just such threatened evils, if in their power.

The petitioners, the majority stated, had surely underestimated the intelligence of the Aldermen if the company thought it had disguised its purpose:

In conclusion, your committee, being of opinion that your honorable body is not desirous of bringing the sand hills of Long Island into any closer or more active competition with the real estate located within our own corporate limits, more than half of which is still vacant and unimproved, that you are not in favor of giving a syndicate of individuals—a trust in the most offensive sense—an opportunity to enter into active competition for the control of the traffic of the port of New-York and the business of our own citizens, nor desirous of taking any action which will tend, in the remotest degree, to interfere with the future progress and prosperity of the city of New-York, respectfully offer for your adoption a resolution against the project.

The minority report, signed by Aldermen Fitzsimmons, A. R. Conkling, and Walton Storm, favored the company's proposal. Fitzsimmons tried to delay action in hope of rallying support for the minority's view, but the Alderman voted against the proposal.

Mooney stated that if the proposition were approved, the newspapers would claim the Aldermen "belonged" to Austin Corbin, president of the Long Island Railroad and a long time booster of Long Island interests. After Fitzsimmons denied that Corbin was involved in the proposition, Mooney made comments (not printed in the *Times*) suggesting that Alderman Conkling, whose father, former U.S. Representative and Senator Roscoe Conkling, was seriously ill, had stock in the company. Alderman Conkling replied that, "My only property consists in city bonds, real estate, and mortgages." Mooney's statement was, therefore, "false, malicious, and unmanly." He had never boasted of owning stock in a railroad company whose franchise was before the Common Council. "Can the Alderman from the Twenty-third Ward say as much?" he asked. "I never asked who was 'to be seen' in regard to railroad franchises." Mooney's insinuation that Conkling had an interest in the company "was false and malicious." (The phrase "to be seen" was at the heart of a corruption investigation, as will be seen.)

The *Times* stated that after these comments, “The Aldermen held their breath at the insinuations of Alderman Conkling.” Mooney rose to reply:

When the Alderman of the Seventh District says that I stated he was interested in this road he tells an untruth. I’ve called him so once or twice before, but he isn’t gentleman enough to resent it . . . . No gentleman, no person, save a monkey-skulking man like the Alderman . . . would dare approach me in the matter of railroad franchises. I have been here three years and no one can say that I was ever approached. Yet monkey business runs in the family. I will hold him personally responsible for his words before he leaves the chamber or in the neighborhood of the City Hall, and I have give [sic] him fair warning.”

The president of the Common Council prevented Conkling from replying. Later, however, Mooney told a reporter that he regretted his comments about former Senator Conkling, who was dying. “I wish you would say that I regret very much my remark in the Common Council meeting to-day about the ex-Senator. What I said was very wrong, and I am sorry for it.”

(Conkling died the following day on April 18, 1888, and is irrelevant to this article about General Stone, except for the indelicacy during the hearing. However, the Rambler is delighted to use the chance reference to the senior Conkling to digress to historian David McCullough’s view of him. In his biography of Theodore Roosevelt, McCullough discussed Conkling’s rivalry with Roosevelt’s father. Calling Conkling “among the most fascinating, outrageous men of the era,” McCullough describes him as “considerably larger than life.” He was “tall, beautiful, enormously talented in the art of politics,” but in the view of the senior Roosevelt and other reformers, “evil incarnate.” He continued:

Conkling was not a crook; his name had been linked with no scandals; nor had he any personal crudities of the kind associated with a reprobate like [William Marcy] Tweed [the notorious leader of the corrupt political machine known as Tammany Hall]. What was so objectionable about Conkling was his utterly masterful, arrogant use of the very system [the reformers] deplored . . . .

Conkling himself, the picture of conspicuous manhood, stood six feet three, and was solidly formed beneath his extravagant clothes . . . . Women thought Conkling gorgeous, which he was. He carried a sun umbrella and favored bright bow ties, fawn-colored vests and trousers, English gaiters [cloth coverings for the lower portion of the pants], and gleaming pointed shoes. His beard was the color of burnished copper and it too was pointed. His hair was a darker red, thick and wavy, and he combed it to produce a single Hyperion curl at the center of his forehead . . . .

Though a married man with children he had for years been carrying on an affair with a fellow senator’s wife, the beautiful, ambitious Kate Chase Sprague . . . .

He had little humor, no patience with those he thought beneath him intellectually. He remained haughty and insufferably vain, anything but a man of the people. He deplored the use of tobacco and whiskey and said so. He disliked reporters and crowds; he hated ever to be touched.

Conkling's base of power was the Customhouse on Wall Street, "the largest federal office outside Washington." It collected tariffs on imported goods, one of the Federal Government's prime sources of revenue – two-thirds of tariff revenue was collected through the Customhouse in New York. Conkling had installed Chester A. Arthur as Collector of the Port of New York. Although Arthur was not accused of corruption, virtually every aspect of the Customhouse's operation was corrupt. Nevertheless, President Rutherford B. Hayes fired Arthur as part of an ineffective reform effort.

Arthur, against his patron Conkling's advice, emerged as the Vice Presidential candidate in 1880 with presidential candidate James A. Blaine, a long-time Conkling foe. Shortly after taking office on March 4, 1881, President Blaine nominated a Conkling enemy, Judge William H. Robertson, to be Collector. In a fury at this breach of senatorial courtesy, Senators Conkling and Platt resigned, as noted earlier:

Both men had expected to be quickly vindicated and reinstated by a compliant legislature at Albany and thus to return to Washington stronger than ever. But it had not worked out as planned. Most people thought Conkling had made a fool of himself; the legislature turned on him and chose another in his place. Inconceivable as it seemed, the giant Conkling had come crashing down, his political career was ended.

Platt might have prevented the reversal in Albany, but he "had been discovered in a compromising position with a young woman and was forced to retire from the scene in disgrace." McCullough noted that Platt may have been framed but since that's no fun, the Rambler will ignore the suggestion.

As for Arthur, he became President on September 18, 1881, following Blaine's assassination by a disgruntled office seeker.

This brief digression describes the gentleman whose dying days created such sensitivity, affronted feelings, and unlikely apologies among the Board of Alderman. [McCullough, David, *Mornings on Horseback*, Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2003, p.152-154, 171, 267])

[“Some Personal Remarks,” April 18, 1888]

### **A Sort of Joke**

Following the elections of 1888, the railroad company tried again in 1889 after a brief glimmer of hope. The old Board of Alderman was still in office on January 3 when the *Times* reported:

A majority of the Aldermanic Committee on Bridges and Tunnels reported yesterday in favor of the adoption of the resolution to give permission to the New-York and Long Island Railroad Company to build a tunnel under East River and across the island under Forty-second-street. The report was laid over for the consideration of the next Board of Alderman.

The old board concluded on January 7, and the new Board of Aldermen took office at noon on the same day.

This time, however, the company's petition was sent to the Committee on Docks, instead of the new Committee on Bridges and Tunnels. The *Times* reported on January 24, 1889, that H. V. Arnold, president of the Board of Aldermen, was surprised by comments that the Alderman had assigned the petition "as a sort of joke, but that was a good enough place to kill it in." Arnold called for the committee to hold a meeting on January 24 to consider the proposal.

At that hearing, Aldermen and speakers discussed whether the proposal would benefit Long Island at the city's expense. Alderman William H. Walker stated his view that "it might benefit Long Island by populating it at the expense of" New York City. Further, "its real purpose was to take freight through New-York without delay and to put it on steamships running from Montauk Point across the ocean." General Stone said he was hampered somewhat in responding to the concern because his company's papers had been sent to the Committee on Bridges and Tunnels. The article did not quote any comments he may have made on the benefit to New York City. However, two steamship company officials and Captain Ambrose D. Snow of the Board of Trade agreed "that the tunnel could not be used to divert commerce from this city, because steamships could not be run to and from Montauk Point as advantageously as from here." As summarized in the article, Captain Snow said:

New-York must be benefited by every railroad that came into it. The railroad might build up outlying places, but New-York would be the centre of supply for such places.

Before long, Alderman Walker rose "with dignity" to say he had some questions for General Stone:

He said: "A statement has been attributed to you that some of the members of this committee and of the Board of Aldermen are actuated by improper motives in taking the position they have taken in this matter. Those who utter it are moral assassins. If any one knows that there is truth in it I wish he would make a statement here publicly. Aldermen who voted in favor of corporations used to be assailed. Now we are assailed for not voting for a corporation."

“I did not know,” Gen. Stone replied, “that any such statement was attributed to me. The company has not been approached in any way for the benefit of a member of the present Board of Aldermen.”

The answer did not satisfy the Aldermen, particularly Orator Carlin. Chairman Walker had an extract from *The Times* read to back up his speech, but Gen. Stone denied that it contained any charge of wrongdoing against any present Aldermen. He corroborated its truthfulness, and repeated the statement made in it that he had been told some days ago that a combine had been formed in the board against the tunnel. As for corruption in the old Board of Aldermen, Gen. Stone declared that he had said all he desired to say before a Grand Jury last year. Finally Gen. Stone asked if the petition of workingmen in favor of the tunnel could not be got before the committee. He was assured that it was on the old files, and the board had decided not to take it from them.

(The Rambler notes that the *Times* article about the hearing, published on January 25, 1889, carried this subhead: “The Committee on Docks Insists That It Is Incorruptible.”)

On January 28, 1889, the *Times* was harsh in its commentary on the new Board’s actions:

Members of the Board of Aldermen resent the insinuation that their opposition to a railroad tunnel under the East River is due to a corrupt desire to be paid for their consent to its construction, and yet it is difficult to find any other explanation which would be a credit to the intelligence of a schoolboy.

The argument that the proposal would benefit Long Island at the city’s expense “cannot be a real, honest reason to any mind that is not either ignorant or stupid.” The editorial explained:

What New-York most needs for its future growth and prosperity is closer connections with the territory about it. The more tunnels and bridges there are connecting Manhattan Island with adjacent lands, provided there is no obstruction of navigation on its surrounding waters, the better for the city, and their construction should be encouraged and promoted in every legitimate way.

The talk of advantage to Long island “is the sheerest nonsense.” The editorial saw “no danger” of business being driven from the city. “Probably the dullest Alderman does not imagine that it would be a good thing for the city if it were as difficult and expensive to get across the Harlem River as it is to get across the East River and the Hudson, and he ought to see that it would be a good thing if communication to the east and the west were as east and inexpensive as it is to the north.”

The editorial saw a larger concept playing out in the debate:

The growth of the metropolis ought not to be restrained by municipal lines, but as its parts become more closely wrought together it would be well to obliterate

partition lines altogether and draw the municipal boundary around the whole aggregation of population and business and wealth which really belong to a single community and have the lower part of Manhattan Island as their centre of operations. Under proper safeguards for public and private interests every effort of capital and enterprise to supply the bonds of union between sections of the metropolis and to give it a more perfect connection with the channels of traffic in every direction should be encouraged and promoted. All barriers should be removed, and our borders should lie open to the world.

The new Aldermen were quick to act, again rejecting the petition. The *Times* reported on January 30 that the application “was yesterday peremptorily denied . . . based on a report of its Committee on Docks adverse to the tunnel scheme.” The committee’s report began:

“It was not necessary to remind your honorable body,” as does this new application, “that throughout the past year the company has constantly sought the consent of your honorable body to the construction of a tunnel railway joining this city with Long Island,” nor is it necessary to inform Mr. Roy Stone and his company that the Common Council of this city has constantly and persistently denied the application. The vilification to which the members of the Common Council was subjected last year, and the villainous attempt made to injure their reputations, both as citizens and officials—at the instance of Mr. Stone and his friends—served to remind the re-elected members of the late board of the former tact.

“Mr Roy Stone, President, is simply an employee of the Department of Public Works, is in no way or manner a responsible person, does not own a dollar’s worth of property in the city, if anywhere else, has no interest whatever other than the amount of salary he draws from its treasury in its welfare or prosperity, and it is very questionable if any of his associates are better qualified to engage in such an extensive enterprise; and your committee has come to the conclusion that Mr. Stone and his associates in the ‘New-York and Long Island Railroad Company’ are simply cat’s paws, chartered or incorporated to draw this municipal chestnut out of the fire for the use of more important and better-known individuals, who, if their identify appeared, would arouse a feeling of indignation at this new one of the many schemes they have inaugurated and established, by which they have enriched themselves at the expense of the city of New-York and its people.”

The vote was 16 to 9 in favor of the report. Alderman Carlin asked the Aldermen to reconsider, acknowledging that he did so to “kill the bill.” Under the rules, a matter once reconsidered and readopted cannot be reconsidered. The Aldermen again voted in favor of the report.

The *Times*, also on January 30, carried an editorial describing the report of the Committee on Docks as “an extraordinarily flippant and frivolous document.” If there were substantive grounds for rejecting the proposal, such as financial problems or lack of

expertise, the committee might have had a valid objection. "But resentment for slurs upon the honesty of past or present Aldermen is a very poor ground upon which to decide such a question." The editorial added:

If the committee really thinks that a tunnel connecting this city with Long Island would be an injury to its interests, that is reason enough for opposing it, but it is really too shallow to be credible in the case of anybody but a New-York Alderman. Evidence accumulates that the Board of Aldermen is really too stupid and incompetent a body to be intrusted with the decision of any question affecting the interests of the city. Such power should be lodged where there was some chance of its intelligent and honest exercise.

On January 31, the *Times* carried a letter from General Stone responding to the report by the Committee on Docks. He did not respond to the personal attack on him, but only to details in the report:

Only one branch of the Aldermanic report quoted this morning needs comment. The cost of the East River tunnel is estimated, by better authorities than the Committee on Docks, at \$5,000,000 instead of \$15,000,000; the amount "paid up" and expended for surveys, &c., is between \$5,000 and \$10,000 instead of "less than \$1,000", the present stockholders are not "irresponsible," but quite able to build the tunnel and the franchise cannot be transferred without being forfeited. These errors were corrected at the "hearing," but of course too late if, as stated in the board [sic], the report was already in type.

It is quite true that the capital of the company was temporarily fixed at \$100,000, or only double what the law required, but, as the event proves, it would have been folly to pay an organization tax of many thousands of dollars on a charter dependent for its validity upon the action of the Board of Aldermen. If their consent is ever granted the capital can be increased by a simple vote of the stockholders. And the company is by no means hopeless of consent; it took three months argument to get four votes in the last board and only three weeks to get nine in this; at the same rate of progress the next board will make short work of the opposition to an improvement commended by the commercial bodies, the press, and the people generally, and opposed only by the orators who represent, I hope inadequately, the intelligence of Thirty-eighth-street. Roy Stone

[ "Work of the Aldermen," January 3, 1889

"The Tunnel Under the City," January 24, 1889

"Talking About the Tunnel," January 25, 1889

"Tunnels and Bridges for New-York," January 28, 1889

"The Application Denied," January 30, 1889

Untitled editorial, January 30, 1889

"The East River Tunnel – Gen. Stone Corrects Some Mistakes in the Aldermanic Report," January 31, 1889]

## The Charge of Bribery

The charge of bribery would resurface in the spring of 1890 when the State Senate's Committee on Cities conducted its inquiry into municipal departments. As the *Times* put it in an article on April 8, 1890:

It was the Board of Aldermen that came in for the biggest share of the committee's attention yesterday. The poor old board came out of the day's entertainment with a very black eye. It was roundly abused, its total abolition was suggested, it was declared to be utterly useless, and one witness added to the general assault upon it by saying that, "the very name Aldermen is repugnant to an honest man."

Former Alderman Conkling had made the comment. He had served on the board in 1887 and 1888. Asked if he could describe the makeup of the board during that period, he said:

"Yes: one-half were in the liquor business, four were educated men, the remainder were ward politicians."

Conkling classified himself among the educated Aldermen.

He described how Aldermen Dowling had sought a bribe in exchange for his vote in support of an electric light company that wanted to run its motors on Fourth Avenue. Conkling was then asked if he could provide any other examples, including names:

Mr. Conkling then said: "Gen. Roy Stone, President of the New-York and East River Tunnel Company, told me that he had been improperly approached in the matter of the tunnel franchise."

"How was he approached?"

"He was called aside by an Alderman and told that money was a condition precedent to the passing of that franchise."

"Who was this Alderman?" asked [Senator J. Sloat] Fassett.

"Do you want his name?"

"We do."

"Alderman Dowling." (D. R. Dowling.)

Corporation Counsel William H. Clark tried to object that when Conkling had appeared before a grand jury investigating the alleged frauds, his testimony was not allowed, but Clark was overruled.

General Stone was one of the witnesses before the Senate committee on April 19, 1890, as described in the following day's *Times*:

Gen. Roy Stone, ex-President of the New-York and Long Island Railroad Company, said that he had been interested in an application made to the Aldermen in 1888 for the tunnel under the East River. The application was rejected.

“Has such an application been made to this board?” asked [Assistant Counsel A. R.] Boardman.

“Yes, but I have had no connection with the application before the present board.”

[Franklin] Bartlett [counsel to the current Board of Aldermen] objected and was again overruled. Mr. Stone said that the matter was still pending before the present Board of Aldermen. Mr. Boardman wanted to know whether the witness had any talks with Aldermen of the board in 1888 in which the matter of paying money for the franchise was spoken of. Mr. Stone said that one gentleman introduced himself to him as a member of the board, who said that it would be necessary for him to know who to “see” before the resolution was passed. “I did not continue the conversation. I knew what he meant. Later I was told that the resolution would not come out of the committee while we were pursuing the methods we were.”

“Who was the gentleman who introduced himself to you?” asked Mr. Fassett.

“I don’t think I should be asked that.”

“The committee does.”

“The matter is now pending before the Grand Jury, isn’t it?” asked Mr.

Boardman. Mr. Stone said that it was before the Grand Jury two years ago; he did not know whether it was before the Grand Jury now or not.

Senators McNaughton and Fassett both thought it was unjust to the other members of the Board of Aldermen of 1888 not to have the name or names come out. Mr. Stone said that the man who had spoken to him said that he had sixteen votes and that the bill could be passed. He did not mention the names of the sixteen men.

Senator Fassett questioned the witness at some length as to the meaning of the word “see” as used by the Alderman. Mr. Stone said that perhaps it was used in the parliamentary sense. Mr. Fassett did not believe it was. [Counsel to the Committee William M.] Ivins asked Gen. Stone if his inference that money was needed came from the use of the word “see” by the Alderman. Gen. Stone said that it was and that no money had been asked for. Mr. Ivins did not think that if this was so the committee had any further use for the witness. There was a deal of whispering between the lawyers and the committee, and Mr. Stone said that he did not wish to name the Alderman until he had been further advised. Finally Senator Fassett said that he would have to insist that the question should be answered. “It would seriously cripple this committee if it shrank from the point when it comes to such a thing as this,” said he.

After more backing and filling Gen. Stone said: “Well, it was Alderman Dowling, the Vice President of the board.”

“That’s as ex-Alderman Conkling, testified” said Mr. Fassett.

The Chairman’s queries then elicited the statement from Mr. Stone that Dowling had not asked for any money. He spoke of the methods that the company was pursuing, and Dowling made the statement to him that he wished it understood that he was not asking for money.”

“Do you think he was?” asked the Chairman.

“I’ll leave that for you to infer,” was the answer.

Mr. Bartlett then asked whether he knew of his own knowledge that any of the members of the present board were dishonest. Gen. Stone said that he had had no experience with them. When asked whether any of the members of the present board had asked for any money for the franchise, he said they had not. The tunnel question is now before the Aldermen’s Committee on Bridges and Tunnels. They have given three hearings on it.

This exchange concluded General Stone’s testimony.

[“Abolish the Aldermen,” April 8, 1890

“Fassett’s Probe at Work,” April 20, 1890]

### **Another Try for Approval**

As noted in the article summarizing General Stone’s testimony, he had stepped down as president of the company. He was replaced by James D. Leary, a shipbuilder and contractor. (He would be known in later years as the contractor who built the Harlem River Speedway for light-harness horsemen.) The *Times* did not explain why General Stone stepped down as president, although later articles reflected his continuing interest in the project—hence the Rambler’s continuing interest.

The Committee on Bridges and Tunnels decided to take the petition up again. (Despite The Rambler’s manipulation of the *Times*’ archive search engine, he was unable to figure out how this happened.) Nine months after receiving the petition, the committee had not issued a report on the proposal for action by the Aldermen. On December 3, 1890, the *Times* reported that Alderman Storm had offered a resolution on December 2 discharging the committee from further consideration so the petition could be considered by the Board of Aldermen. In response, Alderman Oakley created a sensation by claiming, “I have been approached and offered bribes if I would favor this scheme, and I have no doubt that other members of the board have had similar experiences.” According to the *Times*, he offered no details of the bribe and was not asked to explain his assertion:

Oakley, however, was not in the revelation business even if he had anything to reveal. He simply went on in a general way to say that no scheme had ever come before the board with more corruption behind it. He used the old argument that the tunnel was a scheme of Austin Corbin to build up Long Island at the expense of New-York. If some of the Aldermen could be found, he said, to change their views and cast their votes for it, that might be taken as an evidence of rottenness.

Regarding the allegation of bribery, the *Times* said:

After the first surprise of his announcement had worn off the Aldermen began to think that Oakley didn’t know what he was talking about. He has played the low comedy part in the Aldermanic show for so long that his words are not weighty.

Alderman John A. Dinkel stated that he was suspicious that the 9-month delay in committee was a demand for a bribe. Dinkel had taken office as an Alderman on July 2, 1890, following the death on June 28, 1890, of Alderman Louis Schlamp, and had taken Schlamp's place on the Committee on Bridges and Tunnels, which had taken no action on the petition since then. When Alderman Storm asserted that no Alderman could be bribed, Oakley called out, "Ask the Alderman if he has been retained by Col. Bliss, the attorney for the tunnel?" (This was a reference to Colonel George Bliss, a lawyer who was active in Republican politics in New York City and State, with considerable influence on legislation emerging from Albany.)

The *Times* article explained that the charge of bribery was not new to the tunnel project:

The application for the permit has been before three different boards. Two years ago, when Gen. Roy Stone was President of the company, charges were made that some of the members of the Committee on Bridges and Tunnels were willing to accept bribes. The Grand Jury investigated, and there were hints and innuendoes that reflected on the character of some of the Aldermen. No indictments were ever found. The Senate Committee on Cities also paid some attention to the matter, and before that body one of the witnesses testified that Gen. Stone had mentioned the name of certain Aldermen who had endeavored to get the company to bribe them.

The Aldermen voted to require the committee to provide some sort of report in time for the board's next meeting.

That meeting took place on December 9, 1890. The committee had met since the previous board meeting, but decided not to issue a report. Instead, the committee decided to ask the board to discharge it from further consideration of the company's petition. In response, Alderman Storm offered a resolution giving the board's consent to the company. Before the board could act, Alderman Oakley stated that the petition was not properly drawn and left the city without adequate protection. His remedy was a motion to commit the petition to the Committee on Railroads, but his motion was rejected.

Oakley then disputed the number of votes the measure would need to pass. When President Arnold answered that 14 votes were needed, Oakley claimed that a three-fourths majority was needed, but he was ruled out of order.

Finally, Storm's resolution was ready for a vote. The *Times* article on December 10 stated:

Alderman Storm made a long argument in favor of the tunnel. Alderman Clancy hinted at bribery, and wanted to know how so many of the Aldermen who had formerly opposed the tunnel now came to be in favor of it. When the voting was done it was found that 14 votes, just the requisite number, had been cast in favor of the franchise, while 11 votes had been cast in opposition.

The article contained additional details on the bribery charge:

After a fight that had its beginning three years ago, the Board of Aldermen decided yesterday by the closest kind of vote to grant the New-York and Long Island Railroad Company a franchise . . . . The company obtained the original right to build from the Legislature . . . . The history of the fight for this measure before the three Boards of Aldermen that have considered it involves much talk of bribery, and some ugly insinuations were made yesterday. In 1888 Alderman Conkling went before the Grand Jury and endeavored to get one or more Aldermen indicted for efforts to extort bribes for votes in favor of the measure . . . . Mr. Conkling's complaint in 1888 was chiefly against Alderman Daniel Dowling, but there was no evidence to support it.

As the article also noted, now that the Board of Aldermen had approved the franchise, "the only thing that remains to be done before the company will have a clear right to begin the work is for the Mayor to affix his signature to the resolution adopted yesterday.

On December 14, 1890, the *Times* carried a brief article indicating that General Stone had stopped by Mayor Grant's office to see if he had signed the resolution. "The Mayor did not discourage him." General Stone told the *Times* that all the preliminaries had been arranged except consents of property owners along the Long Island approach. The State had already conveyed a deed to the company for the underwater right-of-way. The article added that, "it is proposed to go fifty feet below the bed of the river for the excavation and to carry the tunnel across the city at the same level."

Although Mayor Grant was prepared to sign the resolution granting the franchise, he concluded that he could not. The *Times* reported on December 17 that Mayor Grant had returned the resolution to the Board of Aldermen because the wording was defective. The resolution stated that the company was to pay 3 percent of its gross receipts to the city "inclusive of all taxes and assessments," instead of "exclusive." Alderman Storm attributed the mistake to a clerical error. As a result, the resolution would be revised and put to another vote before the board.

The Board of Aldermen approved the corrected resolution and Mayor Grant approved it on December 31, 1890, the last day of operation before the new Board, elected in November, took office.

["Oakley Charges Bribery," December 3, 1890  
"A Tunnel Under the City," December 10, 1890  
"The East River Tunnel," December 14, 1890  
"Sent Back to the Aldermen," December 17, 1890]

### **Construction Underway at Last**

By January 25, 1891, the *Times* was reporting that a dozen surveyors and engineers were in Long Island City surveying the proposed line of the tunnel.

On October 21, 1891, the Board of Aldermen of Long Island City approved the right-of-way for the company's tunnel into the city and voted to give the company the franchise. The Aldermen added conditions to the approval, namely that the tunnel must come to the surface within the city limits and that the company was required to run passenger trains between the hours of 5 am and midnight. The Aldermen also called for bridges over Newtown Creek. According to the *Times* article the following day, this was the second time the board had considered the company's proposal:

The statement was officially made that the plans recently submitted had been changed substantially from those on which the Aldermen had acted adversely some time ago.

Henry B. Slaven, a company Director, told the *Times* that the board's action was the final hurdle. Construction would begin as soon as possible. "The charges made by some of the Long Island City officials that the company was composed simply of schemers who did not mean business, he said, was not true." He expected the tunnel to cost \$10 million and to be completed in about 3 years.

Before construction could begin, Austin Corbin announced a rival scheme (as noted earlier, Corbin was president of the Long Island Railroad Company). On December 10, 1891, the *Times* reported that he had incorporated under "the more or less self-explanatory title of the 'New-York and Queens County Tunnel Railroad Company.'" The *Times* summarized the proposal:

The road is to be three and a half miles in length "under the waters of the North and East Rivers, and to be operated by steam, electricity, or other motive power." The termini of the road are to be "some point at or near the boundary line of the States of New-York and New-Jersey in New-York City, and some point at or near the mouth of Newtown Creek, in Long Island City."

The reporter tried to secure further information from officials of the company, most of whom comprised "the 'dummy' Board of Directors usual in schemes of this sort." But the reporter did locate General Stone:

Gen. Roy Stone, who is connected with the two tunnel schemes known as the New-York and Long Island Railroad Company and the New-York and New-Jersey Terminal Railroad Company, examined the route of Mr. Corbin's tunnel, and said that it was evidently intended as a strike against the New-York and Long Island Railroad Company, to offset the cost of enjoying the advantages of the latter scheme. The New-York and Long Island Railroad Company is a bona fide scheme, backed by large capital, to build a tunnel under the East River from a point near the Queens County Courthouse, in Long Island City, to and under Forty-second Street to Eleventh Avenue, in New-York, with connections with the

Grand Central Station system of railroads. The plan of the scheme is feasible, and has been fully ventilated and very generally approved. Consents have already been obtained, and there is an abundance of capital to perform the necessary work.

The opinion of Gen. Stone was shared by others familiar with the various tunnel projects.

In April 1892, the New-York and Long Island Railroad Company began construction of its East River Tunnel. It had hired the Inter-Island Construction Company as the construction contractor. Niven, who was listed as the secretary of the New-York and Long Island Railroad Company, was president of Inter-Island Construction Company.

By December 1892, the company had drilled the shaft in Long Island City to a depth of 85 feet and had begun tunneling horizontally toward the East River. However, on December 28, 1892, an explosion that “shook Long Island City from end to end” brought construction to a halt, killing five and injuring many others. The *Times* described the morning incident on December 29:

The explosion was caused by Nicolo Loadano, the Italian who lost his life, thawing out dynamite cartridges in a stream box erected for the purpose twenty feet away from the mouth of the tunnel shaft . . . . A little before 8 o'clock the Italian laborer brought two boxes of dynamite cartridges from the storehouse on the meadows, on the outskirts of the city. It was badly frozen, so he placed the two boxes, which aggregated nearly a hundred pounds in weight, in the stream box to thaw out the explosive. Three minutes after he left the cartridges the explosion occurred . . . .

The scenes following the explosion were indescribable. From every door in the immediate vicinity issued men, women, and children with cut and bleeding faces. Before the reverberations of the explosion had died away it was found that the row of flats [facing Jackson Avenue] was on fire. Part of the rear walls of 25 and 27 had been blown in and those two houses were the first to catch fire. The entire Fire Department and police force of the city were summoned.

They were promptly at work, assisted by hundreds of volunteers, in rescuing the wounded and helping out the women residents, who were prostrated with fright. Many of them had not yet arisen from bed.

Loadano was the only worker killed. Of the 14 men at work on the shaft, only the foreman was injured. All the other deaths and injuries were suffered by residents of Long Island City.

Work on the tunnel was halted while officials assessed the damage and the coroner conducted an inquiry into the explosion. On December 30, the *Times* reported that property damage was estimated to total \$100,000. An insurance company that

specialized in insuring plate glass was identified as one of the biggest losers in the explosion, with losses estimated to total \$15,000.

At the inquest on January 12, 1893, the foreman, Peter McAltee, testified that 64 packages of dynamite was being thawed out in the stream chest at the time of the explosion. He could not explain how the explosion had occurred.

On February 3, 1893, the *Times* reported that the inquest into the cause of the explosion came to an end the day before:

In its verdict, the jury stated it was unable to designate any cause for the explosion, and attributed it to “unforeseen circumstances.”

Work has been abandoned at the tunnel since the explosion. This week a gang of laborers began taking down the machinery and carting it away. The mouth of the tunnel was floored over and the pump taken out.

The ninety-foot shaft is now half filled with water, and persons who were damaged by the explosion are beginning to fear that the project has been abandoned and that no way will be left for them to recover against the company.

The Inter-Island Construction Company promised to resume work as soon as a compressed-air plant was put in, but regardless of the sincerity of the assertion, the delay would be prolonged. The Panic of 1893, the worst economic crisis the country had ever faced, made fund raising difficult until recovery began in 1896. (The Panic had been triggered by the collapse of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad in February 1893, bursting a credit bubble in May. Professor H. W. Brands, in his book about the 1890's, described the impact:

Consumers stopped purchasing, retailers canceled orders, factories shut down, workers drew pink slips, and commodity prices plunged. Iron and steel business was flattened overnight. Big, well-financed corporations retrenched and lived off reserves; smaller firms dissolved. Credit contracted with a suffocating sound. The best bonds went begging; unproven ventures . . . drew derisive laughs from investors fortunate enough to be still liquid. [Brands, H. W., *The Reckless Decade: America in the 1890s*, St. Martin's Press, 1995, p. 63]

A year later, on May 2, 1894, the *Times* reported that Niven was in England talking with a syndicate of English capitalists who were thinking of subscribing \$8 million for the tunnel. The article added:

The [Inter-Island] company met with considerable difficulty in settling claims for damages resulting from the explosion, and there are many persons in this city [Long Island City] to-day who say that they never received anything but promises of indemnity for their losses. Several of those who were seriously injured have, it is said, secured large judgments against the corporation. There will be general

rejoicing here if a portion of the reported \$8,000,000 subscribed in England is devoted to the settlement of existing claims.

The article also pointed out that the project had been proposed by the New-York and Long Island Railroad Company, but it was “at present said to be controlled by the Inter-Island Construction Company, with offices at 45 Broadway, New-York.”

Construction had still not resumed by 1899 when the *Times* reported on March 8 that construction might soon begin. Nevin was again in England trying to raise the capital for reorganization of the New-York and Long Island Railroad Company. The article explained:

About three years ago steps were taken to raise money to resume the work on the tunnel, but a short time later William Steinway, the leader of the movement, died, and again the carrying out of the plan was postponed. Mr. Steinway’s heirs are not actively interested in the work of reviving the undertaking. It is estimated that it will take about five years to build the tunnel.

Steinway, whose piano firm Steinway and Sons, was world famous, had “responded to the second call for capital in July 1891 and soon became the railroad’s largest stock holder.” [Hood, p. 164] (He was first identified in the *Times* as a director following the company’s annual meeting on October 21, 1891.) In addition to his business ventures, Steinway was president of the Rapid-Transit Commission formed under the State’s Rapid Transit Act of 1891 (approved January 31, 1891, by Governor David B. Hill) and a strong advocate for construction of the subway. He also owned real estate in Long Island City as well as the Hunter’s Point Railroad, a horse car transit line.

According to David Rogoff, writing in *Electric Railroad #29* (Electric Railroaders’ Association, April 1960):

By obtaining control of the tunnel company, it would increase the value of his properties. It was his plan to operate the tunnels by electricity which had recently been harnessed for electric traction motors. Stations were to be scattered along the route for both passenger and freight service. Upon assuming control he appointed Henry B. Hammond, a prominent railroad official and lawyer, President with himself as Vice-President. Pomeroy P. Dickinson, who had built the Hudson River Railroad bridge at Poughkeepsie became Chief Engineer and Malcom Niven, Secretary.

The contract for the construction was awarded to Myles Tierney a contractor who had built the Washington Bridge over the Harlem River at 180<sup>th</sup> Street. He in turn gave the contract to the Inter-Island Construction Co. which he founded on Jan. 6, 1891 in association with Niven.

Steinway died in November 1896 before financing could be arranged.

Earlier that same year, on June 4, 1896, Austin Corbin had died when he was thrown from his carriage in Newport, New Hampshire. The *Times* reported the death of the Long Island booster the following day:

The accident took place at 3 o'clock this afternoon, when the party started from Mr. Corbin's country house on a fishing trip. They rode in an open carriage drawn by a pair of horses which the coachman, [John] Stokes, was driving

Just as they were moving out of the yard, the horses, which were being driven without blinders for the first time, shied, and all the occupants were thrown down an embankment against a stone wall.

Corbin and Stokes died from their injuries.

[“The Tunnel to Long Island City,” January 25, 1891  
“To Tunnel the East River,” October 22, 1891  
“Now for Another Tunnel,” December 10, 1891  
“Five Killed by Dynamite,” December 29, 1892  
“Mr. Gleason on Dynamite,” January 13, 1893  
“Due to ‘Unforeseen Circumstances,’” February 3, 1893  
“Millions for East River Tunnel,” May 2, 1894  
“Austin Corbin Dead,” June 5, 1896  
“East River Tunnel Plans,” March 8, 1899]

### **The Steinway Tunnels**

Although Roy Stone had moved on to other endeavors in 1893, the Rambler will continue the narrative of the tunnels to demonstrate that the General's labors were not in vain, even if they did not benefit him.

August Belmont, Jr., a wealthy banker, took an interest in the tunnel between Long Island and New York City in 1902. According to Rogoff:

Control of the financially shaky New York & Queens County and its sister company the New York & Long Island Railroad passed from Steinway's successors, along with the franchises to Belmont, for the sum of about \$80,000. Although Steinway owned both companies, they were always kept as separate corporate entities.

The revived tunnel program became known as the “Belmont Tunnels” although Belmont preferred to have them known as the “Steinway Tunnels.”

Construction of the Steinway Tunnels resumed in 1905 using a cylindrical tunneling shield. William Barclay Parsons had used the innovative technique, which had been patented in England in 1869, as chief engineer of the Rapid Transit Commission. In “A Short History of Shield Tunneling,” Jerome B. O'Carroll stated:

Parsons joined forces again with August Belmont, with whom he had worked previously on the Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) to construct the Steinway Tunnel in 1907. It was on the Steinway (now known as the Queensboro Tunnel) that the use of the hydraulic shield was developed further.

The hydraulic shield, as it was developed during the construction of the Steinway Tunnels, offered ground support and protection against flooding by the inclusion of a solid bulkhead that allowed the excavation of the tunnel to be carried out in compressed air. The incidence of flooding and face collapses was reduced considerably but, unfortunately, the fatality rate did not decrease because workers spent long periods of time in compressed air without undergoing proper decompression procedures. [O'Carroll, Jerome B., *A Guide to Planning, Constructing and Supervising Earth Pressure Balance TBM Tunneling*, William Barclay Parsons Fellowship, Parsons Brnckerhoff Monograph 18, April 2005.)

The north tube was completed in 1907, with a symbolic trip marking the end. Clifton Hood described it:

On September 24, 1907, streetcar number 601 made the first official trip through the tunnel, carrying August Belmont and T.P. Shouts of the Interborough, Michael J. Degnon of Degnon Construction Company, several Public Service commissioners, and other dignitaries. The streetcar went from Jackson Avenue station in Long Island City to Grand Central in less than four minutes, a dramatic improvement over the thirty-five or forty minutes needed to make the same journey via ferry and trolley. [Hood, p. 168]

New York City had taken several legal actions against the company, including a challenge to the franchise granted to the company in December 1890. The city claimed the franchise, which had been extended several times, had expired. Rogoff noted that the city also objected to the revenue it would receive, pegged at 3 percent of gross earnings, as agreed to in 1888, and the fact that the privately owned company was “under the relatively weak control of the Public Service Commission, a state agency, as to fares and service.”

Although the company won in court, the court also ruled that the company did not have permits to dig under the river docks and that the route had been altered since the franchise was granted.

Belmont operated cars in the tunnels for curious visitors but without a franchise to operate for revenue, and the status of the company in limbo, he offered the tunnels to the city. While the city and the Public Service Commission fought over the offer, Belmont sealed the tunnels until the issue was resolved when he sold the tunnels to New York City on April 3, 1915, with the IRT assuming responsibility for their completion and operation.

Hood summarized the issues that had delayed the opening:

[After the] ceremonial run through the tubes in September 1907, its formal opening was delayed by a dispute between the government regulators and the Interborough Rapid Transit Company over the validity of the IRT's franchise. The Interborough had built the tunnel under the terms of the New York and Long Island's old franchise [i.e., the one General Stone had worked so hard to secure – The Rambler] issued during the laissez-faire period of the late nineteenth century, this franchise granted the private corporation perpetual control of a public right-of-way, allowed it near complete freedom from government supervision, and imposed modest fees on it. Such generous grants of power to a private business were not uncommon during the 1890s, but the construction of the Steinway tunnel took so long that the political situation changed by the time it was completed. The Steinway tunnel thus became entangled in the general conflict about government regulation of business that was a major concern of the progressive era. It also became caught in the Interborough Rapid Transit Company's battles with the Public Service Commission over the monopoly of rapid transit in Manhattan and its refusal to build new subways; until these critical issues were settled, the PSC refused to sanction the Steinway tunnel's opening. Only when the IRT and the PSC resolved their larger differences with the signing of the dual contracts in March 1913, was the Steinway tunnel released from limbo. Under the terms of Contract No. 3, the IRT agreed to sell the Steinway tunnel to the City of New York for \$3 million and operate it as part of its Queensboro subway route.

Originally equipped for electric streetcars, the tunnel was then reconstructed to handle the IRT's subway trains. The tunnel finally opened on June 22, 1915, twenty-three years after construction had started and eight years after trolley number 601 had gone through it. [Hood, p. 172]

Opening ceremonies for the Queensboro Subway, formerly called the Steinway Tunnel, took place on June 22, 1915. The *Times* described the festivities on June 23:

An unofficial train carrying the Interborough officers, members of the Public Service Commission and guests left the Manhattan terminal at 10:45 o'clock, and arrived two minutes and fifty-five seconds later at Jackson Avenue station . . . . The party was met at Jackson Avenue by officials of Queens Borough, officers of civic and business organizations and a large delegation of citizens. When the ceremonies were begun, the stairway of the westbound tunnel was used . . . by the speakers, while the platform was packed with those who went to hear the addresses.

August Belmont . . . predicted the rapid development of Long Island City and the rest of Queens Borough. That the Queensboro Subway had not been completed sooner was due not to lack of zeal on the part of the officials of the enterprise, and public officials, but to lack of wisdom.

Borough President Connolly said the residents of Queens well knew what the opening of the tunnel would mean for them, and they rejoiced.

Mr. Ryan and Mr. Adkes, representing the Chamber of Commerce, forecast the development of Queens that would follow increased transit facilities. Both expressed the gratification and thanks of the people to the Public Service Commission, the Mayor, the Board of Estimates, and the Interborough Rapid Transit Company.

Following the addresses at the Jackson Avenue terminal the officials, Commissioners, borough representatives and guests started at 12 o'clock on the first official train to make the run from Long Island City to Manhattan.

Two other trains followed the first train, all to be greeted by large crowds waiting in the New York City stations.

(The *Times* noted that the rapid speed of the unofficial train, under 3 minutes, was possible because it was the only train operating on the line. "Ordinarily trains will be operated with a headway of between four and five minutes.")

The Rambler will speculate that no one, on this important occasion, thought of, much less mentioned, General Stone. He had fought hard for the tunnel, and had helped steer it through the difficult early stages to success in securing the franchise on the last day of 1890. Those early battles had been followed by so many later battles – a destructive explosion, a search for money during a devastating Panic, rival plans, political battles, court fights, and a transfer from private to public hands – that the Rambler formally forgives those officials who on June 13, 1915, neglected to recall General Stone's contributions.

Today, the Steinway Tunnel carries two tracks of the 7 train of the New York City Subway. The Rambler invites readers in the New York area and members of the nonexistent General Roy Stone Fan Club to take the train some day and think about General Stone.

[“Queensboro Tunnel Officially Opened,” June 23, 1915]

### **Terminal Railroad Company**

The New-York and Long Island Railroad Company was not General Stone's only interest in tunnels. He also was involved in the New-York and New-Jersey Terminal Railroad Company. The *Times* reported on February 3, 1891, that the company had filed articles of incorporation with the Secretary of State in Albany the day before:

The capital of the company is \$100,000. The road is to run from New York City to a point in the township of Kearney, N.J. In this city the road will begin at the easterly end of Fourteenth Street and run in a tunnel to the westerly end, where it

will go under the waters of the Hudson River to Hoboken. It will run in tunnels under Hoboken and Jersey City to a point near the Hackensack River, thence under the last-mentioned river to the junction of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western and the Pennsylvania Railroad in the town of Kearney, N.J.

The road will have a branch beginning at the intersection of Hudson and Fourteenth Streets in this city and running in tunnels under Hudson Street to its intersection with Chambers Street, thence south to the intersection of Wall and Broad Streets, and thence underground beneath Broad Street to the East River.

The company took an important step forward when the Land Commissioners in Albany approved the application for a grant of land under the Hudson River at 14<sup>th</sup> Street. On May 29, 1892, the *Times* wrote about the approval in an article that featured General Stone's views. The article stated that after the company secured further tunnel rights from the Sinking Fund Commissioners ("and there is said to be no doubt that this also will be granted"), the next step would be to apply to the New York City Board of Aldermen for approval. The company would also need consents from property owners in the city, but work in this area "is already well advanced." The company was confident of its progress:

[At] the office of the company full confidence is expressed that within a very short time all of the necessary franchises will have been obtained. It will then be necessary to obtain similar franchises in New-Jersey. In that State the process is one of condemnation and, so far as is now seen, nothing can stand in the way of such proceeding.

After describing the proposal in detail, the *Times* continued:

Gen. Roy Stone, the engineer in charge, says that the most careful calculations have been made, both as to the physical feasibility of the scheme and as to its financial prospects. He is perfectly confident that the tunnel can be constructed by the usual methods in the rock sections, and in the earth by the Greathead system, or by the Jennings & Stannard plan lately used by the London and Northern Railway.

As to feasibility, General Stone continued:

Gen. Stone says that if the feasibility of tunnel construction shall be admitted there can be no possible doubt of providing fast and comfortable travel by electricity. Electric companies have undertaken to provide motors that will carry trains of 500 tons at the rate of thirty miles per hour through the tunnel of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in the City of Baltimore. The construction will be undertaken in the Baltimore Tunnel under this guarantee and Gen. Stone has no doubt that it will be entirely successful, the underground conditions for the use of electricity being more favorable than are the conditions in the open air . . . .

Conferences and correspondence have been had by the terminal company with the engineers and other officers of the great railroad companies that have termini in New-Jersey. Gen. Stone says that they seem to be much interested in the project, and he has letters from some of them showing this beyond doubt to be the case . .

Gen. Stone has had occasion to write one letter comparing the location of the proposed road with the proposed Corbin tunnel as to the possibilities of New-York passenger business. In this letter he says that Union Square is the best distributing and gathering point for travel in the city by carriage and by foot. Trains in the proposed tunnel will have a double use for the elevated and other north and south railroads by striking them in the middle . . . .

Gen. Stone is encouraged to believe that the tunnel system, when understood, will be regarded as much more feasible than a system of bridges. One reason for this belief is that the tunnel system affords ample terminal space, which cannot be obtained in the construction of bridges. Another reason, and one quite as potent, in his opinion, as that of terminal space, is that the lowest estimate he has seen for the construction of a bridge adequate for large railroad travel is about \$50,000,000, while the cost of a tunnel of equal or greater capacity would not be much more than one-third of that sum.

An approximate cost of the undertaking estimates \$2,000,000 per mile for the three and five-eighths miles of four-track line, including intermediate stations, or \$7,250,000 for the main tunnel. He estimates that the two-track tunnel for business down town will cost \$1,000,000 per mile for two and half miles, or \$2,000,000. The cost of the passenger station at Union Square is put at \$900,000, while the cost of a tunnel of equal or greater capacity would not be much more than one-third of that sum.

The Board of Aldermen's Committee on Bridges and Tunnels considered the proposed on June 19, 1893. The *Times* mentioned the committee's action the next day without describing the discussion. It summarized what the company was seeking, namely permission to tunnel under the city to build the terminal system for trunk lines:

The plan is to operate the trains by electric power and to have four tracks from the Hackensack meadows to Union Square, under which it is proposed to have a union station. Stations for way traffic will be at Sixth Avenue and Ninth Avenue on the main tunnel, and at Houston, Chambers, and Wall Streets on the downtown branches. There will be sidings under the Post Office for the delivery of mails. The tunnel will be 100 feet below the surface of the streets and the stations will be reached by elevators. The project calls for six miles of tunnel in this city and the station at Union Square is projected as a vast affair, with greater capacity than the Grand Central Station and with sixty miles of track. The estimated cost of the scheme is \$16,500,000.

The Rambler has been unable to determine if General Stone played a role after he moved on to the Good Roads Movement. It is not likely.

The company's proposal was only one of several proposals for linking New York City with New Jersey. On September 27, 1896, the *Times* reported that the company had merged with two other companies, the Central Tunnel Railroad Company (formed 1881) and the Terminal Underground Railroad Company (1883), to protect their rights:

The combination just formed claims to have rights in the route on which the commission is now working, and it is for the purpose of conserving these interests that the companies agreed to consolidate under the name of the Underground Railroad Company of the City of New-York. A certificate of their agreement has been sent to the Secretary of State.

Cornelius V. Slidell of 146 Broadway was the President of each of the old companies, and is President also of the consolidation. He explained yesterday that the intention of the original corporations was to have a grand trunk line terminal in New-York, which was to approach the city from New-Jersey by a tunnel under the Hudson River, reaching to City Hall Park.

Although the companies had secured some rights, "none did any actual constructive work," the *Times* explained. Slidell said, "Everything was done, however, that was demanded by law. For this reason we now claim vested rights in the present route, and we proposal to maintain them." The consolidated company filed a certificate with the New York Secretary of State on October 2, 1896.

Given the difficulty of tracing whether the consolidated company led to construction of a tunnel between New York City and New Jersey, the Rambler will move on, as General Stone did, to the Good Roads Movement.

["Underground Terminals," February 3, 1891  
"A Big Tunnel project," May 29, 1892  
"Underground Rapid Transit," June 20, 1893  
"Claim Rapid Transit Route," September 27, 1896  
"Tunnel Consolidation," October 3, 1896]

### **To Improve the Roads**

The League of American Wheelmen (LAW) was the leading organization behind the Good Roads Movement. On September 11, 1892, the *Times* reported on "What Bicyclists Have Done." The article began:

It does not seem possible, even in these days of rapid growth and development of popular movements, that the subject of roads and the improvement of the same could be so widely disseminated by an athletic organization as has been the case with the League of American Wheelmen. Since the inception of the movement its

growth has been marked, and the distinct credit that will come to the organization was forcibly expressed by the President of the United States, when he turned to Col. Charles C. Burdett, the President of the Wheelmen's league, upon the occasion of the visit of the cyclers at Washington in July, and said: "One thing: if wheelmen secure us the good roads for which they are so zealously working, your body deserves a medal in recognition of its philanthropy."

President Benjamin Harrison's comment came on July 19 while he and Burdett stood on the balcony of the White House watching the annual parade of LAW bicyclists. The *Times* had reported on the parade on July 20:

In point of numbers, the parade broke all previous records, being the largest turnout of cyclists ever seen in this country. Nearly every State in the Union was represented. Order and discipline were not well maintained in some divisions, and discreditable straggling and disorder resulted.

(The article also quoted a letter President Harrison had written to Colonel Albert Pope, the pioneering Boston bicycle manufacturer and prominent good roads advocate. The President had said:

A want of understanding and system has resulted in a nearly useless expenditure of enough labor and money to have furnished the settled portions of our country with good substantial roads.)

One of the LAW's promotional ideas was to include a good roads exhibit at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The exposition was originally to take place in 1892, the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Christopher Columbus' first trip to North America. Problems delayed the fair until 1893, but backers scheduled a dedication ceremony on October 21, 1892.

General Stone, in cooperation with the LAW, had drafted a National Highway Commission bill. It called for a commission to formulate plans for a national school of roads and bridges, gather information on progressive State highway laws and foreign practices, and prepare a road exhibit for the exposition. The commission would also submit a report containing recommendations for a permanent commission. Representative Philip S. Post (R-II.) had introduced General Stone's bill in the U.S. House of Representatives on June 29, 1892, while Senator Charles F. Manderson (R-Ne.) had introduced the bill in the Senate on July 5. (Post was born in Orange County, New York, in 1933 and graduated in 1855 from Union College in Schenectady, a year ahead of General Stone. The Rambler suspects they knew each other in college, but cannot confirm it. Their cooperation on General Stone's bill may have been a coincidence of shared interests.)

On July 20, the day after the bicycle parade, Burdett, General Stone, and others appeared before the House Committee on Revision of Laws to urge passage of the National Highway Commission bill "and later paid their respects to President Harrison." They

also appeared before the Senate's Interstate Commerce Committee. As the *Times*' article on September 11 explained, "They, with Gen. Stone, the framer of the bill, offered such convincing arguments that the Senate Committee favorably reported it to the House [meaning the Senate] on July 23." The full Senate approved the bill on July 27, 1892.

On October 12, 1892, the *Times* reported:

The latest agitation to take shape is that of the National League for Good Roads. This proposed organization will hold a meeting at Chicago on October 19, and its main promoter is Gen. Roy Stone.

Invitations were to be extended to "State and local road-improvement societies, the League of American Wheelmen, Boards of Trades [sic], Chambers of Commerce, and patrons of Husbandry, and to all the farmers' associations, as well as to a number of private individuals who are interested in this movement." The LAW's leadership was committed to participating in the event, in part to interest fair organizers in the good roads exhibit.

The New York delegation to the convention left the city on October 17, 1892. The *Times* reported the following day that the delegation included representatives of the chamber of commerce, board of trade, and the New-York State Road Improvement Association.

General Stone had gone ahead:

Gen. Roy Stone, who has done as much as any other man to push the movement, has gone to Chicago for advance work in relation to the meeting. He carries with him signatures that he has obtained by correspondence and otherwise from every State, and containing the name of some person prominent in every department of business and industry.

The *Times* reported that insurance companies were especially interested in the cause:

The expenses of handling country business grew largely out of the bad roads. When a country house catches fire the difficulty of reaching it is responsible for a good share of the loss sustained by underwriters. The insurance companies believe that the Government ought to spend largely out of its surplus for the improvement of the roads. They think that convict labor might very well be employed in this way wherever it may not be used as a rival of honest labor in mines and manufactories. Few men voluntarily go to work at breaking stone on the road when they can possibly make a living any other way. It is therefore urged that if convicts were put at this work there would be no objection on the part of laboring men, while the prospect of working on the road would operate as a positive deterrent of crime.

The *Times* also noted the interest of farmers, who would "be able to get their produce to market much more readily over good roads than over bad ones, and it is believed that

they will see that this movement must contribute to their material prosperity.” The article concluded:

Those who are the most prominent in the movement feel that it has gained such widespread favor that no argument is needed to convince the people of its importance. Acting upon this supposition they believe that it will be comparatively easy to prevail upon Congress to take up the matter and make it one of national concern.

As described in “Portrait of a General,” the Chicago convention resulted in organization of the National League for Good Roads. The new organization’s executive committee met on November 3, 1892, at its temporary headquarters in General Stone’s office at 45 Broadway. (The Rambler reminds drowsy readers that this address was last seen in this biography as the office of the New-York and Long Island Railroad Company/Inter-Island Construction Company. Wake up, readers – take a walk, eat some chocolate, drink coffee, whatever it takes. You’re only one-third of the way through this epic!)

A *Times* article the following day about the meeting explained that the purpose “was to take steps to further the work of the league and extend its usefulness.” Actions included:

The first step was to appoint committees from the different cities which will nominate finance committees for these cities . . . . Similar committees were appointed from the wagon and bicycle manufacturers, both of whom are interested in this matter . . . .

The committee appointed representatives to participate in the Grange’s national convention on November 16 and the Southern Inter-State Road Congress that same day. Letters received from Governors were read; the league had written to all Governors seeking their cooperation. A circular would be prepared explaining how to establish local leagues, while members would all receive a pamphlet containing the proceedings of the Chicago convention.

The *Times* article concluded by summarizing General Stone’s views after the meeting:

Gen. Stone said yesterday that the organization had met with the heartiest reception all over the country, especially from grangers and bicyclists. Gen. Stone said further that the object of the organization was to awaken public interest in the improvement of public roads, determine the best method of building and maintaining them, secure legislation, State or national, that may be necessary for their establishment and support, and to conduct and foster such publications as may serve these purposes.

On November 8, 1892, the people of the United States voted in the presidential election pitting the Republican candidate, President Harrison, against the Democratic nominee, former President Grover Cleveland. Cleveland, who had served one term before being defeated by Harrison in 1888, won with an electoral advantage of 277 to 145. In advance

of the presidential and congressional elections, the 52<sup>nd</sup> Congress had completed its first session on August 5, 1892. The second session would run from December 5, 1892, to inauguration day on March 3, 1893.

On November 12, the *Times* reported that the work of the league “is fast progressing.” Letters and other documents had been sent to places around the country, with positive responses received in many cases. Governors had agreed to serve as vice-presidents of the league, while Senator Manderson had agreed to be temporary president, as voted at the Chicago convention. Many citizens had taken up the cause after reading about it in the *Times*.

General Stone was attempting to extend the league’s reach:

In presenting this matter to the railroads of the country, Gen. Stone was yesterday preparing and sending out a circular letter to all the railroad Presidents in the country, telling them what the league intends doing and asking them to give their assistance in the propagation of the league through the dissemination of documents and the active good offices of their different local agents . . . . When this matter was first presented to the railroads in the West the officials said that they knew well enough without any one telling them that good roads helped their businesses and that bad roads were a detriment to it. These gentlemen further said that they for years had done all that they could do to improve the roads in the territory through which their lines ran, and would continue to do so. They further said that the ideas of the league were somewhat indefinite, and they did not know how they could help in this work. These circulars which are being sent out to the railroads will give the railroad officials some definite information, and then it is expected that the league will have as its ally the railroads of the country.

The league also was reaching out to the National Horse Show Association, with a meeting scheduled in Box 19 at Madison Square Garden on November 14. General Stone would be there, as would two members of the executive committee who also were directors of the horse show association. The league had sent out hundreds of letters to “different classes of citizens” while reaching out to the general public with brochures summarizing the league’s work.

The November 14 meeting was noted in the *Times* the following day. The brief account concluded:

The members of the league state positively that they are not identified in any manner with Col. Pope’s movement to establish a road department at Washington. Both Mr. [Chauncey R.] Ripley and Gen. King said this would bring a question of politics into the organization, which is contrary to its scope and purpose.

(“Gen. King” may be General Stone.)

[“What Bicyclists Have Done,” September 11, 1892

“Cyclists at Their Best,” July 20, 1892  
“To Improve the Roads,” October 12, 1892  
“For Good Country Roads,” October 18, 1892  
“In the Cause of Good Road” (sic), November 4, 1892  
“Good Roads Much Needed,” November 12, 1892  
“Seeking Improved Roads,” November 15, 1892]

### **A Rift in the Movement**

When the proceedings of the National League’s Chicago meeting were published, the *Times* reported on the rift between the league and Colonel Pope. The article on November 20, 1892, listed all league officers and quoted General Stone on one substitution:

Mr. Wetmore was chosen to fill the place on the Executive Committee made vacant by the resignation of Col. Albert A. Pope of Boston. Col. Pope’s recent public advocacy of the establishment of a National Department of Road Building, with a Cabinet officer at its head, was a complete surprise to the league. He had never made any such suggestion at our meetings. He was first spoken of, I think, about Nov. 3, just after our road convention in Chicago, and many of us disagreed with his views very decidedly.

The present purposes of the National League are simply to organize the road-reform establishment of the country in such a manner that its influence will be felt in the direction toward which it may ultimately be thrown, whether in favor of State, county or national action, and we accordingly avoid for the present any commitment to special plans, in order that we may not repel any friend of good roads.

We quite agree with the utterances of many newspapers in deprecating Col. Pope’s action in favor of a National Road Department. We desire to keep the league entirely free from politics just as long as possible, and this scheme would be a direct plunge into politics. We have no sympathy at all with the department idea.

Laying that incident aside, I am glad to say the league is receiving encouragement from all parts of the country. They had a Southern Road Congress in Memphis within a day or two—it met Nov. 16—at which there were nearly 400 delegates. Local leagues are organizing continually, and we meet everywhere with most cordial co-operation.

On Nov. 10 I sent out letters to the managers of a large number of railroads throughout the South and the West, asking them for their ideas upon the subject of co-operative work in good road building, inviting them to subscribe money for the work, and requesting, if they were willing, that their station agents should distribute our blank forms for the organization of local leagues. So far, I have not

had a single reply disapproving of the work. In some cases they send money subscriptions, and in all cases they express cordial consent to the plan of distributing the league's papers and forms by means of their station agents.

After listing some of the responsive railroads, General Stone explained the plan for another meeting of league officials, probably in Philadelphia on December 1:

We want to hold this meeting before the assembling of Congress, and consider the further work of the league. We are in favor of incorporation under a national charter, and we want to keep hammering away until we get our Senate bill through the House. That bill, which was passed by the Senate last July, was sidetracked in the House of Representatives as "an invasion of State rights." It was a perfectly harmless bill. It only provided for the creation of a National Highway Commission, whose work was to be simply that of inquiry, with a view to having an exhibit of the various processes of roadmaking prepared for the World's Fair. Such an exhibit would be an object lesson to everybody who saw it, and would help wonderfully in teaching the people that it is unnecessary to pay large sums of money annually for the sake of having the most awful country roads that ever were seen.

The only way to promote the work is to enlist general interest in the work and give suggestions for concerted and systematic action which will amount to something. People want better roads and they can have them just as soon as they master the idea of organized work, which starts by forming a Good Roads League in every school district. I believe that in every such small area at least a dozen persons can be found who will agree to vote for the support of this work. A million votes in all is only four to a school district. The work only needs to be pushed with system and energy to make this country worth a great deal more money than it is now, besides relieving us from the national disgrace of maintaining sloughs instead of roads.

We are in this work to stay, and we mean to keep at work until we get a little headway, and then I am sure the work will go ahead of its own weight.

The *Times* recapped the National League's good work in an article on December 4, 1892. After pointing out that the movement "has become of national importance, and local branches of the league are springing up everywhere," the article stated:

A large share of the initial success of the movement has no doubt been due to the positive stand taken by the promoters against that other scheme of establishing a Government Department of Roads. The people do not want politics mixed with their roads, and the strong declaration of the National League for Good Roads against political roads and roadmaking will have the effect of attracting a very large number of persons who would otherwise hold aloof . . . .

Senator Manderson of Nebraska is among those who have written to Gen. Stone commending the National League for refusing to go into the Government roads department scheme. Senator Manderson says that the time has not yet come for a National Commissioner of Highways.

A summary of the National League's work on December 18 reported that \$1,300 in subscriptions had been received, including \$100 from General Stone and \$100 from Colonel Pope. The league was still occupying General Stone's office in Aldrich Court at 45 Broadway.

Now that the work and aims of the league "are becoming known throughout the country," the *Times* reported on December 24, "farmers and all classes of citizens are taking kindly to it, and a number of local leagues are being formed." One had been organized in Maryland by D. C. Wharton Smith, president of the Deer Creek Farmers Club of Harford County. Smith and B. Howard Haman were in town that week from Maryland to see General Stone on business connected with the league. In eastern New York, the City of Hudson League had been formed, while doctors were organizing in the western part of the State. The article also quoted Judge Noah P. Loveridge of Michigan:

The country has now railroads enough. It needs fine wagon roads to traverse the sections between the railroads.

The league's vice president for North Carolina, Richmond Pearson, was organizing the State's branch. He was trying to convince George W. Vanderbilt II to serve as a Director:

Mr. Pearson says the people are ripe for something to start them upon the subject of good roads. Mr. Vanderbilt has laid out some most excellent roads near and on his property near Asheville, and farmers from 100 miles away drive to see these roads and to watch their construction.

(Vanderbilt was an heir to the family fortune, begun by "Commodore" Cornelius Vanderbilt, from steamboats, railroads, and other enterprises. With no business responsibilities, George Vanderbilt II had bought land near Asheville in 1889, eventually totaling 228 square miles, and began building an estate known as Biltmore. He employed Frederick Law Olmstead, widely considered the father of American landscape architecture, to landscape the estate. Gifford Pinchot managed the forests on the vast estate; he would become the first Chief of the U.S. Forest Service (1905-1910) and Governor of Pennsylvania (1923-1927 and 1931-1935).)

The article also pointed out that the possibility of a good roads exhibit at the World's Columbian Exposition, one of the issues raised in General Stone's bill, was receiving attention. W. I. Buchanan, chief of the exposition's Department of Agriculture, had written to Samuel W. Allerton of Illinois, a member of the league's executive committee, on this topic:

I have taken a great deal of interest in the question of calling the attention of the people of this country to the necessity for good roads, and particularly with reference to what could be done in the exposition to further the cause, but for a number of reasons it has been found impracticable to accomplish very much in the exposition in this way. Concerns who are building roads and whose business it is to construct them, and who are manufacturing materials connected with road building, have not taken the interest in it which it seems to me desirable, and, as you know, the function of this department of the exposition is not to create exhibits by purchase, but to take care of exhibits offered by parties who have something which they wish to display or present to the public. The National League for Good Roads has seemed to me a very desirable movement, and I was heartily in favor of its organization.

During the summer of 1892, Colonel Pope had begun circulating a petition in support of a national road department. Somewhat to Pope's surprise, he received over 150,000 signatures on the petition. Although still irritated that the National League had not supported his proposal, Pope agreed to delay submitting the petition while General Stone's bill was still under consideration in the 52<sup>nd</sup> Congress. (Colonel Pope submitted the proposal to President Cleveland in 1893.)

The *Times* edition of January 1, 1893, reported on the continuing "splendid work" of the National League. Subscriptions had continued arriving at 45 Broadway, including one from Henry Flagler, the wealthy oil tycoon who had taken an interest in developing eastern Florida. Flagler "is much interested in the building of good roads in Florida, and believes thoroughly that they are the best help possible to any railroad enterprise." He informed the league that his railroad enterprise, the Jacksonville, St. Augustine, and Halifax Railway, "will carry any material necessary for the building of a good road, free of charge, and expressing himself happy in the hope of aiding in a much-needed reform in the State of Florida."

General Stone, meanwhile, was corresponding with James J. Hill, president of the Great Northern Railway:

Secretary Roy Stone has sent a letter to James Hill . . . who suggested that the farmers and land owners make the first steps, in which he [Stone] says that it is necessary that others should enforce the need of good roads upon the minds of the people living in agricultural districts. Farmers, as a result, Mr. Stone says, do not originate anything. They follow in the wake of an originator. He advises that Mr. Hill's agents be the apostles of good roads; that they spread the good road literature among the farmers living adjacent to the Great Northern Railway, and that the establishment of road leagues in that section of country will be of the greatest benefit, not only to the people themselves, but also to the railway company.

["At Work for Good Roads," November 20, 1892  
"The Work for Good Roads," December 4, 1892

“Seeking Good Highways,” December 18, 1892  
“At Work for Good Roads,” December 24, 1892  
“The ‘Good Roads’ Campaign,” January 1, 1893]

## **Back to Congress**

The National League held its second national convention in Washington on January 17, 1893. While in town, league officials testified on January 19 before the House Committee on Agriculture. The *Times* reported on the events on January 22:

While the convention was in session a committee was appointed to go before the Committee on Agriculture of the House and explain to it the aims and objects of the league. The House committee took such interest in the matter that when it met there was hardly an absentee. Two resolutions which had been passed by the convention of the league were pressed upon the attention of the committee. These were: First, for Congress to appropriate \$50,000 to have a road exhibit at the World’s Fair and to show approved methods of road building; second, to ask Congress to appropriate \$15,000 to carry on an inquiry as to the best method of road building and to appoint a Highway Road Commission of six to look into the question. The commission is to serve without pay.

Among the members of the convention who addressed the committee on the subject were Senator Chandler of New-Hampshire, Dr. Ripley of New-Jersey, and Gen. Stone of New-York. Judging from remarks made by the members of the Committee on Agriculture, it is more than likely that they will take favorable action, and that very shortly.

According to historian Philip P. Mason, all the witnesses favored General Stone’s bill except W. C. Gifford of the National Grange. He questioned the constitutionality of the bill as well as the advisability of Federal participation in road matters. Mason continued:

The hearing came to an end with a statement by Chairman [William H.] Hatch [D-Mo.] that his committee would act on the proposed measure “conscientiously.” He took the opportunity to scold certain of his colleagues on the committee who “have become afraid of any new proposition that comes before them lest they may be knocked down by the Constitution when they get on the floor of the House, or as soon as they get back again.” [Mason, Philip P., *The League of American Wheelmen and the Good Roads Movement, 1880-1905*, Ph.d Thesis, University Microfilms International, 1957, p. 146]

Officials of the League were “very enthusiastic over the convention.” It had “attracted attention from every one who takes the slightest interest in the matter, and was attended by members of both houses of Congress and members of several departments.” Secretary of Agriculture [Jeremiah M.] Rusk, in his address to the convention, “showed he would do all in his power to aid the cause,” while Major J. P. Sanger, representing Secretary of War William C. Endicott, “assured that the league would have all the co-operation from

the department that that branch of the Government could possibly give.” (Actually, Secretary Rusk told the convention that he supported good roads, but not Federal-aid, because he considered road improvement a local issue.)

The article also noted a change in league leadership. Allerton had resigned from the National Executive Committee. He was replaced by August Belmont, the wealthy banker who would later be involved in the venture to construct a rail tunnel between Long Island City and New York City.

Despite the league’s efforts, the House did not pass General Stone’s bill. However, on February 1, 1893, at the request of Representative Allan C. Durborow, Jr. (D-Il.), the committee amended the Department of Agriculture’s appropriations bill to include \$10,000 for the collection and dissemination of information on road laws and the methods of road construction. This appropriation was consistent with Secretary Rusk’s conservative views of the proper role of the Federal Government.

General Stone tried to revive his bill, but Representative Post explained that the chances were poor. Convinced that his bill was dead in the 52<sup>nd</sup> Congress, General Stone tried to increase the amount of the appropriation for the road inquiry. But with Congress in a budget cutting mood, this effort failed as well.

Congress approved the Department of Agriculture Appropriations Act for FY 1894 on March 3, 1893. President Harrison approved the legislation as one of his last acts before leaving office. The Act included \$10,000 for the following purpose:

To enable the Secretary of Agriculture to make inquiries in regard to the systems of road management throughout the United States, to make investigations in regard to the best method of road-making, to prepare publications on this subject suitable for distribution, and to enable him to assist the agricultural colleges and experiment stations in disseminating information on this subject, ten thousand dollars.

Before the new Secretary of Agriculture, J. Sterling Morton of Nebraska, selected General Stone to take charge of the road inquiry, Stone continued his activities as secretary of the National League. On May 2, 1893, the *Times* reported that the executive committee had met the previous day at 45 Broadway, with General Stone presiding. The executives selected directors for New York and appointed a committee “to confer with railroad presidents regarding rates for the transportation of delegates, from time to time, throughout the United States, and also for the transportation of materials for road building.” The *Times* reported one other action:

It was voted to appropriate \$1,000 to assist in preparing a road exhibit under the Department of Agriculture at the World’s Fair, with the understanding that another \$1,000 should be given if required. The Disbursing Committee was authorized to advance \$50 to the league of each State for its preliminary expenses.

The *Times* provided additional information about the proposed exhibit on May 12. General Stone had met with other National League officials the day before to arrange for “an exhibit of a roadway 50 feet wide and 1,000 feet in length at the World’s Fair in Chicago.” The *Times* provided details of the plan:

The road will extend from the French colonies’ exhibit to the live stock pavilion, and will show the various processes of road construction in France, Italy, Germany, and England, where the country roads are in fine condition. An illustration of the condition of the roads in this country after bad weather will be given by a wagon fast in the slough of a rough country road.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> inst. the headquarters of the league will be removed to Chicago, where Gen. Roy Stone, and Assistant Secretary T. P. Grace and his staff will have accommodation in the main Agricultural Building.

The article added that, “On July 1 the league will receive an appropriation of \$10,000 from Congress for the purpose of disseminating literature respecting road improvements.” Whether the league believed this, or the reporter misunderstood the nature of the appropriation, the funds would become available to the U.S. Department of Agriculture at the start of the fiscal year on July 1, 1893, not the league. Secretary Morton, who would gain a reputation for penny-pinching and squelching government “paternalism” (as well as the nickname “The Stormy Petrel” because of his argumentative nature), decided to conduct the road inquiry within narrow limits consistent with his interpretation of limited constitutional authority.

President Cleveland participated in the opening ceremony for the World’s Columbian Exposition on May 1, 1893. Norman Bolotin and Christine Laing stated in their history of the exposition that the Transportation Building was “one of the most interesting buildings of the fair.” It included “every vehicle known to man, ranging from a baby carriage to a rail dining car.” Exhibits included a wide variety of bicycles. The building did not include an automobile or “motor wagon.” [Bolotin, Norman, and Laing, Christine, *The World’s Columbian Exposition*, The Preservation Press, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1992, p. 95-96]

The National League’s plan for a road exhibit did not materialize. Leaders of the organization might have known that such an exhibit would have been a waste, for on the same day, May 12, that the *Times* was reporting on the plans, Senator Manderson wrote to General Stone to discourage the idea:

I spent a few days at Chicago this week. I am convinced that any money expended there in an Exhibit of roads—bad or improved—would be money wasted. The Exposition is so immense and there is so much to be seen more interesting and more attractive, to the casual visitor from all over the country, that a good roads Exhibit would be lost and unseen.

He added that the exposition itself provided the exhibit:

The Exposition grounds themselves are an object lesson in good roads. When it rains mud is shoe deep when the road builder has not put in his best work.

["The Crusade for Good Roads," January 22, 1893  
"Workers for Good Roads," May 2, 1893  
"A Roadway for the Fair," May 12, 1893]

### **The Office of Road Inquiry**

"Portrait of a General" covers General Stone's career as Special Agent in charge of the U.S. Office of Road Inquiry (ORI). The Rambler will understand if the reader skims this section. But skimming is not the Rambler's *modus operandi*, so he will add details to the portrait to flesh out these pivotal days of the Good Roads Movement.

### **New York State Aid Bill**

In 1893, the New York State had enacted a law allowing each county board of supervisors to raise funds to improve roads through the county. Governor Roswell P. Flower (1892-1894) considered the 1893 Act "of great public interest." After the State legislature adjourned on April 19, he told reporters:

As I said in my annual message, I believe that the county-road system should be first tried before any attempt is made to undertake a great and expensive system of state highways. The bill which has been enacted to carry out this idea authorizes the Board of Supervisors in each county to borrow money for road improvements, to designate certain county roads which should be built and maintained by the county at county expense, and to appoint an engineer skilled in the science of roadmaking, who should have supervision of the construction of these roads. In order that Boards of Supervisors may be encouraged in carrying out this policy another bill was passed extending the terms of supervisors and Highway Commissioners to two years. I think this latter provision almost essential to carrying out the road project, for one year is too short a time successfully to establish any reform in roadmaking, and longer tenure of office will enable the experiment to be tried without the uncertain element of too frequent elections.

. . . . The advantage of the new law is that it encourages action on the part of the representatives of the country towns, where farmers and others have been somewhat slow to appreciate the desirability of good roads, because the greater part of the expense of establishing county highways will fall upon the incorporated villages and cities within the county, and not, as heretofore, on the rural districts. Nor do I think the people in the cities and villages will begrudge this additional burden, if by means of it there will be easier access to the centres [sic] of population, and consequently more business and trading.

On March 21, 1894, the *Times* reported that General Stone had appeared before the Assembly Committee on Agriculture in support of a State-aid bill introduced by Assemblyman Ira B. Kerr of Greene County. Kerr introduced his bill without waiting for the results of the experiment. He explained, in the *Times*' words:

It was the only way to bring about good roads. It provided for roads to be built on the petition of one-third of the property owners along the road. Surveys must be made by the State Engineer.

The article stated that General Stone appeared before the committee at the request of Secretary Morton. The General introduced General E. H. Harrison, identified as president of the New-Jersey State Association for Good Roads to explain how New Jersey had obtained some excellent roads. The *Times* summarized General Harrison's explanation:

In the township of Chester, an object lesson had been had. One good road was built, and State aid was secured by an act of the Legislature. The lesson proved a good one, and now the property owners were crying for good roads everywhere in the State. The farmers in New-Jersey, where they once with a team drew a ton, now, with new roads, are able to draw six tons. There the new roads permitted the use of bicycles by school children instead of their patronizing the railroads.

(On April 14, 1891, at the urging of the LAW and General Harrison's association, New Jersey had enacted the first State-aid program in the Nation. It authorized \$75,000 a year to pay one-third of the cost of county road improvements. [*America's Highway 1776-1976*, Federal Highway Administration, 1976, p. 43])

The *Times* also quoted from General Stone's testimony:

New-York is easily the Empire State of the Union for bad roads. We may not have the very worst, but we have the most kinds of bad roads and are the most contented with their badness. Good roads are being built, and the people are finding out that it pays to build them; the question now is not whether it ought to be done, but how to do it. Ohio has 10,000 miles of improved highways. Massachusetts, Connecticut, New-Jersey, Georgia, Kentucky, Texas, Indiana, and Michigan have all made substantial progress in road construction, and other States are moving toward it. It is quite time for New-York to get into line. These States have not only found the way to build roads without oppressing the farmers, but some of them have developed methods of construction which reduce the cost of good highways below anything that was thought possible a few years ago.

On March 30, 1894, interested members of the State Legislature, including Assemblyman Kerr, and General Stone took a special train to New Jersey to meet with General Harrison. The brief account in the *Times* on March 31 stated that the delegation went to Merchantsville where carriages were waiting for a drive of 5-6 miles "over the excellent

Macadam and Telford roads of that section of the State.” During dinner at Moorestown, the delegation discussed good roads before returning to New York by train.

In a speech to the students of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) the following year, General Stone referred to this New Jersey trip:

A committee of the New York State legislature, together with members of the boards of supervisors, numbering nearly one hundred, visited some of the State-aid roads in New Jersey last spring and returned to New York and passed a bill for State aid through the lower house of the legislature by a majority of 4 to 1. [“Road Building in the United States,” *Historical and Technical Papers on Road Building in the United States*, U.S. Office of Road Inquiry Bulletin No. 17, 1895, p. 47]

The House approved the bill, as General Stone noted, but not the Senate. In a letter on July 27, 1894, to John B. Simpson of Lake George, New York, General Stone explained:

The bill only failed in the Senate through lack of time, and being sent to the wrong Committee. [Letter press book, National Archives at College Park, Maryland]

[“Pleading for Good Roads,” March 21, 1894

“Gov. Flower is Satisfied,” April, 20, 1893

“Went to Inspect New-Jersey Roads,” March 31, 1894]

### **Good Roads Convention, Asbury Park, New Jersey**

The *Times* published several articles about the Good Roads Convention scheduled for July 5 and 6 in Asbury Park, New Jersey. Although the New Jersey association was the sponsor, the convention would feature the LAW, the Governors of Georgia, Rhode Island, and Vermont, representatives from other States, and General Stone representing the U.S. Department of Agriculture. According to the *Times*:

Gen. Roy Stone . . . is arranging and planning the convention at the instance of the Secretary of Agriculture, J. Sterling Morton. President Luscomb of the League of American Wheelmen is also actively associated with him in making preparations, and reliance is placed mainly in the co-operation of the wheelmen throughout the country to make the convention a grand success and impart a powerful impetus throughout the United States in favor of better roads.

One focus of the convention was to “show the paramount importance of good roads and to impress strongly upon the delegates and others in attendance the importance of passing in each State laws such as the State Aid act in force in this State.” The article also mentioned what was expected to be a highlight:

The feature of the convention will be the building, in the presence of all the delegates, of a fine macadam road by prominent road machinery manufacturers, quarrymen, and contractors, probably from Main Street to the Asbury Park Wheelmen's clubhouse in Bangs Avenue. This will be done free of expense to the town, and is to illustrate what is required for practical roadmaking.

On June 17, the *Times* referred to General Stone's release of a circular "calling attention to the proposed conference of road associations on the occasion of the meeting of the National Editorial Convention at Asbury Park, N.J., from July 2 to 6." With newspaper editors from every State in Asbury Park, the circular suggested that they also participate in the good roads convention "to represent at the road conference the various associations in their localities not otherwise represented." Based on reports on the convention in the *Times*, the Rambler does not see evidence that the editors took the opportunity to visit the good roads convention.

An article on June 21 reported that General Stone had sent copies of a circular letter to Chief Consul James S. Holmes, Jr., of the New Jersey Division of the LAW for distribution among prospective delegates to the good roads convention. The circular quoted General Harrison as saying that, "This is not to be a convention of delegates, but a conference of road associations, State, county, township, and municipal authorities, corporations, and individuals concerned in road improvement." It also explained the purpose of the convention:

The conference is for the purpose of promoting organization for road improvement where such organization does not already exist, for strengthening the hands of existing organizations, and for the gathering and diffusion of general information on the subject of road improvement . . . We meet to interchange views and to give and get all the information we can to promote the cause of road improvement.

The *Times* covered the events of July 5, the first day of the convention, in the July 6 edition of the newspaper. "In response to the 20,000 bulletins sent out to the road associations, wheelmen, and editors throughout the country by the U.S. Department of Agriculture," 300 to 400 delegates from 40 States and two Territories (Arizona, which did not become a State until 1912, and Indian Territory in what is now eastern Oklahoma) arrived at the Westminster Presbyterian Church for the convention.

According to the article, the delegates, at General Harrison's suggestion, voted Governor Levi K. Fuller of Vermont the president of the convention. (According to an article in the September 1894 issue of *Good Roads*, Governor Fuller's reputation as a good roads leader was such that he "was nominated for Chairman by half of the delegates, and his nomination was seconded by the other half, so there was hardly any need of a vote.")

"Gov. Fuller was escorted to the platform by Gen. Roy Stone, the head of the Road Inquiry Department at Washington, and by Mr. Young of Pennsylvania." Governor Fuller, who had taken office in 1892, was an engineer, machinist, inventor, and wealthy

businessman. He discussed the progress Vermont had made in building good roads; the State boasted some of the finest roads in the country. The State's roads, he said, had been laid out by skillful engineers, with a road commissioner in charge of each town. However, the Governor lamented a condition that was true across the country:

Far too many of our people, Gov. Fuller said, are entirely ignorant about the making of roads, while scores of the Road Commissioners do not know the difference between the common bank gravel and the river-wasted pebbles. Road laying has come to be a question of science, and the need is of geologists as well as engineers.

The article also quoted General Stone's address, which began:

The Secretary of Agriculture requested me to express to this body his sincere regrets at not being able to be present with you. He considers this convention to be a matter of the greatest importance and hopes that good results may follow the deliberations.

He cited statistics to demonstrate the cost of bad roads. "The people are coming to realize this state of affairs more and more, Gen. Stone said, and are more earnestly and, he hoped, successfully seeking a remedy."

On July 7, the *Times* carried an account of the second day's events (July 6), quoting a number of the speeches, and noting that the convention adjourned early in the afternoon so "the delegates might witness the various exhibits of road-making machinery working on several of the main avenues in Asbury Park." However, because the article did not mention General Stone, the Rambler will move on to an article that appeared in the *Times* on July 14 that quoted the General extensively on the results of the convention. Bylined "Washington, July 13," the article began, "The friends of good roads in this vicinity are much encouraged by the results of the recent good roads conference at Asbury Park." Much work remained to be done, but they "are gratified with the increasing evidence that in every State in the Union there is growing dissatisfaction with the existing conditions."

General Stone told a correspondent of the *Times* that he was very pleased with what he heard at the convention:

"This conference," said Gen. Stone, "was proposed originally by the New-Jersey State Road Improvement Association, which is in the advance of all road improvers, but not so far advanced as not to desire further information from other localities. The proposal was indorsed by the National League for Good Roads, the New-York State League, and the Maryland Road League, and was then taken up by the Department of Agriculture through the office of Road Inquiry. Invitations were sent to all the known road improvement associations, to commercial bodies, and to other associations concerned in road improvement.

“The attendance was very satisfactory, but would have been much larger if there could have been any certainty of its being well attended. So many road conventions have been called and have been entire failures that many people who would have been interested lacked confidence in the success of the gathering. The two delegates who came from Rochester, N.Y., for instance, said that twenty-five were ready to come if they could have had any assurance that they would not be the only people there. Schenectady, however, sent twelve delegates, and Oneida, five.

“In this conference no special arrangements were made for cheap transportation, as we were not able to give any assurance as to definite numbers of delegates who might be expected. The railway companies are disposed to promote all gatherings of this class, and hereafter it will be possible to secure very low rates. A central committee was formed, with Gov. Fuller of Vermont as Chairman, with the power to call another conference at some future time, and invitations were immediately received from Atlanta, Ga., and Cleveland. The representatives of New-Jersey urged some point in New-Jersey as the next place of meeting.

“The general business of the conference was the gathering of information from all the delegates of the different States as to the actual progress of road improvement in their several States. About one-half of the States represented, forty-four in all, reported very substantial progress in the improvement of road building, and very great satisfaction on the part of all concerned in the building and use of roads. The Department of Agriculture was fortunately able to furnish for distribution Bulletin No. 9 of the road inquiry related to State aid to road building in New-Jersey, with the opinions of many farmers along the line of the State aid roads as to the benefits derived from the improvement. Gov. Fuller was also able to furnish copies of the publication of the Vermont League for Good Roads, giving the details and purposes of the organization. Other literature was contributed by the Department of Agriculture, by the publishers of Good Roads magazine and other periodicals devoted to a like purpose.

“A comparatively new topic in the Road Improvement Associations was presented by Martin Dodge, President of the Ohio State Road Commission, who advocated the extension of the electric roads into the country with rails suited to wagon traffic as well as [street] cars. This would have aroused much discussion if there had been time for it, it being considered to have some possible merit besides novelty, but as being a long step into the future. Mr. Dodge’s speech will be revised and published in full in the proceedings of the conference, which will form the next bulletin of the Department of Agriculture. [It was reprinted in *Proceedings of the National Road Conference Held at the Westminster Church, Asbury Park, N.J., July 5 and 6, 1894*, ORI Bulletin No. 10, 1894]

“The conference was very conservative in its action, and did not go beyond recommending to the Legislatures of the several States the establishment of highway commissions to consider what legislation and methods it might be wise

to adopt and a general recommendation for the organization of road improvement associations and leagues of instruction in highway engineering, together with a limited adoption of the State aid system. The general feeling, however, appeared to be that the New-Jersey plan would be very strongly commended by the delegates to their respective Legislatures during the coming Winter, and that as many as possible of those Legislatures would be induced to send committees to New-Jersey, as was done by the New-York State Legislature last Winter, to inspect the State aid roads and consult with the State authorities and citizens regarding that system.

“The subject of convict labor on roads was touched upon, and aroused some difference of opinion. The Chairman of the Massachusetts Highway Commission expressed the opinion of that State as decidedly opposed to the public use of convict labor, while the delegates from North Carolina and some of the other States spoke of the beneficial work accomplished in their States by means of that labor. A compromise plan was suggested of using State convicts for the preparation of roads [sic] materials in quarry camps where they could be easily guarded. In this case it was suggested that the State should furnish the road material free to the counties and townships, and that county prisoners, tramps, and vagrants be used for the grading and preparation of the road beds.

“Another novel topic that was talked of outside of the conference, but not introduced in view of the shortness of time, was the organization of bodies of State police to be used normally in the work of road improvement and maintenance, but to be armed and equipped for military duty as well whenever emergencies should arise requiring their services. This idea met with a very favorable reception, and will probably come up for general discussion at the next conference. The conference separated with a general feeling that some good had been accomplished, and that the next meeting would be largely attended because of the great service to the cause of road improvement.”

(Martin Dodge would serve as acting head of the ORI in the second half of 1898 while General Stone was a volunteer in the Spanish-American War, and as permanent Director after Stone left the ORI in October 1899. Like Stone, Dodge would promote the State-aid plan as a model for Federal involvement in road improvement. For information on Dodge’s life and good roads work, see *A Maximum of Good Results: Martin Dodge and the Good Roads Trains* at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/highwayhistory/dodge/>. New Jersey’s State-aid plan would be adopted by many States and serve as a model for the Federal-aid highway program that would be adopted in 1916.)

[“Will Demand Better Roads,” June 7, 1894  
“Proposed Good Roads Conference,” June 17, 1894  
“The Good Roads Convention,” June 21, 1894  
“Working for Good Roads,” July 6, 1894  
“To Improve the Highways,” July, 7, 1894  
“The Goods Roads Conference,” July 14, 1894]

## **New Roads and Road Laws in the United States**

One of the hallmarks of General Stone's tenure was how enterprising he was in using the ORI's limited resources. On July 22, 1894, the *Times* carried an article about his latest activity – publication of a book, *New Roads and Road Laws in the United States*, by Van Nostrand & Co.

The article began by pointing out that General Stone “presents this volume in order to stimulate public interest and thus ‘promote the success of the official inquiry.’” It explained that the inquiry is focused on several points:

First, in regard to the new legislation for road improvement and the working of that legislation; second, to the cost of methods of road construction, and, lastly, to the effects of road improvement where it has been accomplished.

The unnamed reviewer stated that much had been learned in recent years about road building, with old road building techniques, including macadam construction, by “common-sense engineering.” The reviewer stated:

Something that old roadmakers had little perception of was that horses in drawing a load feel the strain much less where there are slight elevations or depressions. The monotony of traction, the constant calls upon one set of muscles, are in this way relieved. What is novel, and something which Mr. Roy Stone and others bring into prominence, is the effort made to change the character, not alone of the wheels of wagons, but of the axles.

The Massachusetts Highway Commission had concluded that wider tires would allow for larger loads to be hauled with less strain on the horses and damage to the roads. However, requiring the State's 50,000 wagons to switch to wider tires was impractical. Further, broader tires and axles of unequal length were even more advantageous. This had been demonstrated in usage in several locations, including Camden County, New Jersey.

The reviewer continued his summary by asking, “Will you have a dust heap in Summer or a quagmire in Winter?” He said:

That is the question which addresses itself to many a farmer in the United States. Mr. Roy Stone explains graphically what he calls the mud tax.

Among other topics, General Stone covered New Jersey's State-aid program, also called the “local-option and co-operative plan.”

Five years later, on June 24, 1899, the *Times* carried a lengthy article titled “Municipal Engineers” covering books that would be of interest to them. On the subject of good roads, the article summarized the brief history of the good roads movement, including

formation of the National League for Good Roads and the funding appropriated for the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a road inquiry. It continued:

Much good has been accomplished by the Bureau of Road Inquiry thus created, at the head of which was placed Gen. Roy Stone, who was a Vice President of the National League. A little book by him, "New Roads and Road Laws in the United States," (New York, D. Van Nostrand Company. \$1) with excellent half-tone illustrations of good and bad roads, is both interesting and instructive.

In the interest of fairness, the Rambler notes that the article also mentioned:

General Gilmore, *A Practical Treatise on Roads, Streets, and Pavement*, D. Van Nostrand Company, 1876, revised for 9<sup>th</sup> edition, price not listed ("still a very useful and handy manual for the road-maker. It is a thoroughly practical book").  
Byrne, Austin T., *A Treatise on Highway Construction*, John Wiley & Sons, \$5 ("The latest and fullest information respecting the location, construction, and maintenance of roads of all kinds, in city or country.").  
Spalding, Fred P., *A Text Book on Roads and Pavements*, John Wiley & Sons, \$2 (the article is suspicious of this book because of its lack of sources – this book is for "those who trust to theory rather than experience").

["The Great Roads Question," July 22, 1894  
"Municipal Engineers," June 24, 1899]

### **A Home in New Jersey**

The *Times* reported on September 9, 1894, that a ceremony took place in Mercer County, New Jersey, to celebrate "completion of the macadamizing of the old Scotch Road, leading through Ewing Township into the City of Trenton." The gathering of farmers and business men of the county reflected enthusiasm over the good roads movement and "was a great success."

State Road Commissioner Edward S. Burroughs discussed the status of the State-aid program, reporting that the \$75,000 appropriated for 1894 had been spent for about 30 miles of roads. The article stated that over 60 miles of macadamized and hard roads had been secured through the State-aid program since its inception.

The article summarized the "agitation" that began 2 years earlier, concluding:

When it became known that Morris County was to be bonded for \$350,000, some of the farmers protested, but the bitterest opponents of the movement then are now its enthusiastic supporters. William E. King made surveys and prepared maps of about thirty miles of road, which are now nearly completed. Gen. Roy Stone, National Chief of the Bureau of Road Inquiry in Washington, is a Summer resident in Morris County, and he gave to the Freeholders the benefit of his services as consulting engineer.

General Stone's summer home was in Mendham. In the years before air conditioning, Washington was often abandoned by officials, including the entire Congress, until crops had been picked and weather in the area moderated.

[“For Good Roads in New-Jersey,” September 9, 1894]

### **General Stone on Convict Labor**

The Rambler has a saying, “Roads are not about concrete, asphalt, or steel, but about the money available to buy the concrete, asphalt, and steel.” With some wording changes, the saying has applied throughout highway history. In the early years of the Good Roads Movement, money was hard to come by. As a result, convict labor was seen as a way of avoiding the difficulty of raising money. (Money is still hard to come by, but on a different order of magnitude.)

On December 16, 1892, the *Times* reported that New York's Superintendent of State Prisons, Austin Lathrop, had written to the Board of Trade and Transportation about the use of prisoners on the roads. The article quoted one paragraph from Lathrop's letter:

I do not think it would be practicable to work the convicts confined in Sing Sing and Auburn Prisons on the State roads. I think the extra expense of guarding and caring for them would cost more than to hire outside labor. At Clinton prison it would, in my judgment, be different, owing to the remote location. In fact, we are now thinking of taking a number of idle convicts from that prison and putting them to work on the highways running through the State lands. This is an experiment.

Many *Times* articles quoted Lathrop on the importance of employing convicts in useful activities. For example, as noted in the *Times* on January 31, 1895, Lathrop's annual report for 1894 stated:

No fact has been more thoroughly demonstrated in prison administration than this one, namely: Convicts in prison need constant employment at work, to save them from destructive moral and physical deterioration and degradation . . . . No prison manager anywhere has had the fertility of resource which enabled him to maintain a body of prisoners in idleness and at the same time keep them from the deterioration which culminates too often in insanity or death.

Road work offered one opportunity for employing the convicts. The annual report, as summarized in the *Times*, stated that:

Much labor of convicts was spent in constructing prison buildings and on roads in Westchester, Cayuga, and Clinton Counties, which, could it be credited at fair rates, would make a material addition to the earnings of the prisoners.

On March 5, 1895, the *Times* reported that State Senator Frederick D. Kilburn's subcommittee of the joint legislative committee to investigate State departments had held a hearing the day before on the State's prisons. Lathrop and the wardens of the prisons were the witnesses. One topic addressed was convict labor on roads. Warden James C. Stout of Auburn Prison stated that in 1894, he had employed about 30 convicts on a two-mile stretch of road, while about 50 worked on a one-mile stretch. Warden Stout preferred to use short-term convicts because they were less likely to want to escape. Only two guards, he said, were needed to keep the men in order.

Senator Kilburn favored convict labor for roads, but preferred that they work under an engineer on a general plan, not just here and there as at present. He "asked if it would be practicable within the next fifty years to rebuild the main roads throughout the State by convict labor." The article summarized the reply:

Warden Stout replied that he believed it would be best to confine convict labor to a main road through the State. It would cost about \$340,000 to build the road straight through to Buffalo (340 miles).

When Superintendent Lathrop testified, he was less supportive of convict labor:

Superintendent Lathrop thought the employment of prisoners on public roads impracticable. The State can better afford to hire free labor than to pay for watching the convicts. Besides this, any such general employment of prisoners would cause a howl about taking bread out of the workingman's mouth.

It would be ruinous for any political party ordering such work. He figured that the State would save \$250,000 yearly by hiring free labor for road work. There is also danger of the prisoners escaping, as they did when working at Clinton, where it cost \$3,000 of the ten-thousand-dollar appropriation to recapture convicts who escaped while working on roads.

Senator Kilburn asked if it was true that the prisoners had actually been working on the warden's house and that the expense of recapture had been charged to the road account to avoid a scandal. "Superintendent Lathrop insisted that there was nothing to this story."

On March 15, 1895, the *Times* reported that the day before in Washington, one of its reporters had asked General Stone about Superintendent Lathrop's view that the use of convicts on public roads was impracticable. General Stone "controverted" this view. "Gen. Stone has devoted much time to this particular question, and is convinced that convict labor may profitably and safely be used in improving the highways of the country."

The article continued:

"There are three sides to the question of working convicts on the highways—or rather two sides and a broad middle ground," Gen. Stone said to-day to a

correspondent of The New-York Times. "The negative side is taken by the Prison Association of New-York and by penologists generally. The reasons advanced in opposition to the plan are that honest labor would be interfered with; that a large body of keepers would be required at great expense; that there would be a constant necessity for shooting convicts in order to prevent escapes; that in many cases the prejudice against convict labor would require a military force to protect convicts thus employed, and that it would be demoralizing to the convicts themselves to employ them in public places.

This is a view of the question natural to men whose minds are fixed on the needs to [sic] society of the reformation of criminals. Opposed to it is the opinion of many equally good citizens who seek the public advancement in other ways, and especially in the direction of improved means of communication, and who see in the convicts now idle in our jails and prisons a labor force sufficient to mend all the roads in the country if it could be so applied, and which they believe could be so applied without prejudice to free labor. The advocates of convict road work insist further that the outdoor life and exercise afforded by such employment would benefit the health and morals of the prisoners.

"In the vicinity of Charlotte, N.C., convicts have built miles of substantial roads, and with such satisfaction to the people that the special law under which it was done is now being extended to other counties. In other Southern States, where the convict lease system still prevails, it is clear that a transfer of the prisoners from irresponsible and often inhumane private employment to the care of States or counties would be a saving kindness to them and would benefit the entire community.

"Some of the apprehensions of the New-York Prison Association do not appear to have been well founded. The Legislature passed a bill providing for the employment of convict labor on the wagon roads of the State, in spite of the protest of the association, and a very satisfactory experiment was made at Clinton Prison. There was no interference with the convicts by citizens, except in two cases, where intoxicated men offered them liquor; no apparently demoralizing effects on the prisoners or the public; no shooting of convicts, and only three men attempted to escape. In the report on the subject, the Warden of the prison concludes as follows: "That a limited number of convicts can be worked successfully is now an established fact."

"On the other hand, when we examine the Warden's financial statement, we find but little if any economy in the use of convicts as compared with the employment of free laborers for the same work. The cost of guards and of the search for escaped convicts was equal to 91 cents for each day's labor done, which, considering the comparative efficiency of such labor, is very near the full value, the day's work being only eight hours. Again, it may be safely predicted that when road making becomes a great business in the country, the introduction of labor-saving appliances will do away with a large share of the hand labor now

requisite in laying a stone or gravel road. The material being generally transported by railroad will then be transferred to wagons without shoveling, and from the wagons will be mechanically spread in its place, so that almost nothing will be left for convicts to do on the lines of the roads.

“These considerations strengthen the position of those who hold the middle ground of the question, which is that State prisoners should be employed wholly in the preparation of road materials, and in places where they can be guarded and secluded as easily and cheaply as in the prisons. The plan proposed for this is in substance as follows: First—For the State to buy some of the territory which contains the best rock within its limits. Second—To make the necessary railway connections, having first secured the permanent agreement of all its leading railroad companies to carry road material at the cost of hauling, on condition, if required of the State furnishing to them a certain amount of track ballast free of charge or at cost. Third—Having erected the necessary buildings and provided the best machinery for quarrying and crushing rock, to bring all able-bodied State prison convicts and put them at this work. Fourth—The counties to put their jail prisoners and tramps at the work of grading, draining, and preparing the roads for macadamizing. Fifth—The State to furnish broken stone free on board cars as its contribution to road improvement.

“The cost to the State, in addition to the maintenance and guarding of the convicts, would be only that of food and oil, explosives, and use of machinery, or, according to the Massachusetts commission report, 6 8-10 cents per cubic yard of broken stone, amounting for the 1,200 yards required to lay a mile of single track road nine feet wide and eight inches deep to \$81.60.

“The remaining cost would be the railroad freight, amounting, for an average distance of 100 miles, to not more than 28 cents per yard, or \$336 per mile; the wagon haul, averaging possibly 2½ miles, 30 cents per yard, or \$360 per mile, and the rolling, superintendence, and incidentals (not including engineering, which would be a general county charge) 10 cents per yard, making the total local cost 68 cents per cubic yard, or \$816 per mile.

“This plan would bring the expense of road improvement so low that no elaborate scheme of taxation or borrowing would be necessary, and all its benefits could be speedily and universally realized. The best plan for carrying it out would perhaps be to let the ‘benefit district’ as heretofore defined pay one-third of cost by installments, and the township one-third; the county to pay the remainder, and to advance the amount for the district, with a rebate or discount to all individuals who might prefer to pay in cash, so that no one would be put in debt against his will. The cost to the district on this basis of division would be \$272 per mile.

“The growth of the road movement in North Carolina is unquestionably due to the use of convicts. Indeed, this use has in the majority of cases been the most important factor in deciding the counties of that State to vote a tax for the

improvement of public roads. The result of the experiments in North Carolina has been altogether favorable to the system both in point of efficiency and in economy and in the health of the convicts. In Lenoir County only short-term criminals are employed. They are carefully described and photographed and offered certain inducements in the way of reward or shortening of term if they remain at their posts and faithfully discharge their duties. They are employed on the public roads very much as hired labor would be, under the control of a Superintendent, but without a guard, and they are allowed to remain at their homes from Saturday night until Monday morning. This novel experiment has been in operation a year and not a convict has attempted to escape.

“Many of the States are now arranging to establish supply camps for road material at which State convicts can be worked under proper restrictions. In California especially the State prison grounds contain an excellent vein of trap rock, the very best of road material, and abundant water power, with the necessary machinery for moving and crushing rock. There are 700 or 800 convicts in the prison. The prison authorities find that they can prepare road material and put it on the ground for 20 cents a cubic yard and pay all the expenses of the prison out of the receipts.

“Many railroads have already offered to transport material for the bare cost of the train service, and probably most of the railroads in the country would be willing to make such an arrangement, for they are naturally interested in the improvement of the highways.”

The article, noting that General Stone was preparing a small volume on convict labor, stated that he “is convinced that, notwithstanding the opposition of the Prison-Association of New-York, the idea of employing convicts in making highways will grow, with much consequent good to the country.”

On April 1, 1895, General Stone transmitted a 15-page volume titled *Notes on the Employment of Convicts in Connection with Road Building* to Secretary Morton seeking approval for publication. It became ORI Bulletin No. 16 in 1895. It described the use of convicts in North Carolina, explained the Delaware and California laws on the subject, and contained an article by General Stone (“Working Convicts on the Highways”) extracted from *New Roads and Road Laws*. (The extract was similar to General Stone’s statement to the *Times*.) The bulletin also quoted Warden Stout:

I approve of the employment of convicts in road making. The cost to the State will be only \$800 per mile. It will take about fifty years to improve by this means all the highways of the State. I advise the repairing of the old turnpike between Albany and Buffalo. Something should be done to give the prisoners work.

[“Prison Labor on Roads,” December 16, 1892  
“Convicts in Need of Work,” January 31, 1895  
“Convicts as Roadmakers,” March 5, 1895  
“Convict Road Builders,” March 15, 1895]

## **Planning for the Higbie-Armstrong Bill**

On December 12, 1895, the *Times* reported on a conference held at the Albemarle Hotel in New York City to consider good roads legislation for the State beyond the 1893 law encouraging county action. Participants included Isaac B. Potter, Chief Consul of the LAW's New York Division; State Senator Richard Higbie, and General Stone. The article stated:

The purpose of the conference was to devise a plan to secure better roads for the State, and better roads mean enjoyable cycling. Each man present showed himself to be an enthusiast on the subject of roads, and many valuable suggestions were offered and commented upon. Legislative action was finally deemed the only proper course to pursue, and the committee set to work to draft a bill to be presented at Albany. The aim of this bill will be to secure the improvement of the highways throughout the State. The bill was not completed at last night's conference, but its essential features were determined upon.

Potter told the reporter that New York was "far behind some other States in road-improvement work." He favored a State-aid plan similar to New Jersey's, which Potter said "has given to that State some of the finest public highways to be found anywhere."

## **Racing and Sidepaths**

On January 1, 1896, the *Times* published an editorial commenting on a meeting of the Board of Officers of the New York State Division of the LAW. The editorial described the board's recommendation to the national LAW to sever all connections between the LAW and bicycle racing. The rationale for this recommendation involved the purpose of the LAW:

The league exists for the purpose of promoting the objects which all wheelmen have in common, such as the improvement of roads, of maps, and in general of the means for getting about the country on wheels with pleasure and profit, which includes improvement in country taverns. Racing is not one of those objects. The proportion of wheelmen who care anything about it is very small.

Bicyclists were interested in "records" achieved by the bicyclists, but racing could best be handled by "those who have direct pecuniary interests in the promotion of bicycle racing, to wit, the professional riders and the makers of bicycles." Given the "enormous" pecuniary interests, no "association of a body of amateur sportsmen can undertake to supervise a commercial rivalry between powerful interests without getting more or less smirched in the course of the operation, and without more or less unfitting itself for its avowed legitimate purposes."

Bicycle racing was at a critical juncture in the mid-1890's. It had started as an amateur endeavor in the 1870's, but its popularity prompted bicycle makers to see it as a

marketing opportunity. They began sponsoring races and skilled racers. The LAW had established rules for racing based on the assumption that the racers were amateurs and that the prizes were trophies or of only nominal value. However, commercial involvement prompted a change in 1893, as described by Professor Robert A. Smith in his social history of bicycling:

The quarreling and bickering over professionalism continued until late in 1893, when the racing board of the LAW decided to divide racing cyclists into . . . three categories, Class A, Class B, and Professional.

The Class A amateur got nothing but prizes from his riding and was not even allowed to accept expenses from a cycling club or any other group that might sponsor his appearance in a contest. The Class B amateur was something else, an amateur who could accept pay for his work.

The Class B racers soon gained a bad reputation, openly accepting commercial sponsorships from manufacturers. "Many of the Class B amateurs became masters at sharp practices and plotting." According to Professor Smith:

Scarcely had the group been designated than rumors began to circulate that some races were rigged. A reporter for the *Minneapolis Tribune* suggested to his readers that since the men were working for cycle makers and their jobs depended on winning a race every now and then, the riders sometimes got together and agreed on who should win each race. He also hinted that some referees appointed by the LAW's racing board were getting kickbacks for fixed races.

The New York State Division's recommendation, therefore, was not surprising. As for the timing, Professor Smith said:

By 1895 the stench arising from the Class B situation was so overpowering that the demand was made for the LAW to eliminate the class altogether, or, even more drastic, for the league to get completely out of racing. Some critics argued that racing took too much of the league's time and money and distracted from the promotion of cycling in general and the movement to improve roads in particular.

The LAW ultimately chose a middle ground:

Early in 1896 the LAW abolished Class B racing and tightened restrictions on the amateur Class A . . . . Nevertheless the League of American Wheelmen and its racing board remained under constant attack. [Smith, Robert A., *A Social History of the Bicycle* (American Heritage Press/McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972, p. 151-154)

A separate group, the National Cycling Association, took over the professional races, while the LAW clung to its role in amateur racing until finally giving up racing in 1900, according to Professor Smith.

While the board members were in agreement on this point, the editorial stated that, “Another point is much more open to question.” Chief Consul Potter had offered a compromise on the good roads issue. In view of the rural districts’ desire for economy, he suggested that cycle paths should be built along the existing highways, from three to six feet wide. “By inference he seemed to intimate that if this accommodation were afforded to the wheelmen their agitation for better roads would cease.”

Adoption of this compromise, the editorial stated, would be “a public calamity.” Although bicyclists wanted good roads for their own use, the issue was broader than them:

What is needed is to convince the rural public that good roads are economical, so economical that they cannot afford to have bad roads. Even if the wheelmen were to agree that, so long as a cinder path was provided for them, they would not object to the rest of the road being by turns a mud-wallow and a dust-heap, they would defeat their own purpose, for the full and combined force of all the elements enlisted in favor of good roads is necessary to produce good roads, and has not yet availed for that purpose.

The editorial hoped that the Chief Consul “will consider, on more mature reflection, that his suggestion was a mistake.”

In an article on the work of the LAW published on January 5, 1896, Potter defended his idea:

A movement for the construction of side paths has taken strong hold in the State of New-York, and must be respected. The wheelmen are large taxpayers and have the same right to ask that the public highways shall be placed in fit condition for the passage of vehicles they use as have travelers who employ other means of conveyance. It is perhaps unfair to say that the public roads should be improved at great expense because bicyclists alone should seem to demand it, but it is not unreasonable to ask that a narrow wheelway should be improved at moderate expense on many country roads, which would otherwise be impassable to the great body of cyclists who have occasion to pass over them.

Professor Smith stated that cyclists were divided on sidepaths:

Some argued that the hard-won recognition of wheelmen’s rights on the highways would be jeopardized, for cycle-paths laws would be “class legislation” and therefore bound to create an unfavorable reaction against cyclemen. As a result, they might lose the right to use public roads and instead be confined exclusively to the paths. [Smith, p. 214]

The *Times*, by this time, was publishing a column called “Gossip of the Cyclers,” that included two items on sidepaths on January 12, 1896. One item quoted the *Lockport*

*Journal* as saying that construction of sidepaths “is assuming large proportions.” Construction of a network of sidepaths in central New York was under consideration. “The wheelmen have for years been anxious to assist in the improvement of country highways, but since others who use the roads have not been as enthusiastic, the wheelmen have preferred to avoid further delays and secure what they might on their own account.”

The second item quoted a statement General Stone issued on Potter’s suggestion:

The general movement for improved highways in the State of New-York through the action of the existing legislative commission has taken such promising shape that I earnestly hope the influence of the wheelmen of the State will not be diverted in the direction of constructing separate cycle paths. Their help will be greatly needed in bringing about the general improvement of highways in the State, and such combined movement as is proposed in Buffalo will be of great value in its effect on the Legislature and upon public sentiment generally. If the bill for State aid which will be offered by the State legislative commission prevails, you will see many hundred miles of good roads built in the State of New-York during the coming Summer, and so scattered through the State as to become general object lessons in the advantages of good roads. The plan of a narrow, hard road with an earth road alongside for dry weather, is very highly approved wherever it has been tested.

Despite the concerns about sidepaths, supporters were successful, as Professor Smith, explained “in part because taxpayers concluded that cycle paths, three to four feet wide, were cheaper than improved streets.” He stated that the result was a far-flung system of bicycle side paths that became downright grandiose in conception, beginning with the 5½-mile Coney Island Cycle Path in Brooklyn. The path opened on June 15, 1895, and was an immediate hit. [Smith, p. 214-215]

Sidepaths or cycle paths appeared around the country, mainly in cities, and proved popular until the automobile brought the bicycle era to an end soon after the turn of the century.

In speaking of Potter’s idea, General Stone was referring to the legislative commission established in 1893 to examine the good roads question. State Senator Higbie had been chairman of the Special Committee on Good Roads, which had visited Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey in the course of its review. On January 16, the *Times* summarized the committee’s report. It found “that there is widespread dissatisfaction with the present road system, and that a change of some kind is universally advocated.” The committee recommended establishing a central head to superintend all roads, with “the prime idea being that the maximum utility shall be reached with the minimum cost.” The report advocated a State-aid approach, as well as other changes, including wide-tire laws and the use of convicts to manufacture material for roads.

General Stone testified before the Assembly Ways and Means Committee on February 12, 1896. The *Times* explained on February 13 that the hearing was held to consider “all

the bills which have been introduced in the lower house having reference to good roads.” General Stone repeated his oft-stated view that New York was far behind other States. “It paid too little attention to the question, and allowed other States to take the lead when the Empire State should set the example.” By contrast, he said, New Jersey had the best road system as a result of its State-aid plan.

The New York General Assembly was not ready for the good-roads legislation, and would not be until 1898 when it passed the Higbie-Armstrong Good Roads Bill, named after Senator Higbie and Senator William W. Armstrong of Rochester. It established a State-aid approach under which the State would pay half the cost of projects to improve town and county roads.

[“A Better Highway Law,” December 12, 1895  
“Wheeling, Racing, and Roads,” January 1, 1896  
“The Work of the L.A.W.,” January 5, 1896  
“Gossip of the Cyclers,” January 12, 1896  
“Good Roads Hearing,” February 13, 1896]

### **Commission on Highways**

While General Stone retained a strong interest in the roads movement in New York, he had national responsibilities as a Federal official. The *Times* reported that on March 12, 1896, he attended a hearing before the Committee on Agriculture of the U.S. House of Representatives on a bill to create a Commission on highways:

The purpose of the commission is to inquire generally how the Government may further promote the improvement of highways and the best methods of securing a scientific location of highways on the public domain; the employment of the Geological Survey in the discovery of road materials and the free testing of these, and the construction of modern roads and instruction in road making at agricultural colleges and experiment stations.

Representative Charles W. Stone, a Republican from Warren County, Pennsylvania, had introduced the bill. Born in Groton, Massachusetts, Representative Stone had served in the State Legislature and as Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania before entering the U.S. House of Representatives in 1890. (After losing a bid for reelection in 1898, he practiced law in Pennsylvania until his death in 1912.)

General Stone was one of the people the *Times* identified as “interested in the proposition.” General Harrison of Asbury Park, New Jersey, and officials of the LAW were among the interested parties.

According to the *Times*, Representative Stone introduced these visitors to the committee and explained the bill. As summarized by the *Times*, he said that he “contemplated no great expense . . . no increase of salaries, and its life was limited in time.” It would simply continue “the work which the Agricultural Department had so well begun.”

Although some of the visitors testified before the committee, the *Times* did not indicate that General Stone did so.

The bill did not become law.

[“National Good Roads Hearing,” March 13, 1896]

### **Bicycling for Women**

A common feature of newspapers in the era of the great steamships was to print the names of those coming and going by sea. On April 5, 1896, the *Times* reported that General Stone had sailed for Liverpool, England, on the steamship Umbria. The brief article did not indicate whether General Stone’s family accompanied him on the trip.

The *Times* also did not record General Stone’s return (as far as the Rambler can determine), but did note on July 12 that he was among “the most prominent arrivals” in the resort of Asbury Park. Again, the *Times* did not report whether the General was alone or what he did during his visit to the resort. However, the article mentioned:

Next to bathing in the ocean, bicycle riding is the most popular exercise enjoyed by the Summer visitors. Thousands of wheelmen and wheelwomen speed along the smooth avenues in North Asbury Park every afternoon and evening, and the ocean drive to Long Branch is also alive with bicyclists. Old and young enjoy the sport, but the females who “bike” outnumber the males nearly two to one. Occasionally a maid in bloomers can be seen scorching [speeding] along the avenues, but the short-skirt costume predominates among the fair sex. On Sunday last six wheel clubs from the big cities made runs to the Park, and to-day the Mercer County Wheelmen of Trenton came here on their annual “century,” with nearly 500 participants, 40 of whom were ladies.

(Professor Smith wrote that despite efforts by dress reformers who wanted to ride a bicycle, women were still burdened by the dress of the day:

Advertisements in magazines and newspapers show the American woman gliding toward the end of the century still clad in yards and yards of heavy material that swept the floor, gathering dust and dirt. Furthermore, she was burdened with whalebone-and-canvas corsets that pinched out the “hour-glass figure” so beloved at the time. These corsets also constricted her breathing, made her subject to fainting spells, and jeopardized both mother and child during pregnancy. [Smith, p. 97]

(Attempts to change women’s dress faced scorn from husbands and fathers, limiting progress. The demands of bicycling, however, necessitated a change, especially when women rode diamond-frame bicycles requiring them to straddle the upper bar.

(By the mid-1890's, women had adopted the bloomer. It was named after Mrs. Amelia Bloomer who had begun wearing the style in the 1850's. Smith described the bloomer:

On Decoration Day of 1894, the dress designers opened the cycling season with the latest style, the bloomer costume. Bloomers, for generations that do not know them, were short, very full pants fastened at the knee, similar to the knickerbockers worn by men. They seem wholly appropriate to present-day Americans, but to a generation that had definite ideas about women who showed their legs, the bloomer costume was an eye-popper. [Smith, p. 100]

(Mrs. Bloomer never claimed that she invented the design, even though she received publicity for wearing it in the 1850's, long before the bicycle era, because the style was not only unusual but outrageous.

(The *Times* covered the controversy. On December 23, 1894, the *Times* reported on a visit to "a New-York cycle emporium." Every woman was wearing knickerbockers (baggy pants that ended below the knee), but the style was changing. According to the emporium's instructor, Mr. Price, "short skirts with leggings would be the coming dress for wheelwomen." He explained that "if a woman sits her wheel well, has her leggings free from wrinkles, and if her hat doesn't look as if she had fallen from her wheel on to it, it will not be objectionable if the skirt is not the conventional walking length."

(Nevertheless, a young man told the reporter:

Well, I'll tell you the truth," he said, "I think that when a woman takes off her skirts she loses all her charm. A young lady, a friend of mine, told me she thought of putting on bloomers, and I told her that if she did – " It is not necessary to tell just what that young man said. There has been no announcement of broken friendships, and one young woman has been spared the expense of a new bicycle suit.

(On August 2, 1895, the *Times* reported on a lawyer in Paterson, New Jersey, whose client objected to the fact that his bicycle riding wife had appeared a day or two earlier "to the utter surprise of her husband, in a pair of dark red bloomers." The article stated that, "This was too much for him," but his protests were to no avail. His wife "continued to wear the bloomers, although her husband refused to go out with her on the road." The husband wanted the lawyer to initiate a law "to put a stop to the red bloomers," but the lawyer said "he could not stop it, as the new woman was here to stay." The lawyer also counseled the husband that if he would wait a year or two "he would not only see red bloomers on the road, but would see them in the legislative halls at Trenton."

(On August 26, 1895, the *Times* reported that Judge Wilson in Little Rock, Arkansas, had dismissed the prosecution of Mrs. Noe, "who was arrested Thursday for appearing on the streets in bloomers." Judge Wilson ruled that, "Women had a constitutional and God-given right to ride a bicycle, and they are bound to have some comfortable and appropriate dress therefore." This right, like most rights, was not without limits, Judge

Wilson said. He added, “I should be disposed to give her the limit of the law” if she were “of a size that threatened to frighten horses and impede traffic” or if “her habiliments [were] of the sort originally designed by the woman whose name they bear.”

(As reflected in the article about the resort bicyclists in Asbury Park, fashions evolve, whether the Rambler likes it or not. By 1896, according to Professor Smith, “French couturiers were moving away from the bifurcated garments.” One “had already refused to make any more bloomer costumes for his customers.” Smith continued:

*Harper’s Weekly* reported as early as 1896 that the “hideous and unsexing bloomers and knickerbockers worn by some women in the early days of the wheel craze” had virtually disappeared. Although this was not quite true, nevertheless the bloomer fad did slow down, ultimately to pass away . . . . The bloomer costume might disappear, but “rational dress” in the form of the shortened skirt did not pass away. The *Minneapolis Tribune* noted that shorter skirts had become common in general outdoor wear by 1897, and no less an authority than the New York *Sun* said that the bicycle costume for women had brought about some desirable changes in women’s clothing, a reform that had long been demanded by common sense. [Smith, p. 108-109])

The Rambler has never been able to determine if General Stone was a bicyclist. He supported the LAW and worked closely with its leaders, but whether he rode a bicycle is unknown. (Similarly, the Rambler cannot determine if General Stone owned an automobile.) The Rambler does not wish to speculate, but is willing to go so far as to suppose that General Stone was pleased to see the wheelmen and wheelwomen using the smooth avenues of Asbury Park.

Clearly, he saw women as potential advocates in the fight for good roads. In a letter dated November 25, 1896, to Charles Freeman Johnson of San Francisco (and located in the National Archives at College Park, Maryland), General Stone said:

We cannot do too much to encourage women’s work in behalf of good roads. No agency will be more effective if once they are thoroughly aroused, as has been so well shown in many other lines of human progress. The interest of the women of the country districts in the improvement of means of travel and association is broder [sic] than that of the men. A Missouri delegate to a good roads convention once said to me “I don’t want to make nuns of my women folks. If I want any sport I can get on a horse and go through the mud and rain to a preaching, but they cannot do it, and that is why I am working for good roads.” One of the best contributions on road repair which this office has received is that of a daughter of the Hon. Abram Hewitt, of New York, who has had a large experience in actual road-management at their place in New Jersey. This communication I published in our Bulletin No. 8.

Bulletin No. 8, printed in 1894, was titled *Earth Roads: Hints on Their Construction and Repair*. It contained information and suggestions on “the best method of constructing a

common highway without gravel or stone,” as General Stone put it in his letter seeking approval from Secretary Morton to publish the bulletin. The final essay, “Repairs of Country Roads,” was a reprint of Sarah Cooper Hewitt’s article from *Harper’s Weekly*. It began:

So much has been said about the difficulty of making good country roads without involving a great outlay of money that it seems rather presuming to take a contrary view of the subject, but I think the matter has been much exaggerated, and that in any part of the country where clay, hardpan, gravel or disintegrated rock can be found it is quite easy to get excellent roads at comparatively little expense. I speak from some practical experience acquired in road-making in a very wild and hilly region of northern New Jersey, where we are accustomed to work out our taxes on 13 or more miles of public highways . . . .

A common county practice was to charge residents a road tax that could be paid in money or labor. Based on her experience of working the road tax, Ms. Hewitt provided a practical guide to the when, where, what, and how of country road repairs.

[“Passengers for Europe,” April 5, 1896  
“Founder Bradley’s Asbury Park,” July 12, 1896  
“Woman’s Wheeling Dress,” December 23, 1894  
“Applied for the Law on Bloomers,” August 2, 1895  
“Mrs. Noe’s Bloomers Vindicated,” August 26, 1895]

### **School Boy Leagues**

On January 31, 1897, the *Times* reported on General Stone’s proposal to enlist school children in the cause of good country roads. He had often tried to encourage country schools to get involved in the cause of good roads, a subject easily seen each day students came to school with muddy shoes or dusty clothes. The article explained that roads need daily care:

Such care would be extremely costly under the present methods of management, but Gen. Stone points out that most of the roads in the country are patrolled twice each day by schoolboys old enough to give the necessary attention to throwing out stones, opening ditches and sluices, and filling ruts and holes.

He suggested forming schoolboy road leagues in country school districts, with a few tools on hand and prizes for the best service rendered by the boys:

Country teachers, it is believed, would naturally take an interest in this work, and any improvement in the roads would of course be a benefit to the schools.

For example, where country roads had been improved in New Jersey, “schools have recalled many scholars who had been drawn away to the city schools, and who now go to school on their bicycles from miles around.”

Wear and tear on the roads, according to General Stone, cost \$40 million a year for restoration, not improvement:

By getting the schoolboys to take a hand, says Gen. Stone, “very great practical benefit to the present roads would result at little or no cost, while training up a generation of road builders for the future. It is not expected that many school districts will take up this work at first. It requires that the teachers be competent, the boys ambitious, and the road authorities liberal and progressive, and this combination will be comparatively rare. But it will be found in some places, and if the work is successful it will rapidly spread.”

The Rambler did not come across evidence of widespread schoolboy leagues, suggesting that the combination was rarer than General Stone expected.

### **Good Roads Day**

The proposal was of only minor interest because New York State had more tangible issues to consider.

On January 24, 1897, the “Gossip of the Cyclers” column in the *Times* alerted readers that the coming year would be one in which bicyclists and their partners in the Grange would work hard “to secure legislation favoring an improvement in the highways.” The LAW would be holding its National Assembly in Albany in early February, with the first day, February 10, designated Good Roads Day. The LAW’s Empire State Division planned to use the day to promote a good roads bill it had drafted, along with the Grange, and would introduce in the State legislature “providing for the systematic improvement of the highways.” Prospects were good:

It is confidently believed that the bill will become a law, its provisions being such that it is hard to think of anybody objecting to it.

The columnist identified General Stone as participating on behalf of the Department of Agriculture and indicated that other speakers would be “of almost equal prominence in this important work.”

On February 7, the column elaborated on Good Roads Day—“one whole day (Wednesday) will be devoted to the discussion of highway improvements and the best means to secure them.” The column explained that, “A year ago at the annual meeting in Baltimore the first day of the convention was given over to this purpose, and it proved one of the features of the assembly.” Good Roads Day in Albany would be “doubly interesting from the attendance of some very prominent men in the league and the Government service.” Gen Stone “will be among those present.” The column stated that, “He has long been associated in good-roads work, and is a most entertaining talker on this question.”

The next day, in an article bylined in Albany on February 7, the *Times* reported that proceedings in the State Legislature were going to be “of a routine character” that week. Hearings would be held on a number of bills, including bills on civil service, regulating marriage, and local topics such as building heights in New York City. However, the article ended by noting that legislators “will be interested in proceedings of the National Convention of the League of American Wheelmen, which opens a three day session here Wednesday” with a Good Roads Day. The LAW had invited the legislators to attend. “The Good Roads bill favored by the Wheelmen already has been introduced in the Legislature and hearings on the measure before the legislative committee will begin next week.”

Good Roads Day opened on Wednesday, February 10, with delegates from every State except Florida and Louisiana (the Florida delegate was en route). The *Times* reported on February 11 that, Miss Mabel Woodberry of Danville, Illinois, “bears the distinction of being the first woman to act as a delegate in a League of American Wheelmen Assembly.”

LAW President Sterling Elliott gave a brief speech on the value of good roads before introducing Lieutenant Governor Timothy L. Woodruff. He spoke of the need for improved roads, but where that was not possible, cycle paths should be provided:

Where roads or streets are not adapted by nature or by improvement for wheeling, and cannot be made available without great expense, there should be constructed, if practicable, cycle paths for the exclusive use of the riders of the wheel. This plan was carried out in Brooklyn during the recent administration of the Department of Parks, and to-day her cycle paths furnish for the three millions of people of the Greater New York the finest wheel facilities in the world—from the very heart of the great municipality to the delightful roads which stretch throughout the length and breadth of Long Island . . . .

He had a caution for the LAW members:

Throughout the State, improvements of this exceptional character, involving great expense cannot and should not be entertained; indeed, they are not needed. What we do require is a systematic, intelligent and aggressive development of the roadways, with which nature has so plentifully endowed our great and beautiful Commonwealth.

Such roads would benefit not only the wheelmen and wheelwomen but the farmers. Everyone, regardless of political affiliation, “should co-operate with you [the LAW] in extending to this worthy object the power of the State and its financial assistance as far as the proper care of its many great and eleemosynary [charitable] interests will permit.”

He had campaigned with a promise to “put forth my best efforts” to work with those who favored good roads and “I am now prepared to do all in my power to redeem that promise.”

The article briefly reviewed the day's other speeches, including General Harrison's afternoon address on "his experiences while traveling through New York and Pennsylvania in the interests of highway improvements." He reported that the farmers were beginning to come around to the cause.

General Stone was not listed as speaking on Good Roads Day. However, he addressed the LAW's Good Roads Banquet on February 11. The *Times* did not report on the speech, but General Stone reprinted it in ORI Circular 28, a collection of his addresses around the country. He knew he didn't have "to preach good roads to the wheelmen" because every wheelman "is a preacher, a worker, and a fighter for good roads." All the wheelmen needed were the "texts for preaching, tools to work with, and weapons to fight with, and then to hold him back when his zeal outruns his discretion."

He recalled his first experience with the LAW 5 years earlier:

In my first experience, five years ago, with the help of the League of American Wheelmen, under the guidance of President Burdett and the active and able leadership of ex-President Dunn, and when the league had less than half of its present strength, I found how potent an agency it could be made; our bill for a national highway commission was pushed through the Senate of the United States almost entirely by the wheelmen's aid, and only failed in the House of Representatives through the determination of one man who had it in his power to put his foot upon it, and he was one who came from a district where the roads were so bad that he had scarcely a wheelman for a constituent. In that context the most grave and reverend seniors of the Senate were startled by the enthusiasm of their constituents for good roads, as shown by the flood of telegrams and columns of editorials, all of which I happened to know were inspired by our friends of the wheel.

The national commission having failed, General Stone said, "we organized a National League of Good Roads" that led to creation of the ORI:

We are ready through that office to furnish facts and arguments showing why good roads are necessary, how they can be built, and how they are being built in many parts of this great country. We have a whole arsenal of weapons now at your service.

The next step in the movement was to convince the farmers that good roads were in their interest:

In your discussion with the farmers and their representatives, you can bring to bear this powerful argument: That it is time to do away with the cruel injustice which places upon them and upon the small fraction of the property in the State which they hold the entire burden of building highways for the whole people.

The “burden of the bad-roads tax,” in the form of unnecessary expenditures, “is infinitely greater than the tax for road building and repair.” He said:

And when the wheelmen’s league and all the farmers’ associations pull together harmoniously in this direction, working only for justice and the public welfare, there is no limit to the power they may exercise and the good they may accomplish.

Prosperity for the whole country will date from the happy hour in which that beneficent combination is established.

He discussed the value of good roads (“That good roads will bring prosperity is no idle dream”), the need to involve cities in the cause, and the benefit of employing convict labor for good roads.

Since most participants in the banquet were from New York, General Stone estimated that bad roads cost the State about \$30 million annually (“and this is no guesswork, but the result of careful investigation and computation”). “This loss is wholly chargeable to bad government, and the remedy for it ought to be the first concern of the lawmakers of the State.” No other cause could “compare with it in magnitude or in pressing importance.” It was not as if the solution were hard to find – “no further study of the subject is needed and no experiment is required.” He advocated the State-aid approach used in Massachusetts and other States:

If the best available intelligence of this State can be set to work to apply their example and adapt their experience to the conditions that exist here, it need not be long till New York is abreast of the leaders in the race.

He concluded:

Taking New Jersey for a pattern in State aid and California for the use of convicts in preparing road materials, we have all the legislation that is needed . . . . Put your idle prisoners at this work in this State and you have solved the convict-labor question as well as the road question.

Following the Albany convention, General Stone went to Orlando, Florida, for the National Good Roads Congress. He was selected to chair the convention and “what he had to say was closely followed by his auditors.” Reporting that the “discussions were all entertaining and instructive” and resulted in “much benefit,” the columnist did not indicate what was said.

According to a *Times* article on February 26, 1897, General Stone attended the Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means Committee’s hearing on the LAW good roads bill on February 25:

The committee gave a hearing upon the Good Roads bill now pending in the Legislature, especially upon the measure introduced by Senator Higbie and Assemblyman Armstrong, which was prepared under the supervision of President Isaac B. Potter of the National League of American Wheelmen.

The article reported that one witness, A. B. Crocker of Bethlehem Centre, “bitterly opposed the bill, as being too much a burden for the farmers to stand at present.” County Engineer McLaughlin of Queens County requested an exemption from any expense under the bill for his county because the county “had already expended \$3,000,000 for repairs to roads, and that it felt it had done sufficient for this cause.”

Other than that, “There were no further objections.” The article concluded that, “All the other gentlemen present favored the bill.” It did not state whether General Stone testified before the joint committees.

[“Schoolboys and Roads,” January 31, 1897  
“Gossip of the Cyclers,” January 24, 1897  
“Gossip of the Cyclers,” February 7, 1897  
“The New York Legislature,” February 8, 1897  
“American Wheelmen Meet,” February 11, 1897  
“Gossip of the Cyclers,” February 21, 1897  
“The Good Roads Question,” February 26, 1897]

## **Mazamas**

A mazamas, according to an article in the *Times* on July 18, 1897, is a species of mountain goat, as well as the name of a mountain climbing club on the North Pacific Coast. After describing the club and its activities, the article explained that in 1897, the plan was to visit Washington State’s Mount Rainier, “the largest and highest mountain in the United States,” beginning July 20. Because scientific research was a feature of all Mazamas enterprises, the group made “a very special effort . . . to interest and secure the co-operation of the scientific departments of the Government.” Officials of Agencies such as the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Fish Commission had agreed to participate. Other officials were expected to be assigned to participate, including General Stone. (The article listed his name without explaining why Mazamas thought it would need a roadbuilder on Mount Rainier.)

Whether General Stone participated, the *Times* search engine is unable to reveal. However, the Rambler is reasonably certain General Stone did not join this ill-fated expedition. The July 31 edition of the *Times* reported that Professor Edgar McClure of Oregon State University fell down a 300-foot precipice to his death, while two other climbers “had terrible experiences”:

H. A. Ainslie and George Rogers of Portland, Oregon, got lost in a manner very similar to McClure’s experience, and fell forty feet into a crevasse on Cowlitz glacier. Both were rendered unconscious, but Ainslie was not so severely stunned

as his companion. With great effort he succeeded in climbing over ice to the top, and then crawled two miles to Camp Mazama and gave warning.

Rescuers found Rogers who “was taken out nearly dead and carried to the camp.”

That same afternoon, a party of six, including William Pierce of Pendleton, Oregon, started for the summit:

After climbing several hours, Mr. Pierce turned around on the Cowlitz ice fields and greatly alarmed his companions by his agitation. He was prostrated and partially demented from gazing down the frightful precipice on both sides, for thousands of feet downward perpendicular walls of ice greeting the eye.

Meanwhile, Professor Brown of Stanford University began his ascent alone, became lost above Gibraltar Rock, and wandered around for hours before “finally sinking down behind some rocks exhausted. A rescue party found him and returned him to Camp Mazama just in time. “In an hour he would have been frozen to death.”

[“Mountaineering Extraordinary,” July 18, 1897  
“Accidents on Mt. Rainier,” July 31, 1897]

### **Object-Lesson Roads**

Following the election of Ohio Governor William McKinley as President in 1896, the Department of Agriculture loosened restrictions on the ORI. Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson encouraged General Stone to emphasize the practical, scientific, and experimental over the academic.

One outgrowth of the new approach was the object-lesson road program, an idea General Stone borrowed from Massachusetts. The idea was to build short stretches of good roads, initially at the Department’s agricultural experiment stations, partly to educate local citizens, engineers, and officials and partly to create support for good roads on the theory that “seeing is believing.” ORI, with its small budget, had to rely on donations of equipment and material, but General Stone hired General Harrison to take charge of the important new program.

General Harrison built the first object-lesson road in June 1897 at the entrance to the New Jersey Agriculture College and Experiment Station in New Brunswick. The Federal cost was \$321. In addition to building the road, General Harrison lectured area residents and officials on what he was doing. (Harrison would lead the object-lesson team until his death in February 1901.)

On August 1, 1897, the *Times* reported on the second project, this one at the New York Experiment Station in Geneva:

It is learned that the second of the sample roads to be built in connection with the newly established Office of Road Inquiry is at present in its first stages of construction at this place . . . . The director of the station (W. H. Jordan) desires that the citizens of New York, especially those who have the care of roads or who are engaged as engineers or otherwise in road construction, shall visit and inspect this operation while it is in progress, in order that the maximum benefit from this educational road building may be derived.

Wednesday and Thursday of each week are set apart for visitors. During these days either Gen. Roy Stone [of] the Road Inquiry Office or Special Agent E. G. Harrison will be present to explain the work to them. A movement is on foot to have each county select a day when its visitors shall visit Geneva in a body.

General Stone's article on "Object-Lesson Roads" appeared in the 1897 *Yearbook of the Department of Agriculture*. [p. 373-382] After summarizing the work on Nichol Avenue and College Avenue in New Brunswick, he reprinted General Harrison's report on the Geneva work. Harrison had visited the area in the spring to arrange for construction of a sample road from the experiment station to Arch Bridge on Castle Street. Estimating a cost of \$7,000 to \$8,000, Harrison approached two property owners along the road; they agreed to contribute \$1,000 or more if necessary. He returned in May to secure village funding. He addressed a citizens' tax meeting on May 18 to explain the plan for the object-lesson road. "The appropriation of \$3,000 was carried by a vote of 60 to 4."

The Good Roads Machinery Company of Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, and the Buffalo-Pitts Company of Buffalo, New York, provided equipment without charge that was worth \$6,000 to \$7,000. Work began on July 16, but was not finished until November 8:

The road was an expensive one, owing in part to the fact that it was a city street, requiring attention to sewers and gas and water pipes, and also requiring grading to a nicety not necessary in a country road. The grading also was very difficult, owing to the fact that the road had been graveled for many years with very coarse material, including a large amount of cobblestones. It was designed to make a good smooth dirt road alongside of the stone road, and to do this required that all cobblestones or coarse gravel be removed. The expense was further increased by the necessity of hauling most of the field stone which were used for the foundation over a distance of several miles and bringing the trap rock surface material a distance of over 300 miles from the Palisades of the Hudson River.

The length of the road was increased by extending the work from Arch Bridge to Main Street, making a little over 1½ miles in all . . . . The foundation was entirely of crushed field stone laid 5 inches thick with a surfacing of trap rock 3 inches thick.

During the construction of this road it was visited by many hundreds of farmers from different portions of the State, including officials from half the counties of the State.

Total cost was \$9,046.32, with the experiment station contributing \$1,040.73 along with funds from the town and three citizens. The result “seems to be meeting with favor,” especially the portion on Castle Street “from Mr. Mellin’s to the Octagon House.” Harrison added, “The only unsatisfactory piece is that portion between the brick pavement and Main Street.” Mud had been carried onto it and when it dried, “it has appeared to roll up on the wheels and take some of the surfacing of the road with it.” Nevertheless, the new road was “getting a very large amount of use” and was “the only place where the horsemen could drive” along with “everyone who had a load to draw.” He added “that the town of Geneva has purchased the road machinery.” [p. 376-378]

As 1897 came to an end, the LAW was increasing its role in promoting good roads. The Gossip of the Cyclers column reported on December 19, 1897, that the LAW’s National Committee for Highway Improvement had proposed to distribute 1 million pamphlets on the good roads movement, especially the merits of State aid. Otto Dorner, the committee’s chairman, “is preparing the book for the press, with the assistance of Gen. Roy Stone.” The pamphlet would be distributed to farmers and State and local officials.

The article explained that, “Gen. Stone has issued, since the establishment of the Good Roads Bureau, some fifty different bulletins relating to various phases of the good roads problem, and containing a great deal of valuable information, but the appropriations made by Congress for the support of the bureau being limited in amount, it has been impossible to circulate the bulletins upon a large scale.” The national committee proposed to supplement this effort.

In 1898, the ORI published ORI Circular No. 31, Dorner’s *Must the Farmer Pay for Good Roads?* It stated that just as the burden of bad roads was shared by all, every citizen of the State and Nation should share in the cost of repairing them. The circular proved to be the ORI’s most popular, in part because the ORI used a mailing list provided by the LAW to send free copies to 300,000 farmers.

[“Sample Road Building,” August 1, 1897  
“Gossip of the Cyclers,” December 19, 1897]

### **The Grand Highway**

On February 20, 1898, Gossip of the Cyclers reported on a “most alluring scheme to the wheelmen,” namely a grand highway across the continent. It was not a new idea, but one that General Stone had recently revived. In an 1895 speech to the Tennessee Road Convention, he had called it the Great Road of America, a transcontinental highway that would join at right angles with similar highways spanning the East and West Coasts. The column quoted General Stone on the financing of the proposal under which the States through which the highway would pass and the general government would “bear the expenses, which would ultimately be repaid from the benefits of such a concourse.” He explained:

Suppose that property were to be assessed with a long term of payment, in installments running up to ten, fifteen, or twenty years, and suppose the property actually adjoining the road were to be assessed \$2 an acre, for instance, and the next half mile back a little less, and so on, but always giving the party owning the property the privilege of selling out his land at a valuation if he did not choose to pay the assessment, and of buying back again by paying the interest if he found he had made a mistake. The Government could well afford to make that liberal proposition, and it would result in nearly all the present property owners getting the actual benefit of the increase of the value of their property and paying the assessment entirely out of such increase of value.

This idea would not be adopted, as General Stone probably realized.

[“Gossip of the Cyclers,” February 20, 1898]

### **Spanish-American War**

*Portrait of a General* discussed the origins of the Spanish-American War and General Stone’s participation in it. In short, the explosion of the U.S.S. Maine in Havana harbor, attributed to the Spanish military, prompted President McKinley to ask Congress on April 11, 1898, for permission to use American forces to end Spanish rule in Cuba. He also asked for 125,000 volunteers for the war, and would need officers to lead them.

General Stone requested a leave of absence to serve under General Nelson A. Miles, the Commanding General of the United States Army. On May 12, 1898, the *Times* reported that General Stone had offered his services and that General Miles had recommended that they be accepted. Secretary Wilson “heartily acquiesced in the suggestion.” As a result, “Gen. Stone is now installed for temporary duty in the War Department.” The article continued:

The Agricultural Department owns road-making machinery with which it has experimented, and this outfit has been placed at the disposal of the War Department. Nothing definite will be done by Gen. Stone until word is received from Col. Ludlow of the Engineer Corps, who is now at Tampa, and is being consulted as to what is necessary.

General Miles, the article stated, considered it “especially important” to be “fully equipped with supplies and the most improved machinery for the construction of roads and railroads, and also with experts in the use of such machinery and construction.”

General Stone was appointed Brigadier General of United States Volunteers on June 8, consistent with his rank during the Civil War. He accepted the appointment on June 14. While he was away, President McKinley brought his friend and former associate in Ohio, Martin Dodge, to Washington as Acting Director of the ORI.

On June 24, the *Times* reported that General Stone, serving on General Miles' staff, "has prepared a manual for the use of troops operating in Cuba, covering the most expeditious means of cutting military roads through the tangled tropical vegetation, swamps, and underbrush" the army would encounter. In preparing the manual, General Stone had studied Cuban soil, vegetation, and timber growth. In addition to "having a personal acquaintance with the country," he had collected photographs and maps showing the topography of the island. (The Rambler does not know when General Stone had visited Cuba.)

He emphasized the use of the guava tree or bush, "which grows in luxurious abundance" throughout Cuba:

He gives diagrams by which this is to be cut and the boughs bound upward, making a compact roll, about the size of a small log. These guava bundles, known as fascines, are laid lengthwise, one row of bundles lapping over another, like shingles. There are successive layers of these bound together, making a serviceable roadway strong enough for troops, and even for field ordnance.

The article quoted the pamphlet:

If the road is an important one, it should have about sixteen feet of travelway, and, to allow for ditches on either side, the ground should be cleared at least thirty feet wide. Running through a wooded country, the advance or clearing party should be equipped with axes, machetes, bush scythes, and a few forks, and should be instructed to cut and clear away all vines, weeds, and small undergrowth, and to bind up into bundles all small bushes less than an inch in diameter at the ground, these bundles to be kept for repairs of roads. If there is heavy timber, the second gang, equipped with axes and saws, will chop out all trees, leaving the roots in the ground, and saw the trees into such lengths as will allow the logs to be hauled or rolled off the roadway.

A third gang would then go through the area with axes, hatchets, and twine to create the fascines for the roadbed. The article stated that in crossing swampy ground, the gang should first place a layer of poles or canes lengthwise on the road, with the fascines on top. "While these bush roads might seem insecure, they are, as a matter of fact, more solid than an ordinary corduroy road, the bundles of bushes being crowded together with crowbars until they lie with the solidity of baled hay."

The manual also provided details on grubbing out timber, making sluiceways, and using sugar cane "as one of the best layers for improving the sandy roads." The bark of the palm tree also could be used for this purpose. However, General Stone warned against using pine needles "as they work to the surface and are liable to be burned off," according to the *Times* article.

General Stone was still in Washington on July 3 when the U.S. Navy destroyed the Spanish fleet as it tried to escape a blockade of the harbor of Santiago in Cuba. On July

8, 1898, the *Times* reported that General Miles and his party, including General Stone, had left Washington on the Southern Railway for Charleston, South Carolina. General Miles intended to go on to Santiago to take charge of operations.

Shipping supplies from the harbor to troops in Cuba was a problem. According to an article in the *Times* on July 14, 1898, the Army imported stevedores from Tampa, Florida, to help unload the ships and move supplies to where they were needed. Additional help was on the way:

When Gen. Miles sailed from Charleston for Cuba he left Gen. Roy Stone of his staff in that city to engage several hundred negro laborers to be taken to Santiago to build roads, dig trenches, and help generally in making easy the path of the American Army. This work in ordinary circumstances is done by the soldiers themselves, and the men at Santiago have done a vast amount of it uncomplainingly, but it is recognized that the extraordinary conditions at Santiago make unusual methods necessary and that a few hundred negroes will be able to relieve the men of some of the hardships to which they have been exposed.

Gen. Stone has succeeded in hiring the men he wants and they are now at Charleston awaiting transportation. They will be hurried forward as soon as possible, and as soon as they get there will be put to work under the direction of Gen. Stone, who, as an expert road builder, will be able to make effective use of them in that work.

Neither the laborers nor General Stone made it to Cuba.

[“Roadmakers for the Army,” May 12, 1898  
“Road Making in Cuba,” June 24, 1898  
“Miles to the Front,” July 8, 1898  
“Laborers for Santiago,” July 14, 1898]

### **In Puerto Rico**

When the fight for control of Cuba ended a few days later, on July 17, General Miles turned his attention to Puerto Rico.

His first problem was getting there from Cuba. Despite detailed plans for his transportation to Puerto Rico with an escort of warships, his departure was delayed, as the *Times* reported on July 21, 1898 (dateline July 20):

Gen. Miles failed to get away from Guantanamo last night with the vanguard of the Puerto Rico expedition, and he lays the blame for the delay on the navy . . . . No light is shed by either army or navy officials here [in Washington] on the puzzling question as to why there should have been any delay in the providing of a naval escort for this advance guard of this expedition. In view of the fact that nearly the entire strength of the navy is massed in the vicinity of Santiago and that

the need of a convoy has been known for a week, the present delay, which War Department officials of the highest grade unhesitatingly blame the navy for, is felt to be unnecessary, to say the least.

The article outlined the forces General Miles intended to use during the invasion. In addition to the usual combat forces, a large engineering corps would be accompanying the General "and he has assigned to the expeditionary force full complements of hospital and signal detachments." The article continued:

To make the outfit still more complete, 600 negro laborers engaged at Charleston will be sent along to build docks, clear and mend roads, unload transports, and do such other heavy labor as they may be called on for.

Because the plan was to take and occupy the entire island, not just the capital, the road and rail network and the harbors were critical:

For the execution of such a scheme the preliminary seizure of one of the fine harbors on the south coast, near Ponce, the second city to San Juan in size and importance, is considered desirable, and this is what the advance guard under Gen. Miles is expected to do.

The best road in [sic] the island runs from Ponce to the capital, and the march of the invading army along this highway would drive the Spanish force gradually back upon San Juan, whose capture after a combined land assault from the rear and bombardment from the front by the warships would be a matter of hours only.

San Juan so lies that the fleet can remain out of range of the shore batteries and shell the town effectively. It is significant of the intention to do a good deal of marching in Puerto Rico that whereas little wagon transportation was sent with the Santiago force, the two brigades of [Generals] Ernest and Haines already under way to Puerto Rico have orders to take all their mules and wagons with them. This transportation will be available on the macadamized roads of Puerto Rico.

By July 22, General Miles and his forces were well on their way, but he sent the following dispatch to Washington:

Am disappointed in non-arrival of Col. Hecker with construction corps. Col. Black arrived without snag boats or lighters. Please send at least four strong sea-going steam lighters and tugs. Also Gen. Stone's boats at Jacksonville, if not already sent, as soon as possible. Moving along well.

The article indicated that transportation would also be provided for 400 laborers engaged by contract, and "the 600 negro laborers engaged by Gen. Stone at Charleston." The article also explained that General Miles' reference to "Gen. Stone's boats at Jacksonville" referred to lumber boats.

An article on July 24 again discussed transportation conditions in Puerto Rico based on a recently released "Military Notes on Puerto Rico" by the War Department's Bureau of Information:

From Yauco to Ponce, a distance of some ten or twelve miles, a railroad runs, followed for its entire course by a wagon road, both following the coast line so closely that an army proceeding along them would be under the protection of the fleet for the whole distance . . . . From Ponce to San Juan the road is eighteen feet wide, with twelve feet in the centre laid with pounded stone. The streams are crossed by iron bridges and the road is in good shape for travel all the year.

A separate article that same day (datelined July 23) noted that several ships were en route, while the Ute, "chartered to take 600 negro laborers to Puerto Rico," was at Charleston. A third article stated that the ship was on its way to Jacksonville with 300,000 feet of lumber and the "force of negro workmen." It added:

At Charleston she will stop to get Gen. Roy Stone, who is an expert in road and pier building.

A July 26 article (datelined July 25) picked up the transport arrangement:

The Ute took on 600 negro laborers at Charleston to-day and is understood to have sailed for Jacksonville, where she is to ship a lot of landing boats secured by Gen. Stone of Gen. Miles's staff.

The Ute headed to Puerto Rico on August 3, with 75 mechanics, the Negro laborers, and about 600,000 feet of lumber "which will be used in constructing pontoons and buildings for use by United States troops in their invasion of the islands." All kinds of other building material were included as well.

Although the Rambler has been able to trace the departure of the Negro laborers for Puerto Rico, he has not found references to their work. From future references to General Stone, as discussed below, they were not assigned to him. As a result, the Rambler will move on to General Stone's activities on the island.

General Stone arrived in Ponce, Puerto Rico, on July 25, with General George Garretson's brigade as a member of the Corps of Engineers. The *Times* first reported on General Stone's activities in Puerto Rico on August 1. A story datelined Ponce, July 29, said:

Gen. Garretson's brigade is massed at Yauco, the terminus of the railway, fifteen miles off, and will probably remain there until the army is ready to move, but it is thought that the artillery will be brought here immediately. The railroad is in good order, but much of the rolling stock has been destroyed. Yesterday Gen. Roy Stone found several engines wrecked. The machinery had been taken to

pieces by Spanish sympathizers and hidden. Gen. Stone gave them two hours to get the engines into working order, under penalty of imprisonment, and in less than that time the engines had steam up and were ready to move.

On August 6, 1898 (dateline August 5), the *Times* reported that while General Miles prepared his troops to advance, "Gen. Roy Stone is repairing the road to Arcibo, but a movement there is improbable."

An article published August 17, 1898, datelined Ponce on August 3, explained that a reporter had accompanied General Stone on July 26:

Last Tuesday the writer accompanied a reconnoitering expedition under Gen. Roy Stone of Pennsylvania into the mountains north of Ponce. It was remarkable in more ways than one. Gen. Miles had ascertained that the enemy's position at Albonito was almost impregnable and he had decided to turn the left flank of the Spanish position by landing Gen. Brooks's force at Arroyo and thence moving his column to Cayoy, in the rear of the Spanish position at Albonito. The advisability of a movement by our left flank was also discussed. This could be done if the road across the mountains to Arcibo on the north coast was passable.

The reports were that there was a fine carriage road from Utuado to Arcibo. The only question was as to the character of the road as far as the former point. Gen. Stone volunteered to make the reconnaissance. He took with him several men of the Signal Corps, four newspaper correspondents in carriages, armed with Remingtons [i.e., typewriters], and C Company of the Second Wisconsin. The start was made at noon.

The road led straight up to the tip of the mountain for ten miles, and the infantry company was soon far behind. The carriages were drawn by native ponies, and went up the mountain on a gallop, except when the reckless drivers stopped to breathe the animals. It was right into the heart of the enemy's country. The road rises to an altitude of five thousand feet, and is an extension of the military road from San Juan to Ponce, which cost 25,000,000 Spanish pesos. Even to the top it is a marvelous piece of engineering. At times it is hewn out of the solid rock, hanging over sheer cliffs a thousand feet deep. At others it spans gorges with stone bridges. The scenery of the Alps, though bolder, of course, is not more beautiful. Everything is covered with luxurious tropical verdure, even the rocks. Brilliant flowering plants and trees splash the green with vivid color.

Once at the top, the completed military road is ended; and then we started on to Adjuntas, ten miles off. The drivers drove like jehus. ["Jehus" was a common nickname for stagecoach drivers. The term derives from an Old Testament reference at 2 Kings 9:20: "and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi: for he driveth furiously."] The vehicles had no brakes, and the little ponies on the descent, were on the "dead run" to keep away from the wheels. Bounding, turning, swaying, now an inch from a precipice on but two wheels, and

now swinging into the side of the cliff, the occupants holding on for dear life, the vehicles went at a tremendous pace as the drivers whipped on their mad beasts. One false step, a stumble, would have sent us whirling into space. Few Western stage drivers could have safely accomplished this feat.

Adjuntas was a coffee-trading center surrounded by coffee haciendas that employed the inhabitants. [*Puerto Rico: A Guide to the Island of Boriquén*, American Guide Series, The University Society, Inc., 1940, p. 362]. When General Stone and his few companions arrived in Adjuntas, they found “women and children lining the streets [who] bombarded us with bouquets of roses, fuschias, and wild flowers, while the men who formed the background cheered the Americans and cried ‘Down with Spain!’” As residents waved a few American flags, the Alcalde (Mayor) formally greeted General Stone, who addressed the people from the veranda of the Town Hall:

In their enthusiasm the people could not wait for the translation. At every sentence they cheered. Then they cheered the translation.

The festivities ended in the evening with the citizens offering to put up the members of the party.

Gen. Stone finally accepted the invitation of a rich Englishman, who had lived there fifty-four years. His children spoke nothing but Spanish and French, and the old gentleman was so delighted that he could himself still speak English that he would not take no for an answer.

The next day, General Stone continued on to Utuado, where the Spanish defenses quickly fell.

Although General Stone had other adventures in Puerto Rico, the *Times* did not cover them, so the Rambler moves on. (See “Portrait of a General” for additional details.) The Spanish lowered their flag in San Juan on October 18, 1898, effectively ending the Cuban phase of the war.

A tiny article in the *Times* on November 4, 1898, reported:

On board the steamer Philadelphia of the Red D Line, which arrived last evening from Ponce, Puerto Rico, were Brig. Gen. Roy Stone, Col. Edward Hunter, and Col. George W. Goethals, en route to Washington.

(In 1907, President Roosevelt selected Colonel Goethals, an engineer with the U.S. Corps of Engineers, as chief engineer of the Panama Canal, which would be completed in 1914.)

[“Miles Delayed by the Navy,” July 21, 1898

“Army Speeding to Puerto Rico,” July 23, 1898

“Miles May Reach Puerto Rico To-Day,” July 24, 1898

“Army Has a Navy of its Own,” July 24, 1898  
“Movements of Transports,” July 24, 1898  
“Men for Miles are Delayed,” July 26, 1898  
“Puerto Rico an Easy Conquest,” August 1, 1898  
“Lumber for Miles’s Army, August 4, 1898  
“Not Stopped by Peace Talk,” August 6, 1898  
“Spaniards Made no Fight,” August 17, 1898  
“Gen. Roy Stone Arrives from Ponce,” November 4, 1898]

### **After the War**

A longer article that same day printed an extract of a letter General Stone had written to Martin Dodge to be read before the National Road Parliament at the Omaha Exposition. Unfortunately, the letter arrived too late for that purpose. The *Times* quoted two paragraphs from General Stone’s letter about road conditions in Puerto Rico:

I can only add to all that I have heretofore said in favor of the [good roads] movement a warning and reproof drawn from a country where, except for a few military lines, no roads have ever been built, and where the bulk of the product of a marvelously rich soil is carried to market on the heads of men and women or the backs of diminutive animals. As a result of this neglect, together with other kindred causes, the agricultural population of the island, although industrious and frugal, is so poor as to be almost without shelter, furniture, or clothing, and entirely without supplies of food, so that their trifling wages must be paid day by day to enable them to continue this hopeless existence.

If the change to American possession can be made to bring the blessings of good roads to this island, the lesson may react upon the continent itself and aid the work of road improvement at home; and this is one thing which encourages me in my local work here [in Puerto Rico] and consoles me for my absence from the greater field. With liberal treatment by our Government I hope to see here a quick example of the effects of good communications by road, railroad, and water on a heretofore homebound people.

On February 5, 1899, the *Times* carried an article titled “A Lesson in Patriotism,” referring to the joy of seeing the American flag abroad. The article recounted an incident the previous August when forces under Generals Garretson and Guy V. Henry had left Ponce on a march that would take them across two mountain ranges to the Atlantic Coast. After a difficult mountain march, General Henry had gone ahead to Adjuntas which “a week previously, had ignominiously capitulated to Gen. Roy Stone, two Signal Corps men, and four newspaper correspondents, and was then, so its inhabitants thought, American territory.” The Alcalde “in the fullness of his joy at the appearance of the commander of the invaders” hoisted a tattered American flag over the Town Hall.

When the weary troops followed General Henry into the city, one of their leaders, Colonel Rice, saw the flag:

With the patriotic reverence inherent in the breast of the regular soldier he took off his hat and passed on without giving a sign. Almost at the same moment the leader of the band observed the emblem and intuitively he started his men playing Sousa's stirring "Stars and Stripes" march.

Finally, his men saw the flag:

Then, with a unanimity that was almost perfect, the hundred men broke into a cheer, thrice repeated, while every hat was doffed. As each company passed the flag these cheers were repeated and the salute given, much to the amazement of the natives, who had never heard an American soldier's cheer before.

The following day, when the natives passed the flag, they also removed their hats in tribute.

On April 4, 1899, the *Times* reported on the return of Inspector General Joseph C. Breckinridge following an inspection tour of Puerto Rico. In several weeks of riding across the island, he found considerable discontent and a danger of uprisings. The people were divided among those who favored annexation to the United States, returning to the Spanish flag, and establishing an autonomous country. Many believed they were under a military government. General Breckinridge also reported that General Stone "is engaged in constructing a railway across Puerto Rico, from the southeast to the northwest corner." This line would complement a railroad running diagonally across the island, northeast to southwest.

Poverty had worsened. "Over 100,000 of the natives . . . have been without bread and meat for six weeks, and are on the verge of starvation," the *Times* reported on April 26, 1899. The day before, the article stated that General Stone and the Executive Committee of the National Red Cross had called on President McKinley "to lay before him a plan for the partial relief of the destitution in Puerto Rico." The article added that, "The aid the military authorities in Puerto Rico were able to give to the natives in the way of distribution of rations and employment on the roads has been greatly reduced since the free distribution of rations was suspended."

General Stone's plan was for Puerto Rico to ship coffee to the United States to be sold through the Red Cross, with the proceeds helping relieve the country. The coffee and other products, such as crystal sugar, fruits, preserves, cigars, and cigarettes, would be sold in coffee rooms to be established in principal cities by the Red Cross.

(Puerto Rican coffee had primarily been marketed in Spain and Cuba. Following the Spanish-American War, Spain established high tariffs that blocked import of Puerto Rican coffee. Cuba, which was beginning to grow its own coffee, also erected tariff barriers, leaving Puerto Rican coffee growers without an international market. General Stone discussed these issues in an article on "Agriculture in Puerto Rico" for the 1898 *Yearbook of the Department of Agriculture* [p. 505-514]. He explained that the island

country was in a depression because of its loss of established markets. The price of coffee had fallen 40 percent since the summer of 1898. General Stone added that:

An additional, and the most serious, cause of the extremely low price of coffee is the excess of more than 6,000,000 sacks in this year's production in Brazil. This, together with the comparatively short crop in Puerto Rico, has reduced the income of the island planters this year to less than one-third of the usual amount, leaving them in debt for previous advances and without means to make a new crop.

(Planters had so little capital that they had discharged most of their laborers and, in some cases, abandoned cultivation.

(Although Puerto Rican coffee did not have a market in the United States, it was "considered among the best in the world" in Europe:

If it could be favorably introduced here, the increased demand would at once advance its price, which would give new credit to the Puerto Rican planters and enable them to resume work.

(The Depression-era American Guide Series volume on Puerto Rico offered an additional concern:

The use of Puerto Rican money was abolished in 1899 and United States currency substituted on the basis of 60 American cents for one peso. This necessitated readjustment of local values, temporarily to the disadvantage of the Island whose economy was based on the peso. At the time coffee was the economic mainstay of the Island, which exported 58,000,000 pounds. The coffee planters, encouraged by a consistent demand for their product in European markets during the latter half of the nineteenth century, had gone into an orgy of coffee production. They mortgaged their properties in order to buy more land, and the change of currency automatically increased their mortgage burden. [p. 55-56])

General Henry, who had been appointed Governor of Puerto Rico on December 6, 1898 (serving through May 17, 1899), disputed reports of poverty conditions. On May 5, 1899, the *Times* reported on a dispatch from General Henry to Acting Secretary of War Meiklejohn. Reports of starvation, General Henry said, were exaggerated: "over \$100,000 a month is spent on roads; over 12,000 men employed; more money is distributed direct to people now every month than they have had for years." He added that "nature here is too bountiful" for people to starve. Secretary Meiklejohn also had a letter from Philip C. Hanna, Consul in San Juan, reporting on the "successful efforts to Americanize the island by the adoption of American methods and regulations, all of which appears to be very acceptable to the business men of Puerto Rico."

The *Times* pointed out that these reports were in response to Secretary Meiklejohn's effort to determine if General Stone's report of dismal conditions and starvation were accurate.

General Stone's interest in Puerto Rico would continue, as reflected in an article on July 29, 1901 about the gradual recovery of the island. The article stressed how the U.S.-oriented Executive Council that governed the island had imposed restrictions that blocked foreign investment needed to invigorate the economy. "When the Executive Council came into being [in 1900] there were upward of thirty applications for franchises of various sorts," but the only franchise of importance "that have been granted are for a railway, issued to Gen. Roy Stone, which is now seeking capital," plus a trolley line in Ponce, and water power rights.

[“No Roads in Puerto Rico,” November 4, 1898

“A Lesson in Patriotism,” February 5, 1899

“Discontent in Puerto Rico,” April 4, 1899

“For Starving Puerto Ricans,” April 26, 1899

“Prosperity in Puerto Rico,” May 5, 1899]

### **Hurricane San Ciriaco**

On August 8 and 9, 1899, a hurricane devastated Puerto Rico. During its 28-day cycle, Hurricane San Ciriaco scored the highest Accumulated Cyclone Energy ever recorded. Fatalities on Puerto Rico were between 3,000 and 3,500 people, with millions of dollars in crop damage. A second hurricane, which struck on August 22, added to the disaster.

Public and private relief efforts began in the United States shortly after news of the disaster was received. On August 18, the *Times* reported on efforts by the Puerto Rican Relief Committee of the Merchants' Association to ship goods to Ponce for the relief effort. The article included this statement:

The following letter was received by the committee yesterday from the Secretary of War:

I have asked Gen. Roy Stone to confer with you upon the following subject, namely: He says that well-to-do citizens of Puerto Rico, while without money, are willing to contribute large quantities of Puerto Rican coffee of the highest grade, provided it can be sold in the United States and turned into money. They might produce large additions to the relief fund and at the same time serve as a means of introducing Puerto Rican coffee. I hope that you will be able to arrange with Gen. Stone for such proceeding—that is, the sale of a suitable quantity of Puerto Rican coffee for the benefit of the fund. It seems to me that this being advertised widely would lead to a ready market and have a very beneficial effect. If this can be done we will arrange for bringing back the coffee on our transports as they return from Puerto Rico.

The association followed up on Secretary of War Elihu Root's recommendation. (Root had taken office as Secretary of War on August 1, 1899.)

As relief supplies left by ship for the island, General Stone convened a meeting of Puerto Rican merchants and plantation owners who were in New York City. The *Times* reported on the meeting at the rooms of the Merchants Association on August 19:

Gen. Stone called at the rooms of the Merchants' Association at the suggestion of the Secretary of War. His plan, briefly outlined, is to have Puerto Ricans contribute a percentage of the crops of coffee of the highest grade, to be introduced in this market for the purpose of popularizing it with the coffee drinkers of this country, to whom it is practically unknown. It was finally agreed that Gen. Stone should prepare a statement of his plan in writing, to be promulgated through the proper channels in Puerto Rico for the purpose of soliciting or having donated coffee to be shipped to this country on a Government transport, to an amount not exceeding 100 bags, or 20,000 pounds for the first shipment, this coffee to be of the highest grade of coffee grown on the island.

On August 20, the *Times* reported the Merchants Association had held a meeting the day before with several Puerto Rican plantation owners and merchants to discuss General Stone's plan:

P. M. Toro, who will return to Puerto Rico this week, agreed to put Gen. Roy Stone's plan announced on Friday through, and arrange for a shipment of the best grades of coffee to an amount not exceeding 100 bags. The coffee will be brought on transports by permission of the Secretary of War.

The *Times* reported on August 24 that the U.S. transport McClellan had left the Quartermaster's dock at Brooklyn with the relief committee's supplies for Puerto Rico the day before. The article noted:

The Merchants' Association Relief Committee has sent out a circular to the principal coffee planters of Puerto Rico, asking for contributions of the highest grades of Puerto Rican coffee, not to exceed 100 bags, or 20,000 pounds, to be shipped to the committee in the city, the idea being to popularize Puerto Rican coffee in this country. The Secretary of War has offered to bring this coffee to the United States free of charge on one of the Government transports. R. H. Macy & Co. have agreed to sell the coffee in their restaurant, turning the proceeds over to the Puerto Rican Relief Committee. The firm of John Wanamaker has also agreed to place the coffee on sale in its store in small lots, selling it for the benefit of the Puerto Rican fund.

(Macy's has become a national department store chain. Today, Wanamaker's is less well known, but at the time John Wanamaker was one of the great department store merchants of the era. As Postmaster General under President Benjamin Harrison, Wanamaker initiated planning for rural free delivery although the service did not get underway until he had left office.)

In concocting the plan, General Stone was probably not aware that the hurricane had devastated the uplands plantations where coffee was grown. The *Times* reported on August 23 that General George W. Davis, the Governor General of Puerto Rico, had reported on island conditions in a cable to the War Department. As for the coffee crop, he said, "In a few limited areas the coffee is half safe, [but in] remaining areas the crop is almost totally ruined." General Davis estimated that "next year's crop will not exceed 50 per cent. [of] average."

On September 9, Secretary Root reduced the duty on coffee exported from Puerto Rico to Cuba from \$12.15 per hundred kilograms to \$3.40, effective October 9, with the former duty remaining in effect for coffee imported into Cuba from other sources. The article added:

According to a cable message received by the Commissary General to-day [September 9] there is not very much coffee in Puerto Rico. Col. Nye has been instructed to purchase coffee for the army, and has bought 40,000 pounds. He cables that there is not more than 50,000 pounds more fit for use. The new crop will not be available before November, and the store and plantation coffee has been damaged by water.

The subject was raised when the Senate Committee on Puerto Rico and Pacific Islands held a hearing in Washington on January 22, 1900. Delegates representing the Chamber of Commerce of Puerto Rico asked that the United States adopt a policy of free trade with the island. Coffee, they explained, comprised more than 60 percent of the island's products. Free trade would result in most of the coffee finding its way to U.S. markets. Although Puerto Rican coffee was better than Brazilian coffee, one of the delegates said, Puerto Rican farmers would have to receive a higher price than Brazilian coffee or they would not produce it. The *Times* reported:

The subject was further considered at an afternoon session, when Dr. Azel Ames and Julio Larrinago, residents of Puerto Rico, spoke of the political and commercial needs of the island. Gen. Roy Stone proposed as a means of introducing Puerto Rico coffee of [sic] the United States that a National society be incorporated by Congress, the incorporators including the wives of all prominent officials.

The Rambler is unable to determine the fate of General Stone's plan to import Puerto Rican coffee to generate revenue for hurricane relief, but it seems likely to have failed because of the devastation to the crop. The loss of its established markets and the devastation of the hurricane were major blows to Puerto Rican coffee growers and thousands of laborers. As the American Guide Series put it:

This situation [the switch to U.S. currency], together with the ravages of the San Ciriaco hurricane in 1899 which completely destroyed the coffee plantations, was a death blow to the coffee economy of Puerto Rico. Losing their properties, the planters were forced to migrate to the towns and cities. The coffee workers

followed them and were forced to squat on the outskirts of urban communities, giving rise to malodorous slums still in existence. [p. 56]

[“Aid for the Puerto Ricans,” August 18, 1899  
“More Aid for Puerto Ricans,” August 19, 1899  
“Money for Puerto Ricans,” August 20, 1899  
“Relief for Puerto Ricans,” August 24, 1899  
“Gen. Davis Reports Distress,” August 23, 1899  
“Puerto Rican Coffee for Cuba,” September 10, 1899  
“Claims of Puerto Rico Heard,” January 23, 1900]

### **Back to Work**

While retaining a strong interest in Puerto Rico, General Stone returned to his post at the ORI on January 31, 1899.

The *Times* reported on February 6, 1899, that he would participate in the National Assembly of the LAW meeting in Providence, Rhode Island. The first day was scheduled to be a Good Roads Day, with prominent speakers addressing the topic. General Stone was listed as speaking on “Puerto Rican Highways.” The *Times* did not report the details of General Stone’s speech.

“Wheelmen’s Annual Meet,” February 6, 1899]

### **Interesting and Instructive**

The *Times* published an article on June 24, 1899, surveying books of interest to municipal engineers. The article included a long section on roads, noting that the subject of good roads and streets “is one which affects the welfare of the community as much as any other.” It briefly related the history of the good roads movement, including establishment of the National League for Good Roads and initiation of the road inquiry in the Department of Agriculture:

Much good has been accomplished by the Bureau of Road Inquiry thus created, at the head of which was placed Gen. Roy Stone, who was the Vice President of the National League. A little book by him, “New Roads and Road Laws in the United States,” (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company. \$1) with excellent half-tone illustrations of good and bad roads, is both interesting and instructive.

[“Municipal Engineers,” June 24, 1899]

### **G.A.R. Encampment**

In September, Civil War veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic gathered in Philadelphia. President McKinley arrived in Philadelphia on September 4, 1899. According to an account in the *Times* on September 5:

The President walked with uncovered head from the train shed to the street, and was cheered to the echo. He acknowledged the ovation with many smiles and bows. The party was driven rapidly to the Hotel Walton, and Mr. McKinley immediately retired to his private sitting room.

An accompanying article about Lafayette Post No. 140, Department of New York, pointed out that it “has the distinction of having more notable army and navy officers on its membership roll than any other post in the country outside of Washington.” The article listed General Miles, General Stone, and several others, “all of whom, in addition to serving in the civil war, took part in the Spanish-American conflict.”

[“The Philadelphia Reunion” and “Lafayette Post Leaves,” September 5, 1899]

### **The Automobile Club of America**

As the 1890’s neared an end, the horse remained a dominant power source, with the automobile still a novelty. The Duryea Brothers had driven America’s first gasoline-powered automobile on the streets of Springfield, Massachusetts, on September 21, 1893, just 2 weeks before General Stone opened the ORI on October 3, 1893. (The Rambler recognizes that some contrarians dispute the Duryea Brothers’ “first,” but everyone is entitled to an opinion, however wrong it may be. He doesn’t want to hear from you.) The brothers established the Duryea Motor Wagon Company in 1895 to sell what they called the Buggyaut. Their first sale, and the first sale of an automobile in the United States, took place in early 1896.

Given the prevalence of the horse, “America’s love affair with the automobile” had not yet begun when a meeting took place at the Waldorf-Astoria hotel in New York City on October 16, 1899, to adopt a constitution and by-laws and select permanent officers of the Automobile Club of America. Planning for the club had begun in June, when temporary officers and an executive committee had been appointed, according to a *Times* article on October 17, 1899. Since June, the temporary officers had been in touch with Automobile Clubs in France, Great Britain, and Ireland regarding exchange of courtesies. The new club would arrange for storage houses, depots for the charging of electric vehicles, and a clubhouse for an exchange of views. It also would advocate good laws for automobiles and sponsor tours, runs, and contests, all activities it would have in common with the LAW.

The founders of the Automobile Club were wealthy, prominent individuals, giving the association an image it would never shake. The club’s constitution allowed for 25 honorary members, 400 active members, and unlimited life and associate members. Historian James J. Flink quoted *Motor Age* magazine as saying of the membership that “the millionaire and socially prominent contingent which gives the club its standing as an adjunct to sweldom enjoys membership in the Metropolitan, Union, and other leading social clubs.” Flink added:

Through its membership roster of nationally prominent figures, the Automobile Club of America expected to transcend being merely another local organization of motorists. The New York club had ambitions to be the national voice and conscience of motorists. [Flink, James J., *America Adopts the Automobile, 1895-1910*, The MIT Press, 1970, p. 145-146]

A roster in the *Times* on October 31, 1899, listed General Stone as a member.

One of the first issues the club addressed was securing approval for automobiles to operate in Central Park. Although General Stone had no role in the matter, at least as described in the *Times*, the Rambler was interested enough in this early controversy to pursue it through the *Times* archives. Those interested (and that should be everybody) may consult the Rambler sidebar, “Automobiles in Central Park – 1899.”

[“Automobile Club Formed,” October 17, 1899  
“The Automobile Parade,” October 31, 1899]

### **Parade of Automobiles**

General Stone resigned from the ORI on October 23, 1899. The last *Times* references to General Stone during his tenure in the ORI occurred on October 18 and 19, as far as the Rambler can determine. The October 18 article concerned the first session of the National Carriage and Harness Dealers’ Association at Grand Central Palace. The morning session, the article reported, was closed “and care was taken to admit no outsiders.” The afternoon session would be open, and the annual banquet would take place that night at the Hotel Marlborough. General Stone was listed as one of the speakers at the banquet.

During the afternoon session, Randolph Guggenheimer, president of the Municipal Council, delivered an address of welcome to New York City saying:

I cannot conceive, gentlemen, that the time will ever come when carriages and horses will cease to be the pride and recreation of the wealthy. However bright the future may be of the horseless carriage, especially in the avenues of commerce, the horse, which has been one of the first friends and servants of man, will remain so until the end.

His assurances notwithstanding, the convention planned to address the issue of automobiles on its second day. The *Times* explained, “It is said the advent of the horseless carriage has paralyzed many of the wagon manufacturing plants in the West.”

About 400 members attended the banquet at the Hotel Marlborough, with W. W. Sergeant, president of the association, as chairman and ex-Congressman John S. Wise (R-Va) as toastmaster. The *Times* summarized:

Judge William J. Gaynor responded to the toast, "The Patriotic Duty of Business Man." He referred to the work which had been accomplished in Brooklyn, where, he said, the interest manifested in the primary elections among business men was much more marked than in the Borough of Manhattan. Gen. Roy D. Stone replied to the toast, "Good Roads." I.S. Remsen, John Hassett, and Frederick H. Gowen were the other speakers.

The *Times* did not summarize General Stone's remarks.

Although General Stone was no longer associated with the ORI, he retained his interest in roads. The *Times* would cite him again on October 31, 1899, in an article about a pending automobile parade sponsored by the Automobile Club:

The Board of Governors of the Automobile Club of America met at the Waldorf-Astoria last night complete arrangements for the run next Saturday . . . . The first run of the club on Saturday promises to be a very successful affair. There will be nearly 100 vehicles in line.

The run was to start at the Waldorf-Astoria at 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and Fifth Avenue, circle around Morris Park, Morningside Park, and Columbia College on the way to Riverside, Claremont, and then back to the Waldorf-Astoria.

"Runs" were a common experience in the early years of the automobile era, just as they had been during the Bicycle Craze. They were an opportunity to say "I can afford an automobile and driver" in a setting where other motorists were around to help with needed repairs. They also were a way of finding out what these new means of conveyance could do.

The article listed the entire membership of the club, including "Gen. Roy Stone." The article noted that Richard Croker, Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt, and Cornelius Vanderbilt has been proposed for membership but were not listed as members. Dr. Whitney Lyon, a member of the board, explained why: "The gentlemen named were proposed and are still eligible, but they have made no personal application. We are not hunting for members and in that respect are like Masonic bodies." (Croker, who dominated the corrupt Tammany Hall during this period, had accumulated a fortune in bribes. He engineered the election of Robert A. Van Wyck in 1897 to be the first Mayor of the new five-borough New York City, supposedly dominating the Van Wyck administration.)

General Stone next appeared in the newspaper's society column in a reference to the automobile run:

The parade of automobiles, which is to take place in the city to-morrow afternoon, is attracting a large amount of advance attention. There is so much interest now taken in the development of the automobile that this first parade of the recently organized club promises to be attended and witnessed by a large and representative throng.

General Stone was listed as one of the “well-known men [who] will be among the guests of the club on the parade.”

The club had planned the run carefully, as the *Times* explained that same day in a news article:

All arrangements for the run to-morrow have been completed, and intending participants are expected to report to the committee at the Waldorf-Astoria before taking the places in line assigned them. While it is expected that all who will take part in the parade will come with their vehicles fully charged for the trip, [Club] Secretary [Captain Homer W.] Hedge announced that arrangements have been made for a renewal of motive power in case of emergency.

In the run to-morrow the automobiles will proceed at an average speed of eight miles an hour . . . . It is expected that many ladies will be among the paraders.

A private dining room at the Waldorf-Astoria had been engaged along with several ladies' dressing rooms. The parade would be postponed 1 week in the event of rain.

The *Times* reported on November 5 that the run had been a success:

With the exception of one punctured tire there was not a single incident to mar the proceedings.

The article said that “all sorts of horseless carriages were in evidence,” electric- and gasoline-powered, outside the hotel along 33<sup>rd</sup> Street, Astor Court, Fifth Avenue, and 34<sup>th</sup> Street:

At 2 o'clock sharp the band ceased playing and the automobiles started . . . . All along the line sidewalks were packed with interested spectators.

There was some change in the proposed route of the vehicles, because of the hills. The procession moved from One Hundred and Thirtieth Street to Seventh Avenue, to One Hundred and Tenth Street, to Eighth Avenue, to One Hundred and Sixth Street, to the Boulevard, and thence to Riverside and Claremont, as originally published in these columns . . . .

Many frisky horses were on the line traveled, but none of the animals was disquieted by the appearance of the machines.

The group halted at Claremont for a luncheon, after which the procession started homeward:

[Near] Grant's Tomb Gen. [Avery D.] Andrews took his vehicle to the right of the road, and the other paraders passed in review.

The article did not list General Stone as participating, but *The Rambler* would like to think he had a grand time.

[“Carriage Makers’ Conference, October 18, 1899  
“Carriage Dealers in Session,” October 19, 1899  
“The Automobile Parade,” October 31, 1899  
“What is Doing in Society,” November 3, 1899  
“Automobile Club’s Run,” November 3, 1899  
“Parade of Automobiles,” November 4, 1899  
“Automobile Club’s Run,” November 5, 1899]

### **For Good Roads**

When the Automobile Club met at the Waldorf-Astoria on February 3, 1900, to plan a campaign of encourage the legislature to appropriate funds for the Higbee-Armstrong bill, General Stone was on hand to make an address, as was his ORI associate, General Harrison. The legislature had appropriated \$50,000 a year for State-aid under the Higbee-Armstrong bill during its first 2 years of operation. A February 4 article about the meeting stated that because New York was far behind Massachusetts and New Jersey, the club would make efforts “to show that if the commerce is to be retained and merchandise brought satisfactorily to the railroads and canals upon which so much public money is being lavished the highways must be improved.” The article did not quote General Stone.

The *Times* reported on March 14, 1900, that the Automobile Club would tender “a complimentary dinner” to General Nelson A. Miles,” the hero of the Spanish-American War, on April 2. “Gen. Roy Stone, who has been instrumental in agitating the good roads project in this State, will also be a guest.”

The *Times’* April 3 account of the dinner did not mention General Stone. The article focused on a resolution the Automobile Club adopted urging construction of a transcontinental road that followed the “H” pattern General Stone had proposed a few years earlier. “The resolutions proposed that the National Government should pay one-third the cost; the twenty-five States and Territories through which the road would pass, one-third, and the cities and towns one-third.” Although the article did not say so, the *Rambler* considers it likely that General Stone was the source of the proposal.

In support of the idea, General Miles discussed the government’s involvement in the transcontinental railroad:

He said that in the building of the transcontinental railroads which had been aided by the Government there had been something more than a commercial incentive. The co-meeting of the East and West was of patriotic import. He reviewed the route suggested and advised that the question of military importance should be

left out. There were other ample reasons for good roads which must appeal not only to the automobilist and wheelmen, but to the farmers of the country.

The Rambler would not claim that this was the first time a military leader pointed out that defense was not sufficient justification for building good roads. However, this sentiment would be repeated many times in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most notably by General John J. Pershing, the hero of World War I, and General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the hero of World War II and future President who would do much to bring about the Interstate System. The military view has consistently been that if the Nation builds roads to meet civilian needs, the roads will satisfy military needs.

On June 11, 1900, General Stone was at the Schwalbach's Academy on Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn when the Good Roads Association of Brooklyn and Long Island held its semi-annual meeting. The following day, the *Times* reported on the event:

The principal address of the evening was made by Gen. Roy Stone, who had come on from Washington to speak at the meeting. Gen. Stone advocated the postal savings bank system for raising money to be applied to the building of good roads. He also discussed the project for a system of great trans-continental highways.

Gen. Stone said that the cost of building these roads would be about \$20,000 a mile, according to a careful estimate. The National Government could be asked to assume one-fourth of the expense of constructing the roads, the States through which the roads would pass another quarter of the expense, and the remaining half of the cost could be raised by assessing the owners of the land lying for several miles on either side of each of the roads.

During his good roads crusade, General Stone had often mentioned postal savings banks as a way of financing road projects. People who did not trust banks, or did not have access to banks, would give their spare money to "banks" established in post offices, which would invest the funds in county road bonds. The bonds would pay for the roads, while the interest paid on the bonds would increase the value of the banks' holdings. General Stone usually extrapolated from the experience in Great Britain, which had instituted postal savings banks in the 1860's, to estimate the road building capabilities of such a system in the United States.

(The United States would follow Great Britain's example in legislation enacted on June 25, 1910, without the relationship to road bonds that General Stone had proposed. The system would remain in effect until being abolished by statute in March 1966.)

["Meeting to Urge Good Roads," February 4, 1900  
"Automobile Club Feast," March 14, 1900  
"Automobile Club Plans Vast Roads," April 3, 1900  
"Met to Talk of Good Roads," June 12, 1900]

## **McKinley's Reelection**

In 1896, Governor McKinley of Ohio, the Republican, had defeated the nominee of the Democratic Party, William Jennings Bryan, to become President of the United States. McKinley won, 271 electoral votes to 176; and 7.1 million votes (51 percent) to 6.5 million. The fact that the country was still suffering from a major economic downturn that had begun in 1893 helped McKinley defeat Bryan, who represented the party of the incumbent President, Grover Cleveland. (The Democratic Party rejected Cleveland's bid to be the party's nominee in 1896.)

Bryan and President McKinley would match up again in 1900, this time with the President's popularity assured by a return to prosperity (campaign slogan: "Four More Years of the Full Dinner Pail"), success in the Spanish-American War, and his new Vice Presidential nominee, Governor Theodore Roosevelt, who had distinguished himself with his Rough Riders in Cuba during the war.

The *Times* reported on August 2, 1900, that Senator Redfield Proctor of Vermont had visited Republican National Headquarters. (Proctor had served in the State Legislature, as Lieutenant Governor (1876-1878), Governor (1878-1880), and Secretary of War under President Harrison before resigning to become a U.S. Senator in 1891.) He was confident that Vermont would remain Republican in November, but met with Senator Mark Hanna, McKinley's campaign manager, to discuss the prospects for increasing the Republican ticket's margin of victory. The article added, "Other callers of prominence at headquarters were Gen. Roy Stone, Gen. O. O. Howard, and Gov. N. O. Murphy of Arizona. Each of them brought cheering intelligence."

President McKinley won reelection easily, with 292 electoral college votes to 155 votes for Bryan. The President received 7.2 million votes (51.6 percent), while Bryan received 6.3 million.

["Proctor Calls on Hanna," August 2, 1900]

## **Death of General Harrison**

On February 8, 1901, the *Times* reported the death of General E. G. Harrison, who had been prominent in the Good Roads Movement as the head of General Stone's object-lesson road unit. The short obituary stated:

Edmund G. Harrison, special agent and road expert of the public roads division of the Agricultural Department, died in Washington on Wednesday, aged seventy-two years. He helped Gen. Roy Stone organize the public roads division and had appeared before the Legislature of every State east of the Mississippi in the interest of good roads. He was born in Hulmville, Penn., and for four years was Postmaster at Asbury Park, N.J.

General Harrison's son, Charles T. Harrison, would take over the object-lesson program.

[“Obituary Notes,” February 8, 1901]

### **Steel Trackways for Automobiles**

General Stone continued to cooperate with the Automobile Club of America in its efforts to promote good roads. When the club held its annual dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria on April 18, 1901, the *Times* reported the next day that the theme of the evening was “Good Roads.” The featured speaker, General Miles, stated that “the question of road improvement seems to me to be the plainest and the most important economic problem for this country to consider.” He was confident that “within a very short time the example of New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Illinois, and California, which have made the greatest progress in road improvement, will be followed by the other States.”

Other speakers, according to the article, included General Stone, who spoke on the subject of “Federal Paving.” The article did not quote from his speech.

On March 3, 1902, the *Times* carried a brief item alerting readers to the fact that:

Gen. Roy Stone, formerly Director of the United States Office of Public Road Inquiry [the new name of the ORI], will deliver an address at the rooms of the Automobile Club of America, Fifth Avenue and Fifty-Eighth Street, to-morrow night on “Street Highways.” The entire method of road building will be thoroughly explained, and the utility of good roads for automobiles will be clearly demonstrated. Supper will be served to members and their guests at the close of the talk.

The *Times* did not report on the contents of General Stone’s speech, although the *Rambler* will speculate on the content in just a few paragraphs.

The *Times* did report that on March 4, 1902 in Chicago, delegates from eight leading automobile clubs, including the Automobile Club of America, had met at the Coliseum to form a national body that would be called the American Automobile Association (AAA). The first president of the new organization would be Winthrop E. Scarritt of the Automobile Club.

(The two clubs would soon turn into rivals, with AAA becoming dominant by 1910. The Automobile Club, according to Flink, was never able to shake its image as a club for millionaires, despite aggressive attempts to expand its membership:

Despite its attempts at democratization, the ACA had retained its identification as a millionaires’ social club. *Harper’s Weekly* pointed out in January 1909, for example, that “prominent among the active members may be mentioned Colonel John Jacob Astor, Cornelius Vanderbilt, George J. Gould, William Rockefeller, E. H. Harriman, John T. Havemeyer, August Belmont, C. K. G. Billings, P. E.

Collier, Paul D. Cravath, Hon. Chauncey M. Depew, J. B. Duke, Alfred I. du Pont, Stuyvessant [sic] Fish, John H. Flagler, John W. Gates, Robert Goelet, and others.” [Flink, p. 161]

(Many of those names are recognized to this day, while the use of an online search engine will provide information on many of the others.)

General Stone also received a mention in the *Times* on April 6, 1902, in a report on the Automobile Club’s run to Ardsley. Sixteen automobiles began at Fifth Avenue and 57<sup>th</sup> Street for the first run of the season. General Stone was among the many guests along for the ride. Because the club was not trying to set a speed record, “The rules of the road were well observed, and the entire party arrived at the Ardsley Club in time for luncheon.” The trip had taken the 16 vehicles “through Yonkers, and then by the main road through Hastings and Dobbs Ferry” (along what became State Route 9A). The *Times* also reported that “the roads were in very good condition.”

Now, about that speech on “Street Highways,” the *Times* reported on May 14, 1902, that:

A committee of the Automobile Club of America has been investigating the subject of steel roads, and the club and several of its members have made liberal subscriptions for the purpose of building a sample section of steel road somewhere in the vicinity of New York.”

General Stone was chairman of the committee. The directors included Scarritt and Charles M. Schwab, a millionaire steel executive who at the time was president of U.S. Steel. (Schwab had been president of Carnegie Steel Company when he negotiated a buyout of the company in 1901 by J. P. Morgan, who combined it with other steel companies into a steel trust called U.S. Steel. Schwab would resign in 1903 and join Bethlehem Steel, which became the world’s largest steel company under his leadership.)

On May 11, the *Times* society column reported that “General and Mrs. Roy Stone” were among those who had sailed the day before on the *Lucania*, a Cunard Line ship bound for Europe. The Stones were headed for Paris to see their daughter, Mrs. Romaine Turnure. Her husband, Lawrence Turnure, 43 years old, had died on April 10, at home in Cairo, Egypt, where they had lived since his retirement a few years earlier for health reasons. He left behind his wife and a son, according to a short death notice in the *Times* on April 11, 1902. On May 20, the *Times*’ society column reported that:

Mrs. Lawrence Turnure is very ill in Paris. Gen. and Mrs. Roy Stone sailed on Saturday to join their daughter. Lawrence Turnure died at Cairo about a month ago.

The Rambler will return to General Stone’s daughter, but for now suffice it to say she recovered from her illness and the Stones returned to New York City.

By July, General Stone was back in New York to begin work on one of his last innovative projects, a steel trackway in Manhattan.

In the early 1890's, some advocates for good roads thought they could achieve their goal faster and at less cost by extending steel rails into the countryside for use by bicycles, wagons and, later, automobiles. When President McKinley took office in March 1896, his Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson had encouraged General Stone to explore experimental road building concepts, particularly steel tracks.

Martin Dodge, an associate of President McKinley when he was Governor of Ohio, claimed that he had raised the idea with Secretary Wilson. Dodge had long advocated steel trackways. He believed that the principal advantages in any surfacing material were cheapness, durability, and reduction of power required to move a vehicle. Steel tracks offered the advantages of cheapness and durability, as well as a smooth surface that would not be altered by the weather as earth roads were.

On September 16, 1897, the *Times* reported from Washington that the day before, the ORI "had made arrangements with the Cambria Iron Works of Johnstown, Penn., for rolling special rails for this purpose, these arrangements to go into effect as soon as definite orders were received from responsible parties amounting to one mile of track. The article described the tracks:

The directors of the road inquiry and engineers of the iron company, after much discussion, have agreed upon a plan of track which promises to meet all requirements. It uses no wood in construction and no cross-ties for support, but consists of a simple inverted trough or channel of steel for each wheel, with a slight-raised bead on the inside to guide the wheels, each channel resting in a bed of gravel, and the two tied together occasionally to prevent spreading.

Special devices for remounting are provided at each joint. The bearing or tread for wheels is eight inches wide, the thickness about seven-sixteenths of an inch. The weight of the structure is about 100 tons per mile of single track road, and it will be furnished in small sections at the rate of \$2,500 per mile.

While General Stone was in Puerto Rico during the Spanish-American War, Acting Director Dodge supervised the initial ORI experiments in steel trackway. Under Dodge's supervision, General Harrison installed 280 feet of steel track on the grounds of the October 1898 Trans-Mississippi Exposition in Omaha, Nebraska. After completing the exposition tracks, General Harrison built a 150-foot steel trackway at the State experiment station in St. Anthony, Minnesota, and a 180-foot trackway at the State College in Ames, Iowa, both in September.

At the Omaha exposition, Dodge demonstrated that one horse on a steel trackway could haul an 11-ton load that would require 20 horses on an ordinary road. (The load consisted of Dodge in his top hat and other dignitaries and fairgoers standing on a long wagon bed.) He also demonstrated that a "horseless carriage propelled by electricity"

could operate on the steel-track wagon road, and that a bicycle could ride on one track of the double trackway. The experiment proved his point that steel-track wagon roads would be cheaper and theoretically more durable than regular roads. It also demonstrated that “the power required to move a vehicle . . . is only a small fraction of the power required to move the same vehicle over any other kind of road.”

Dodge considered the trackways a success; he would display photographs of the exposition experiments in articles and congressional testimony for many years. However, the three experimental trackways built in the autumn of 1898 would be the ORI’s only experiments with the concept. The cost of retooling steel plants for manufacture of specially designed steel tracks proved prohibitive.

In 1902, General Stone revived the idea with his own steel trackway design. The *Times* said on July 27, 1902, that Schwab had become interested in the idea a “fortnight ago” as a way of relieving “congestion of traffic in the down-town streets” while providing “a perfect speedway for automobiles.” With the support of the Automobile Club, Schwab offered to furnish the steel tracks free of charge. The *Times* explained the concept and the rationale for it:

The “road of steel” is not to be a steel pavement extending from one pavement to another, as seems to have been the general idea since the recent announcement of Mr. Schwab’s offer to furnish the material for the road. It is to be two steel tracks, each about twelve inches wide, and set at standard gauge. It is pointed out that street car traffic in the lower portions of Manhattan often is exasperatingly delayed because drivers of heavily loaded [horse-drawn] trucks and other vehicles, in an effort to select the smoothest portion of the streets, drive on to the street car tracks, which are set at the same gauge as the ordinary wagon. Frequently it is difficult for the motormen of the cars to get the drivers of these wagons to turn back on to the cobblestones, and as a consequence traffic is blockaded, sometimes for several minutes.

Those who advocate the road of steel say this would be obviated by the adoption of the new road. The drivers would not find it more satisfactory to follow the street car tracks, because the broad tracks in the middle of that portion of the streets reserved for wagons and trucks would be smoother, and there would be no interruption, the wagons using the tracks having formed in line, and always to the right.

In the driveways where there is little or no heavy traffic it is believed that the road would be popular. The road of steel would insure good roads for a spin, even during or immediately after a hard rain.

The article added that General Stone had made a “careful and thorough study” of the concept and “said recently that the studies of engineers and the experiments so far made tend to simplify the construction of these roads, and especially their foundations, to the last degree.” The two issues that Dodge, and now Stone, had to resolve were whether the

rails had to be built with cross-ties, as railroad tracks were, and if not, how they would be kept in place. The article continued:

“It is needless to tie the rails together,” he said, “or to use cross-ties or other supporting devices. The rail is a simple channel with flaring sides, turned down into a narrow bed of gravel, broken stone, or vitrified clay, which is drained at every low point. The rails are strongly spliced by a channel piece closely fitting underneath the joint, the whole forming practically a continuous plate on a uniform bearing.

“A single track will serve for most country roads; the turning out is easy, the earth road, being little used, is not cut up, and never heavy with mud, except when the frost is coming out.”

Speaking of the comparative cost of the road, Gen. Stone said:

“The amount of metal required, if the plates are twelve inches wide and a quarter of an inch thick, including splices and bolts, is nearly 75 net tons per mile of single track. The average price of steel of late years is perhaps 1 cent per pound, and at this price the percentage of profit is still very large, so that it may be safe to assume \$20 per ton as a future price of the metal. At this rate the steel roads will not cost more originally than stone roads do on an average, and the expense for repairs will be practically nothing during a lifetime.”

Gen. Stone is enthusiastic over the prospect of securing the introduction of the road in New York City, and says he feels certain if it is given a fair test in those localities to be designated by the City Engineer the city will find it profitable to place steel roads in many of the streets, particularly where traffic of trucks and other freight vehicles is heaviest. He declares that the steel track is a new highway system which settles the great “road problem” that has so long agitated the country, and settles it in a manner which pleases every one concerned—farmer, teamster, bicyclist, and pleasure driver.

Schwab’s steel mill was working on the slabs for the experimental tracks. City Engineer George B. Olney had designated the location for the experiment:

One of these, he said, will be in the vicinity of the Battery, probably on Greenwich Street, where traffic is very heavy. Another will be on lower West Broadway, probably, and a third on Seventh Avenue, probably between One Hundred and Sixteenth and One Hundred and Twentieth Streets. This will furnish a test of the road under varying conditions. In the down-town districts the heavy trucks and vehicles will have an opportunity to try it, while in Seventh Avenue, the popular driveway, the automobiles and light carriages will give the road the test of conveyances of their nature.

By the time installation began in November 1902, none of Olney's candidates received the steel tracks. Instead, the tracks were placed on Murray Street between Church Street and Broadway. On November 30, the *Times* reported that Schwab "is about to lay a track of parallel steel plates twelve inches wide and flanged at the edges with ridges that shall act as guides for vehicle wheels." If the experimental installation was a success, "it will be repeated on the high roads in different parts of New York State."

A brief reference in the "Automobile Topics of Interest" column in the *Times* on December 14, 1902, indicated that the installation had been completed "last week." The tracks were "laid upon beds of concrete about a foot thick, which in turn rests upon a layer of granite paving blocks." The double steel track had been placed in the center of Murray Street, "and as there is a slight ascent from Church Street to Broadway, vehicles going in that direction will have the right of way."

A few days later, on December 18, the *Times* reported that General Stone had conducted tests on the section the day before. The *Times* summarized the "remarkable" experiments:

It was found by actual experiment that a tractive force 60 per cent. greater was required to draw a load upon the rough stone pavement than upon the track, or that, taking the power necessary to draw the load upon the pavement as the standard, exactly 37½ per cent. of it was saved by using the rails. In starting the load the advantage in favor of the rails was even greater, as but one-half or one-third of the usual force was required.

The tests, which were conducted on a Wednesday, "were materially impeded by the interference of passing vehicles on the narrow street, and by the presence of the usual curious jostling crowd which quickly gathered and of itself, nearly blocked the street." Additional tests were likely, including tests with automobiles, but would be scheduled on a Sunday when traffic would be less inconvenienced. Tests were being devised for when the steel tracks were slippery with mud or sleet. The article added, "Gen. Stone has invented a form of rail with slight rectangular depressions about three inches square and a quarter of an inch deep, for use where there is much ice and sleet, but this has not yet been given a trial."

### **The Ideal Road**

On January 26, 1903, the *Times* reported on General Stone's presentation during the automobile show at Madison Square Garden, sponsored by AAA, the Automobile Club of America, the American Motor League, and the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers. (The American Motor League, the first automobile club in the United States, had been formed in 1895 with members such as the Duryeas and other early automobile pioneers. According to Flink, it was "premature" and "failed to get off the ground," but would survive into the early 1900's. [Flink, p. 144, 156-159] The National Association of Automobile Manufacturers had organized on December 3, 1900.)

The *Times* reported that the sponsors of the show “placed themselves on record in favor of the popular movement for the improvement of the highways.” During the Automobile Club’s dinner on Saturday night at the Waldorf-Astoria, “no less than six of the eight speakers made this topic the subject of their speeches.” The other two speakers, “referred to the subject during the course of their remarks.” Speakers included State Senator Armstrong, who spoke on the Higbie-Armstrong bill, Colonel Pope, who spoke on “Improvement to Highways,” and State Engineer and Surveyor Edward A. Bend whose topic was “The Construction of Roads in New York State.”

In addition, General Stone, one of the speakers, “described the results attained in building steel roads, and advocated a plan for the building of such roads by the National Government.” He explained how the Automobile Club had initiated the experiment in May, that with Schwab’s help had obtained the steel, and with city support had laid a block of steel track on Murray Street, next to Broadway. He explained that the Automobile Club had additional material to lay tracks on other roads in the upper part of the city in the spring. The article continued:

The Murray Street road was laid in wet and frosty weather, but it seems abundantly firm, and appears to give satisfaction to the users; loaded teams which toil up to it find their “occupation gone” when they get fairly upon the rails, while the lightly laden strike a trot when they come to this stretch. It was feared that horses might slip on the plates, but when the wheel are on them the pull, even up the 2 per cent. grade, is so light that there is little tendency to slip; on steeper grades, however, it will be necessary to roughen the rails for horses; that is, to roll them with depressions which will catch a horses’ toe-calk, but will not let a wheel drop into them.

The article explained that the city’s highway department was considering use of steel trackways on “various lines where heavy trucking exists, or where it could be drawn from other streets to the relief of streets and avenues now congested.” The Dock Department was considering installation of steel trackways on the piers that are quickly destroyed by the heavy traffic. Meanwhile, the State engineer wanted a steel trackway “from the Ulster state quarries to the Hudson River to carry the ten-ton loads which now ruin every other kind of road there.” At the same time, the OPRI was asking for steel to install in the District of Columbia while New Jersey was considering a steel trackway across the Hackensack Meadows. The article added:

. . . and from over the sea comes an inquiry from the Public Works . . . of London City. Germany is already in our lead, in this regard, having fifty miles or more of steel road which is “reported in great favor with drivers: and on which from “three to five times the loads of the best stone roads can be hauled.”

General Stone had high expectations for steel trackways. If the Murray Street and planned Canal Street installations gained the support of trucking interests, he said, “and steel rails should be laid on routes that will draw the trucks away from the car lines and carriage avenues, the traffic capacity of the great thoroughfares will possibly be doubled

and one great source of friction in daily life removed, while the use of automobiles in the city will be vastly facilitated.” He continued:

It will be credit enough, however, in the great future which awaits the development of automobile travel to have devised or developed the idea road for the new vehicles and so hastened the day when they shall have freedom of movement throughout the land and, through that freedom, reach their natural expansion of use and usefulness. Such an ideal road is a wheelway like that in Murray Street, but without the wheel guides on heavy grades, to prevent the slipping of wheels in wet weather—the roadbed graded nearly flat, with no ditches and only shallow grassed gutters and with the space between and outside of the plates all well laid down in grass.

On such a road there will be no dust or mud, no glare from sunlight or reflected heat, while the road itself will suffer no wash from rains and no wear of any kind, and if it is bordered with hedges and without trees no serious accident would be possible to any motor at its highest speed. It will be like driving over a fine lawn, except that the power required will be almost inconsiderable.

Such exclusive automobile roads will be especially needed about New York, and, fortunately, there are localities where they can reach out in four or five directions from the city for a distance of twenty to fifty miles with comparatively little obstruction. Without going into any details at this moment, I venture to ask the attention of the automobile manufacturers and users and of suburban property owners to the possibilities of this development. If the proposal meets with favor among those interests, the study by a competent committee of the question of routes, ways and means, and legislation required cannot be too soon undertaken.

But the club will have its crowning credit if it should help to develop a plan through which new ways and means become available for the general and prompt construction of good roads for all vehicles throughout the country.

General Stone explained why a single track would be sufficient for country roads:

On many stone roads the travel confines itself to a narrow wagon track and the grass has grown over the rest of the surface in the hard macadam. On the steel roads the travel will be still more strictly confined; the grass will grow up close to the rails, and the turf will be firm enough for all light vehicles to turn out upon and for the occasional heavy ones that will be going against the townward traffic.

The idea may “seem like the impossible,” but it was simply a financial problem, and one that “ought not to be too great for the financial ability comprised within this membership, together with that now interested in steel manufacture.” He said:

We may take it as an axiom that the farmers generally will not tax themselves to build good roads, even though they could tax the cities, too, as they should do, neither will they readily borrow the necessary money under present conditions.

He thought States could issue bonds at the lowest rate of U.S. government bonds, 2 percent a year, with a State guarantee. He suggested two ways to ensure marketability of the bonds. He summarized the first way:

In wiping out the National debt the Government is gradually taking away the basis of National bank circulation, and a new one must soon be found that will be broad, safe, and permanent. If at the same time that basis could be of such a character that its mere creation promotes and assures the National wealth and prosperity, it would give additional security to the circulation as well.

Nothing could fill these conditions like such an issue of road improvement bonds as I have described, and if accepted for that use the market for hundreds of millions of them at par or a premium would be made. The Government 2 per cents. [would] command a large premium for the same purpose.

The second was postal savings banks. He asked, "What could be more appropriate than the investment of the farmers' spare money in road improvement?" It could be accomplished easily at little cost to the government. "It could all be done through the Post Office force and would involve no appreciable expense or risk to the Government."

The *Times* article concluded with the words of General Stone:

And looking at the grand result, what could be more beautiful in its beneficence than practically letting the farmer build his own roads with his own money and still have that money safe at interest for his own benefit, while the roads are free to the world forever?

A great campaign of education and legislation for good roads is now beginning, and the field is full of energetic recruits, but as a veteran I may ask, with deference to the old campaigners, whether it may not be easier to carry out such a plan as I have outlined than one which involves hard-won State and National appropriations and the general increase of debt and taxation.

### **The World Stands Still**

On February 1, 1903, the *Times* printed a long article by General Stone on steel trackways. It covered many of the points from his recent speech. The article began:

A radical change in methods of roadmaking throughout the world appears now to be probable, and it would seem quite time that some change should be made. The whole Christian era, with all its advancement of arts and sciences, has seen no improvement in this particular art. The best stone roads of to-day are no better

than the ancient Roman ways or the prehistoric Peruvian roads; not so good, in fact, for, while their surface is the same, their foundations are inferior. It may be said, therefore, that in a concern so vital to the general well-being of the human race as its primary means of communication, the world has practically stood still for twenty centuries. The fact challenges the intelligence of this progressive age, and it is not surprising that the nations are waking up to it, and that some of the talent heretofore employed in the perfection of rail and water ways is now devoting itself to the improvement of common highways.

The value of steel trackways had been demonstrated in other countries:

Germany, which country leads in this field at present, has over fifty miles of steel roads in various forms as to rail and foundation laid in 1901, and these roads are reported as being “in great favor among drivers,” while official tests show that from “three to five times as great load” can be moved thereon as with the same effort on a stone pavement.

The desirability of these roads has been questioned, but Spain has had a short steel road in successful operation for ten or twelve years, running from the City of Valencia to its seaport, and under a travel of 3,200 vehicles daily, careful measurements shows [sic] only a small fraction of wear in that period, while thin plates laid across a bridge in Canada have stood four times as long under heavy traffic.

Experiments in the United States had been “on a small scale and with insufficient means,” resulting in “nothing determinate.” The Murray Street installation was the first good test in the United States. General Stone reprinted a letter he had sent to the chairman of the Automobile Club on December 20, 1902, saying, in part:

The steel wheelway in Murray Street . . . has been favorably received and is bearing constant testimony to the excellence of its method. Many drivers, not informed of its character, still avoid the steel plates, thinking they may cover some electric or other conduit, but those who use them pronounce them perfect.

The time was ripe to consider other installations in the city “having in view the three great objects to be attained—first, the ease of freight movement; second, the relief of carriage travel; and third, the clearance of way for the street cars.” New York City, he explained, had a street network planned for “a four-story city” that was now “growing to three or four times that height, without any increase of the street surface.” The solution was to separate “the various classes of travel which now impede each other, and the separation must be voluntary, since it cannot be enforced without great friction.” If freight could be restricted to roads with steel wheelways, the cost of shipping could be reduced, but these vehicles would also be removed from car tracks and carriage streets:

The principal car lines, which are now cut down from their normal speed of about eight miles per hour to an average of about four miles in rush hours, and which by

adding more and more cars have only added to the congestion and actually reduced the capacity of their services, would be able to do vastly more business, with less cars, while at the same time the carriage and motor travel could correspondingly increase both in volume and speed.

In his February 1 article, General Stone predicted that the increase of motor vehicles “will increase the demand for special roads, and in turn such roads will increase the demand for motors.” Areas in the vicinity of New York City would be perfect for such roads:

These special roads would benefit every interest concerned, both public and private; they would extend the suburban limits of the city and develop new residence districts of the highest class, and they would largely relieve the public roads of motor travel, while adding the usefulness and popularity of motor vehicles by freeing them from a speed limit on a good stretch of distance.

As for paying for the roads, General Stone explained that “special weakness of our system of government [was] that we cannot compel a present sacrifice to secure future benefit.” He continued:

People who govern themselves will not apparently tax themselves to build the roads which they know they need, nor will they generally consent to borrow the money and tax their children’s children to pay it, although they could hand down to them not only the roads themselves, but the savings of generations in their use.

Although “direct aid to road building” was now being advocated in Congress,” he thought that the United States “could give more efficient aid indirectly, and give it through such means as would, moreover, secure most important benefits to the whole country in addition to good roads.” Government bonds at 2-percent interest would solve the problem. (He did not reference postal savings banks in this article.)

That same day, February 1, 1903, the *Times* carried an article about General Stone’s article. General Stone’s article “is an interesting and valuable contribution to the literature of good roads,” but a clarification was necessary:

Lest it should be assumed that the author of the paper referred to, being the inventor and patentee of the system he advocates, is actuated therein by considerations of personal advantage, we are authorized to say that his interest in such patent or patents is dedicated to the public, and that he expects no further advantage from the use of the system than will come to him as a citizen and perhaps the user of wheeled vehicles.

In the newspaper’s view, the building of roads suitable for automobiles was of “especial interest.” It continued:

Fortunately, what is a good road for the motor vehicle and the bicycle is also a good road for the road wagon, the heavy truck, and the farmer's wain, and the good roads argument is too well known and too unanswerable from the point of the public interest to need repetition here.

The article stated that the Murray Street steel wheelway "has greatly facilitated the hauling of heavy truckloads from the river to the comparatively level streets running north and south along the backbone of Manhattan, and in a wider street [than Murray] its value would be proportionately greater."

The planned expansion of steel wheelways ran into an obstacle, as reported in the *Times* on March 29, 1903:

The Committee of the Automobile Club of America on steel road experiment has abandoned the plan of laying steel rails in upper Seventh Avenue, as originally planned last Fall, on account of the letting of contracts for the repaving of that thoroughfare, and it is now proposed to use the rails remaining after the laying out of the experimental stretch in Murray Street, to lay out a straightaway track on private property on Long Island. A site near Creedmore has been selected, and if the necessary arrangements can be made a kilometer course [0.62 miles] will be laid out. It is desired to test the suitability of the rails for fast driving, and also to see whether it is necessary to make any allowance for expansion and contraction in a long stretch.

### **Lifting the Burden of Bad Roads**

On April 28, 1903, General Stone was in St. Louis for the National and International Good Roads Convention in conjunction with the dedication of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. Although the *Times* did not quote his speech, the Rambler likes the speech as a summing up by General Stone of his experience. The following excerpt from his speech, titled "Good Roads and How to Get them," is from "Portrait of a General":

Ten years ago three great leaders were fighting their separate battles for good roads in the United States. Colonel Pope in the East, Judge Thayer, of Iowa, in the West, and Isaac B. Potter [of the LAW] all along the line. They had little faith, however, in a national movement; and they had seen too many State conventions fail to materialize. In fact, so forlorn a venture did it seem that, although a goodly number signed my call [for a national convention in October 1892], I dared not ask for a dollar toward the expense of calling or holding the convention, and had, therefore, the high privilege of financing it alone.

My success in assembling that convention was due to the press of the United States; its happy outcome was due to the newspapers of Chicago, which gave columns and pages to its proceedings, in the midst of all the news of the dedication of their great "White City" [as the Columbian Exposition was called because of its imitation marble architecture].

With this grand send-off our National League for Good Roads, organized there, was able to raise \$10,000 for a year's campaign, and that campaign, among other things, brought about the organization of the Office of Public Road Inquiries at Washington [as ORI was called in 1903], and all the great work accomplished by it in ten years.

Comparing the conditions of today with those of ten years ago we see the progress of the country most strikingly displayed. But progress in road sentiment is perhaps more marked than in any other line. The convention of 1892 was called by a few private enthusiasts, with fear and trembling for the result; this convention was called by a multitude of high officials in perfect confidence of the Nation's interest and participation. In 1892 our delegates were self-appointed; here they are appointed by municipalities, States, and public bodies. In that convention we dared not whisper "National aid to road building" save in secret; now we can shout it on all the highways and byways. At that time a majority of the people of the United States had never seen a good road; today, through National object-lessons and good roads trains [a Dodge-era innovation], it is a familiar sight to nearly every one. Then, even State aid was denounced as a dangerous experiment; now it is being generally adopted. In those days to borrow money for good roads was denounced as "robbery of future generations," today it is accounted a blessing and especially to them.

Since 1892 an entirely new force has appeared in the good roads field and one whose influence can not now be measured or bounded. Already the automobile industry is one of the most active and powerful in the land, and its representatives fully realize that its ultimate success is bound up with that of road improvement, for in France, where the roads are good, it leads all other manufacturing industries in size and profit . . . .

How to lift the burden of bad roads without putting a burden of taxation in its place is the question for this body to discuss and determine, and on that question every delegate must carry such light as he can home to his neighbors. And here, I may be pardoned for saying, as regards the estimate of the annual loss by bad roads, which I announced officially some years ago and which has been derided by many wiseacres who are perhaps not to blame for what they don't know, it was the result of a thorough digestion of well-ascertained facts, the boiled down experience of 10,000 intelligent farmers in all parts of the country, honestly applied to the census returns and their official data, and I would not to-day discount it nor abate it one dollar from its enormous total of six hundred millions.

He endorsed Federal-aid, saying "The people are ready for a measure of this kind, and it will give us good fighting ground." He also summarized his reasons for supporting steel track roads, bonds guaranteed by the Federal Government, and the use of postal savings. "The youngest of you here will never see the work half done, and we veterans will scarce see a beginning," he said. Then he concluded:

But whatever may be the fate of my proposition, good roads are coming whether by easy ways or hard. Federal aid is in the air; our young statesmen are eager to promote it, and our oldest no longer have the cold shivers when it is mentioned. It has reached the very top. Within this month, a President of the United States [President Roosevelt] has said what no President has dared to breathe in almost a hundred years—that the Federal Government can and should “cooperate” in the building of common roads. For these brave words every advocate of road improvement in the land, and they are millions upon millions, will join me in saying, “God bless the fearless man who uttered them.”

### **Long Island Motor Parkway**

The Long Island project was expanding. On June 14, 1903, the *Times* reported that General Stone, backed by the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers and AAA, “has developed an extensive plan for an automobile speedway on Long Island.” General Stone had initiated the proposal by writing to the National Association explaining the value of special roads for automobiles “and that the sport and industry never can attain proper development without them.” With the association’s support, he prepared his plan:

The plan is to start from the eastern landing of the Blackwell’s Island Bridge [now known as the Queensboro Bridge-59<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge], near the Court House in Long Island City, run the line between Jackson Avenue and the Long Island Railroad as a sunken and inclosed road so as to allow of full speed from the outset, and then to continue nearly parallel to the same avenue, following, if practicable, the right of way of the abandoned Oliver Charlick Railway to the Flushing Meadows, passing beneath the North Shore Railroad and the Corona Electric Road at the point where they descend upon the meadows; thence across the meadows along the line of the old Long Island Central Railroad, known as the “Stewart” Road, and following the line through its long summit, cutting to Creedmore and Floral Park. There the line will touch the Belmont Park race course. From that point it is planned to take the speedway across Hempstead Plains and along the southern foot of the Bethpage, Half Hollow, Brentwood, Ronkonkoma, Coram, and Dix’s Hills, keeping the middle line of the island between the heights and the plain as far as the heights extend, and then straight through the level pine woods to Good Ground, and so on to Montauk Point. The location, it is believed, will secure a perfect alignment, easy grades, and cheap construction, while it would serve for branching north and south under equal conditions. The total distance would be 112 miles.

The speedway would include a double track of steel, with 10 feet between tracks and the same distance outside of them, making for a 40-foot roadway:

Outside of this would be the hedges and a wire netting fence to keep out animals, and beyond the fence would be a row of trees on each side. All highways are to

be carried over the motorway by raising them five feet and sinking the motorway to the same extent. The entrance to the motorway would be by gates from the important highways, and these, of course, would be tollgates. Between midnight and morning, the road could be used for freight vehicles for farm and garden service, and when it is desired to use the speedway for formal races all other traffic would be kept off by merely closing the gates to it. For the benefit of those who do not own motor carriages or trucks, motor coaches could be licensed to run at low rates of fare, and this, together with hotels and inns at the terminals and at the tollgates, it is believed the project would be given a decided public interest.

General Stone estimated that the road would cost \$15,000 a mile. It would be self supporting, with an estimated 3,000 vehicles presently in the corridor. Further, the after-hours trucking at a speed of 12 miles an hour, “would extend the available garden district of the island to double its present length, and, counting on a width of five miles, would lead to the clearing, fertilizing, and cultivation of 200 miles now barren.” The article concluded:

The cost of operation would be the taking of tolls and the care of the grass and hedges, little or no repairs being required for many years.

As best the Rambler can determine, the Long Island automobile speedway was not built. Moreover, the Murray Street installation does not appear to have been duplicated. The best the Rambler can say is that the steel track concept was outdated. In the 1890’s, when General Stone, Dodge, and others were promoting the idea, traffic volumes in rural areas were low. As traffic increased, and especially in city congestion, the use of steel tracks was impractical. Whatever the reason, steel roadways did not catch on.

Although the Long Island speedway conceived by General Stone was not built, the concept was a precursor of the Long Island Motor Parkway. William K. Vanderbilt, Jr., the wealthy auto racing enthusiast (George Vanderbilt, mentioned earlier, was his uncle), and several wealthy friends had thought of building a private automobile road for racing on Long Island in 1902, from Long Island City to Montauk Point, but the idea didn’t result in construction. In 1904, Vanderbilt launched the Vanderbilt Cup Races on the public roads of Long Island.

The 1906 race in October attracted 250,000 spectators, many of whom surged into the roadway to get a better view of their favorite racers. When one of the spectators was killed and others injured, Vanderbilt and his friends decided to build the private auto road they had talked about a few years earlier. It would include several ideas General Stone had included in his proposal, including crossroads separated on bridges and limited access throughout. Construction began in 1908 and was completed in 1911, with the road eventually extending 45 miles from Nassau Boulevard to Ronkonkoma. When races were not underway, the parkway operated as a toll road for general traffic, as General Stone had suggested for his proposed steel trackway.

In 1910, the annual Vanderbilt Cup Race resulted in the death of two driving mechanics and injuries to several spectators. The outcry resulted in the end of the races, but the Long Island Motor Parkway remained open for public use as a toll road. [Kroplick, Howard, and Velocci, Al, *The Long Island Motor Parkway*, Images of America, Arcadia Publishing, 2008, p. 7-14]

[“Miles on Good Roads,” April 19, 1901  
“Automobile Talk on Good Roads, March 3, 1902  
“National Automobile Club,” March 5, 1902  
“Automobile Club Meets,” March 8, 1902  
“Automobile Club Run,” April 16, 1902  
“Automobilists Advocate Steel Roads,” May 14, 1902  
“Society at Home and Abroad,” May 11, 1902  
“What is Doing in Society,” May 20, 1902  
“Steel Tracks for Wagons,” September 16, 1897  
“Proposed Steel streets for New York,” July 27, 1902  
“Automobile Rails,” November 30, 1902  
“Automobile Topics of Interest,” December 14, 1902  
“New Steel Road Tested,” December 18, 1902  
“Motor Vehicle Makers Organize, December 4, 1900  
“Favoring Good Roads,” January 26, 1903  
“Use of Steel in Building Wagon Ways is Advocated,” February 1, 1903  
“Steel Wagon Ways,” February 1, 1903  
“Automobile Topics of Interest,” March 29, 1903  
“Automobile Topics of Interest,” May 10, 1903  
“Speedway for Motorcars,” June 14, 1903]

### **The Final Years**

General Stone remained active in his final years, as reflected in the *Times*. An article on January 29, 1902, reported that he was a director of the Union Terminal Company of New York, which had been incorporated the day before. The company, with a capital of \$100,000, intended to “construct and operate an electrical tunnel road between nine and ten miles long between New York and Kings Counties.” A followup article on February 7, 1902, indicated that the company had filed plans with the County Clerk. The company counsel, Appleton D. Palmer, described the project:

Beginning at the intersection of Montrose and Varick Avenues, Brooklyn, the tunnel will run in a diagonal line under private property to the East River, under the river in steel tubes, then across the Island of Manhattan on the line of Fourteenth Street, and after that under the North River to Hoboken, straight under the hill on which the Stevens estate and mansion are located, through Bergen Hill, and finally to a point near the Hackensack River and close to the westerly openings of the Erie and Lackawanna Railroad tunnels. Mr. Palmer said that the depth of the tunnel would be from 50 feet to 100 feet, varying within those limits.

There are to be two branches, one beginning at Fourteenth and Hudson Streets and extending down the latter to College Place, thence to Greenwich Street, and thence down to Battery Place and around Bowling Green; the other beginning at Fourteenth Street and Broadway, going up the latter to Madison Square, diagonally across that, up Madison Square to Forty-second Street, and under private property to the Grand Central Station.

The connection to Grand Central Station was “merely advisory” and “would depend upon whether or not the Central desired such connection.”

The tunnel was intended principally for freight, but passenger trains would be run as well. In addition to stations, the line would include connections with wholesale mercantile houses “the idea being that these establishments can load and unload their goods directly from the underground road and thus save themselves all the expenses of truckage.”

As with past proposals of this type, some cynicism was called for:

When the attorney was asked whether the New York Central or any other railroad was behind the plan, and whether the scheme was designed to offset the Pennsylvania Railroad’s project to build a North River tunnel, he replied that no railroads had as yet negotiated with his employers, but that he expected to receive propositions, as it could not fail to be seen that the scheme would be of advantage to the roads.

This discussion suggests that the Union Terminal Company may have been intended to entice railroad companies planning similar lines to buy the company to eliminate the competition. Investors would profit from the sale, rather than from return on construction of the tunnels. The Rambler has been unable to track further details on the company.

On January 18, 1904, the Republican Club held its annual meeting at its new home on West 40<sup>th</sup> Street for its election. A brief article the next day indicated that 31 residents of the city and 61 non-residents were elected to membership, “it being a noticeable fact that the friends of Gov. [Benjamin Barker] Odell [Jr.] largely predominated in the additions to the membership.” One of the new non-resident members was “Gen. Roy Stone of Morristown.”

On May 8, 1904, the *Times* contained a social article on life in Morristown. One of the items:

Gen. and Mrs. Le Roy Stone have returned from New York, and are at Mrs. Stephenson’s on South Street for a few weeks.

The article did not explain why the Stones were staying with Mrs. Stephenson or who she was.

The following year, on August 6, 1905, the *Times* reported that General Stone, who was suffering from “a complication of diseases,” was “dying at his home, in Mendham.” The prospects for recovery were not good. “All hope of his recovery was abandoned to-day by the attending physicians when he became unconscious.” Mrs. Stone, her daughter, and son-in-law (more on the daughter in the next section) were at the General’s bedside in his final hours.

The following day, the *Times* reported that General Stone had died at the Phoenix House in Mendham at 1 am on August 6:

He had suffered from a complication of diseases. Gen. Stone’s condition was not considered alarming until Wednesday, when he began failing rapidly. Yesterday he sank into unconsciousness, from which he never rallied.

In describing his life, the article stated:

Gen. Stone was born in Steuben County, New York, where his father, Ithiel V. Stone, had a large estate, sixty-eight years ago.

After graduating from Union College, he went to Pennsylvania to manage his father’s estates in Sheffield and Warren Counties. He soon joined the Union forces in the Civil War, providing “brilliant service” in the early campaigns in Virginia:

For gallant services in the Peninsular campaign, and particularly at the battle of Gettysburg, Gen. Stone was breveted a Brigadier General by President Lincoln. At Gettysburg Stone was severely wounded in one of the most dashing attacks made in the whole war.

The article also summarized his service during the Spanish-American War:

Gen. Stone served on Gen. Miles’s staff as a Brigadier General and Chief of Engineers. With a troop of cavalry in Porto Rico he made a bloodless reconnaissance that extended nearly all over the island, and with no other force he captured several cities. After the Spanish war Gen. Stone became very much interested in Porto Rican affairs and worked very hard to assist in the development of the island.

Regarding his civilian activities, the *Times* reported:

[He] was connected with many important works, including the blowing up of Hell Gate and the removal of the bars in the New York Harbor.

Gen. Roy Stone was one of the pioneers in the movement for good roads, and it is largely due to his efforts that New Jersey possesses so many fine thoroughfares. He also advocated the use of steel in the building of wagon ways, and watched with considerable interest the experiment in Murray Street a few years ago.

His body was to be transported to Washington for burial in Arlington National Cemetery. "Portrait of a General" describes the burial, which was not described in the *Times*.

(The Rambler has tried to find information on General Stone's involvement in blowing up the Hell Gate rocks, but has been unable to learn more than the statement in the obituary.)

["Electrical Tunnel Road," January 29, 1902  
"Plans for a Big Tunnel," February 7, 1902]  
"Activity in Morristown," May 8, 1904  
"Gen. Roy Stone Dying," August 6, 1905  
"Gen. Roy Stone Dead After Brief Illness," August 7, 1905]

### **Lady Monson**

General and Mrs. Stone had two children, one son named Richmond who died of typhoid fever several years before General Stone's passing. The Rambler has been unable to find information about Richmond Stone.

General Stone's daughter, who was born on June 5, 1865, is another matter. She was a fixture in the New York social scene as Miss Romaine Stone. Although the Rambler cannot be sure of Miss Stone's first appearance in the *Times* archives, he found at least an early reference on April 28, 1886, in an account of several weddings. Miss Stone, then 20 years old, was a bridesmaid at the wedding of Miss Marie Louis Case, the daughter of Watson E. Case, to Mr. Henry Costar Emmett at the residence of the bride's parents. The bridesmaids, Miss Stone and Miss Kittie Emmet, "were charmingly attired in white."

Thanks to the archive, the Rambler can provide a sense of the social world Miss Stone enjoyed. In the "Society Topics of the Week" column on October 30, 1887, the *Times* reported on a social week that was "one of preparation rather than of fulfillment." It explained:

Long Island and New-Jersey have had their turn now, and at Orange and Hempstead what are known as the Hunt balls of the Essex County and Meadowbrook Clubs took place on Friday evening. It seemed rather unfortunate that both these organizations have chosen the same night for their dances, but the entertainments really did not conflict so seriously as various reports would make it appear. The Meadowbrook Club set, although small in number, is said to be fine in quality, and is entirely sufficient unto itself for enjoyment . . . .

At the Meadowbrook cotillion "the event partook more of the nature of a small and jolly private dance; the pink coats of the huntsmen as at Orange giving an added dash of color to the scene." A new star had emerged in recent years, despite a misunderstanding about her lineage:

The new beauty, Miss Romaine Stone, was present and of course, attracted much attention. She is a dark brunette, with remarkably handsome eyes and perfect features. She has been in Europe for some time and is well remembered as having been a belle at Narragansett Pier and Bar Harbor some few Summers ago, when she was not yet out. Miss Stone is not, as has been supposed, a daughter of the late Gen. Stone, of Bartholdi statue fame, but of another Gen. Stone.

Although the *Times* did not go to the effort of explaining who this mysterious other General Stone might be, he was at the time a civil servant in New York City, known to some extent but not an honored figure. The other General Stone, General Charles P. Stone, had been a celebrated figure in the city until his death on January 24, 1887. This General Stone, an 1845 graduate of West Point, had left the U.S. Army in 1856. Working in Washington at the outbreak of the Civil War, he was identified as the first volunteer officer to the Union cause. Quickly rising to the rank of General, Charles Stone's Civil War career was derailed following the Battle of Ball's Bluff in Loudoun County, Virginia, on October 21, 1861. Coming after the embarrassing defeat of the Union Army at Bull Run on July 21, 1861, also in Virginia, this second defeat in what northern residents thought would be a short, glorious victory over the rebel forces, aroused public and political outrage. Stone was arrested amid public outcry over the defeat and held for 6 months without trial. He would be restored to active duty, but never had another opportunity to distinguish himself during the war.

Historians have identified him as a scapegoat unfairly assigned the blame for a communications breakdown among the leadership, but his actions after the war restored his reputation. He served as an engineer in Egypt (1870 to 1883), on the Florida Ship Canal (1883), and as Chief Engineer for construction of the foundation and pedestal for the Statue of Liberty designed by France's Frederic Auguste Bartholdi and dedicated on October 28, 1886.

Miss Stone, along with our General Stone, attended the Patriarch's Ball, "third and last of the season," at Delmonico's on February 13, 1888. According to a *Times* account the next day, it was "the last gasp of the season's festivities," but also "the best attended and most pleasurable." The article did not indicate that General Stone was accompanied by his wife.

Miss Stone was also identified as attending an exciting polo game at Newport, Rhode Island, on August 2, 1888. "Capt. Hitchcock was beaten again at polo this afternoon, his team only taking 2 out of 8 goals." The *Times* assured readers that the Captain was not at fault. "His men were not up to the scratch, and one of them, Mr. Agasaiz, while being a good rider, was always sure to miss at a critical moment." (The Rambler knows the feeling.)

Miss Stone's social activities continued in Lenox, Massachusetts, on September 14, when she attended a ball given by the Sloanes "at their elegant cottage here." It was "the most brilliant social event of the season . . . attended by all the society people staying in town." Mrs. William D. Sloane was the former Emily Vanderbilt of the wealthy Vanderbilt

family, while her husband was a member of the Sloane merchant family (W & J Sloane). Together, they were fixtures of the social world for decades.

The following day, the Sloanes gave an “elaborate party” that was considered the “greatest event” of a busy week. “Wealth and beauty were not wanting to make it the most brilliant affair which ever took place in Lenox or, perhaps, in this State.” Miss Stone was among the beauties.

The “second greatest event” was at the “finely finished clubhouse” of the Lenox Club the night before the Sloanes’ grand ball. Miss Stone was among those in attendance. Earlier that day, she was at the center of a unique event:

A very novel and enjoyable picnic was given by Mr. Arthur Dodge on Thursday in honor of Miss Romaine Stone and Miss Hurst. The party consisted mostly of young people whom Mr. Dodge invited to a picnic of six or seven covers on the mountainside two miles from Pittsfield. The company enjoyed the day in the woods exceedingly, spending the time in climbing over rocks and up the steep side of the mountain to its summit, where they could overlook a large expanse of country.

Miss Stone continued her social whirl by attending a party on September 19 thrown by Mrs. Flora Whitney, the wife of President Cleveland’s Secretary of the Navy, William Whitney. She held an archery and lunch party “on the beautiful lawn of her cottage” for 250 guests:

The weather in the morning was threatening, but the sun came out about 1 o’clock and the air was clear and warm enough for the comfort of the guests. The ladies who engaged in the archery contest were dressed in gay and becoming costumes, as were the large number of other ladies who had come out to see the contest.

The list of “cottagers present” included Miss Romaine Stone. The article did not state whether Miss Stone was one of the archers.

An article dated October 17, 1888, reported that Miss Stone attended the wedding of Miss Lilian Carnochan and Livingston Crosby at Grace Church.

The Rambler came across Miss Stone again in an account of the first “of a series of three match races between the seventy-foot sloop Titania . . . and Katrina” under the sponsorship of the New-York Yacht Club on June 18, 1889.

She also attended a reception and cotillion given by Mrs. William Astor at her residence on Fifth Avenue on January 22, 1890. It was, the *Times* reported, one of “the most brilliant events of this season’s social history.” The article pointed out that less than 100 “regrets” had been received for the 600 invitations.

Another name that the Rambler encountered in many of these articles was Turnure. For example, the article about Mrs. Whitney's party on September 18, 1888, contained this note:

Mrs. Lawrence Turnure has issued invitations for a ball on Saturday night. It will be one of the most select events of the season.

Mrs. Turnure's husband Lawrence was a well-known banker at Lawrence Turnure and Company in New York City. He and Mrs. Turnure were prominent in social circles. (At one time, according to a society column in the *Times*, Mr. Turnure and his brother David "were considered the handsomest men in Wall Street.") The couple had two daughters and three sons, one of whom was Lawrence Turnure, Jr. Perhaps—and this is mere speculation on the Rambler's part—Miss Stone met Mrs. Turnure's son at the ball. What is not speculation is that the *Times*' "Society Topics of the Week" column contained the following item on January 26, 1890:

The engagement has just been announced of Lawrence Turnure, Jr., and Miss Romaine Stone, a daughter of Gen. Roy Stone and one of the beauties of the past two seasons. Miss Stone made her debut first at Narragansett Pier some summers ago . . . . She is a tall and dark brunette.

On March 30, the society column reported the latest on the pending marriage:

Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Turnure and family will soon sail for London, where the wedding of Lawrence Turnure, Jr., and Miss Romaine Stone will be celebrated next month.

The wedding would be delayed, as reported in June:

It is now definitely announced that Lawrence Turnure, Jr., and Miss Romaine Stone will be married in London on July 7.

Their wedding and two others "will be novelties to the many Americans abroad," according to a May 11 article. "Many New-Yorkers will go over especially to attend one or more of these weddings."

The *Times* carried a marriage announcement in the July 18 edition:

Turnure-Stone.—On the 15<sup>th</sup> inst., at St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, London, by the Right Rev. Henry C. Potter, Bishop of New-York, assisted by the Rev. Montagu Villiers, M. A., Vicar of St. Paul's, Lawrence Turnure, Jr., eldest son of Lawrence Turnure of New-York, to Romaine Madeline, daughter of Gen. Roy Stone of New York.

Why the marriage had been delayed is unknown, at least to the Rambler, as is whether General and Mrs. Stone attended the ceremony. The next reference the Rambler found to

the young couple was a report that they were back in New York in early November enjoying fine weather at the resort of Tuxedo on election day.

The marriage would last almost 12 years before Mr. Turnure passed away on April 10, 1902, after a long illness:

A cablegram announcing the death at Cairo, Egypt, yesterday, of Lawrence Turnure, a son of the late senior member of the firm of Lawrence Turnure & Co. of 50 Wall Street. Mr. Turnure retired from the firm about eight years ago on account of ill-health, and soon thereafter went to Cairo, where he had since made his home. The cablegram gave no particulars, but his relatives here believe that his death, while unexpected at this time, was due to an aggravated attack of his malady. He had long suffered from consumption. Mr. Turnure was forty-three years of age. He leaves a wife, who was Miss Romaine Stone, and one daughter.

(The *Times* had noted on May 2, 1899, upon the death of Lawrence Turnure, Sr., after an 18-month illness following a stroke, that, "All the members of his family were at the bedside last night, except the oldest son, Lawrence, who is in Cairo, Egypt, where he has resided for several years.")

As noted earlier, Romaine soon became ill, prompting notice in the *Times* on May 20, 1902, that General and Mrs. Stone had sailed to join their daughter in Paris.

The nature of the illness is unknown, but a year later, the *Times* reported on May 21, 1903, the happy news that "Mrs. Turnure, daughter of the American Gen. Roy Stone," would shortly marry Lord Monson. "Lord Monson is a nephew of Sir. Edmund Monson, British Ambassador in Paris. He is Controller of the Household of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha." The article provided additional details on Lord Monson:

Augustus Debonnaire John Monson is the eighth Baron of his line. He was born in 1868 and succeeded his father in the peerage in 1900. He is private secretary to his uncle, Sir Edmund Monson, and is an Honorary Attaché to the British Embassy in Paris.

Lord Monson's seat is Burton Hall, Lincolnshire.

The society column noted the announcement on May 22, referring to Mrs. Turnure as "a great beauty." The column added:

Her wedding to Lawrence Turnure, Jr., took place some years ago in London. Mr. Turnure died two years ago after a long illness. His health had been poor for quite a period, and he and Mrs. Turnure lived in Cairo, Egypt, occasionally coming to this country. All visitors to Cairo will remember how charmingly and well the Turnures entertained.

Lord Monson received a brief mention on May 31:

Baron Monson, who is to marry Mrs. Lawrence Turnure, Jr., the daughter of Gen. Roy Stone, is quite a young man, and belongs to several well-known London clubs, among others to the St. James and the Bachelors.

More details on the pending marriage emerged in a column on June 21, 1903:

It is said that Mrs. Lawrence Turnure, Jr., who was the beautiful Romain [sic] Stone, first met Lord Monson, who she is to marry very shortly, at the residence of Lady Newbrough. As has been stated, Lady Newbrough and her sister, Mrs. Chauncey of Brooklyn, were originally from Louisville. They have made a great social success in London. Mrs. Turnure has been considered one of the most beautiful women in New York and American society. For the past few years she has lived almost continuously abroad. Her late husband, Lawrence Turnure, Jr., was very delicate and this necessitated her living in Cairo with him. The Turnures entertained there a great deal. Mr. Turnure died about two years ago. Gen. Roy Stone has gone over for the wedding of his daughter, which will be very quietly celebrated.

The wedding took place in Paris on July 1, 1903, as reported the following day in the *Times*. The wedding “was an interesting international event which was largely attended by members of the Diplomatic Corps and of the British and American colonies.” The civil ceremony took place at 1:30 at the British Consulate, with General and Mrs. Stone “witnesses in behalf of the bride.” A “brilliant reception followed at the British Embassy,” after which the couple left for Burton Hall.

The society column reported that General and Mrs. Stone had returned from the wedding on the *Oceanic*, arriving on October 14, 1903. Lord and Lady Monson visited the Stones in Morristown in December, having arrived on the *Oceanic*. Staying at the Boldings in Morristown, “Lord and Lady Monson intend making many pleasure trips in the country and will make their headquarters in Morrisown.”

Lord and Lady Monson went to Montreal early in 1904, and left for Florence, Italy, in late February to join Lord Monson’s mother. The United States apparently made a poor impression on Lord Monson, as reflected in this headline in the *Times* on February 20, 1904: “Lord Monson Doesn’t Like Us.” The brief article stated:

Lord Monson has not been favorably impressed with his visit in this country, and considers Canada far preferable to the United States as a place of residence.

Why that might be, the *Rambler* is unable to state.

As noted earlier, Lord and Lady Monson returned to the United States to be by General Stone’s side in his last days in August 1905. On August 13, 1905, the *Times* reported that they would sail for Europe shortly, noting of Lady Monson that, “As Miss Romaine Stone she was a great beauty.” It also mentioned her first marriage to the late Lawrence Turnure, Jr. “who died in Egypt five years ago.”

In later years, the *Times* would continue to periodically report on Lady Monson's activities, usually with a mention of General Stone and her first husband as a reference point for readers. For example, on March 21, 1907, the *Times* reported that, "A son has been born to Lord and Lady Monson at their country seat in Kent, England." (John Rosebery Monson was born on February 11, 1907.) The short notice reminded readers that Lady Monson "is a daughter of the late Gen. Roy Stone of New York, and was once a belle of Newport."

Lady Monson was cited as likely to attend the coronation of King George V on June 22, 1911 at Westminster Abbey. King George had ascended the throne upon the death of his father, King Edward VII, on May 6, 1910. The *Times* reported on March 26, 1911, that many Americans were traveling to London for the ceremony, but few would get in. "The only other Americans who will be present at the coronation will be those who have married British peers, and who are as peeresses of the realm entitled to an invitation." Peeresses included Lady Monson who was the "widow of Lawrence Turnure" and "a daughter of the late Gen. Roy Stone, U.S.A." The *Times* article included portraits of many of the peeresses, including Lady Monson (the only image of her that Rambler came across in the *Times* archive).

Many Americans attended the chief party given by the Duchess of Marlborough at Sunderland House, as reported on May 28, 1911. Lady Monson was among those in attendance. By July, she was driving visitors from London, including Lord and Lady Monson who "left London for the country after a week's visit to Cora Countess of Strafford."

On March 14, 1912, Lady Monson was among the Anglo-Americans "who paid their devoirs" at the Court. The Rambler, who is deficient in British royal doings, believes this means she was presented formally to King George.

Following the sinking of the Titanic on April 14, 1912, and the loss of 1,517 lives, the British took pride "that the officers and crew did their duty in a manner worthy of the best traditions of the British merchant marine service." An article, datelined London on April 21, 1912, explained that it was never doubted in England that the male passengers, mostly Americans, "would prove equal to the strain" and follow for the most part the concept of women and children first. However, "militant suffragettes" denied that the experience contradicted their view that the age of chivalry was dead. While Miss [sic] Sylvia Pankhurst [a leading suffragette in England]. . . did not want to minimize in any way the gallantry displayed," she pointed out, as the article summarized, "it must be borne in mind that it was the universal rule in cases of shipwreck that women and children should be saved first . . . . There was no special chivalry attached to it." Many women in England disagreed with that view. They, including Lady Monson, had contributed a total of \$35,000 dollars to a fund on behalf of the dead.

That same day, the *Times* reported that the latest craze in London was the study of German. "This is being taken very much 'au grand sérieux' (in all seriousness) by

several Anglo-Americans.” The first name cited as adopting the craze is the former Miss Stone:

Lady Monson took it up directly she came to town in the early part of last year.

She was in Paris on June for “a dinner and opera party” thrown by Miss Gurnea, who was identified as Lady Monson’s cousin.

Lord and Lady Monson were in London for social engagements in December 1912:

Lord and Lady Monson have been paying a series of shooting visits during the last few weeks, but are now preparing to return hospitalities at their place near Lincoln. Lady Monson has invited quite a large party of friends to stay with them at Burton Hall for the Lincoln color ball, which is really a hunt ball. A pretty custom prevails for this affair. The lady patron of the year is expected to choose the colors to be worn at the ball by an eminent portion of the community, so that their toilets shall not clash with the pink of the hunt coats worn by the men. Yellow and gray are the choice for the coming function, and the members of the various house parties are carefully planning their gowns, so that the wearers of each color shall be evenly divided.

Lady Monson is bringing out one of her husband’s nieces, Miss Phyllis Chetewynd, at the ball. “Getting her hand in for the thing,” as she says, referring to when her own daughter, Miss Margaret Turnure, shall make her debut.

After war with Germany broke out in August 1914, Lady Monson was on the advisory committee of the American Women’s War Relief Committee, which as of August 19, 1914, had raised a fund of \$72,000.

On May 17, 1922, the *Times* carried an article announcing that Lady Monson’s daughter Margaret was betrothed to Thomas Richard Bevan of Royston, Hertfordshire. Miss Turnure’s uncles, George Evans Turnure and Dr. Percy R. Turnure, “are both well known in this city,” while her “mother was Miss Romaine Stone, a daughter of General Roy Stone, who was prominent in society both here and in London.” The brief article added, “Lady Monson was very active in Red Cross work during the war.”

The marriage took place on July 17 at St. Michael’s Church, Chester Square, in London. Lord Monson gave his stepdaughter away. The *Times* added, “Prince Alfonso and Princess Beatrice of Spain attended the wedding.” Sadly, in the Rambler’s view, the article did not explain why. (Princess Beatrice was a member of the British royal family and a granddaughter of Queen Victoria. She married Prince Alfonso in 1909 despite his family’s objections to the wedding because she refused to convert to Roman Catholicism. The marriage-for-love cost him his place in the Spanish royal court.)

General Stone’s wife Mary died on September 28, 1925. The death notice in the *Times* indicated that she had died “at the residence of her daughter, Lady Monson, Burton Hall,

Lincoln, England.” It added, “Mary N. Stone of Morristown, N.J., widow of General Roy Stone,” was 82 years old. She was to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery alongside her husband.

On June 4, 1931, the *Times* reported that the Honorable John Rosebery Monson, the only son of Lord and Lady Monson, was to marry Miss Bettie Northrup Powell, whose parents lived at Journey’s End, Chevy Chase, Maryland. The engagement was “of especial interest in New York” because Miss Powell and Mr. Monson “have many relatives in this State.”

Miss Powell “was descended from two of the oldest and most prominent families in Central New York.” Her grandfather, William Brown Smith, had been one of the early settlers of Onondaga County and the founder of Lakeside Farms, “long internationally famous for their show horses and Holstein cattle.” She also was a granddaughter of Edward A. Powell, “banker, agricultural authority and philanthropist.” One of her ancestors was Cotton Mather, the influential 17<sup>th</sup> century New England Puritan minister who is associated with the Salem Witch Trials.

As for Mr. Monson, the article explained that he was half American:

His mother is a daughter of the late General Roy Stone of Mendham, N.J., and Mrs. Stone. Her first husband was the late Lawrence Turnure of New York. She is a Lady of Grace of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. Mr. Monson’s father, the ninth Baron Monson, was Controller of the Household of the late Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. During the World War, he was Commissioner of the British Red Cross in Italy.

Miss Powell and Mr. Monson “met in the Summer of 1929 while traveling in the Yukon and again last Summer in the Balkans.” At the time of the article, he was in the United States visiting with Miss Powell and her family in Chevy Chase. After marriage, they planned to divide their time between London and the family estates in Lincolnshire.

The wedding took place on August 4, 1931, in Christ Church, Beachwood, New Jersey. An article on August 6 provided a few additional details about the lives of the young couple. Miss Powell’s father, Lieutenant Colonel E. Alexander Powell “is the author of many books on international affairs.” As for the groom:

He was graduated recently from the Inner Temple, London . . . . The engagement of the couple was announced last June and the wedding was planned for the Autumn. Mr. Monson came to the United States recently for a visit with his fiancé and while motoring through New Jersey several weeks ago, met with an accident which necessitated his remaining in this country longer than he at first intended. The date of the wedding was advanced in order that the bride could return with him to England.

The article added, "Mr. Monson is a grandson of the late General Roy Stone and Mrs. Stone of Mendham, N.J." It did not indicate whether Lady Monson was able to attend the wedding, but the Rambler hopes she did. It also did not mention General Stone's advocacy of the New Jersey roads on which his grandson's crash took place.

On August 23, the young couple arrived in New York, staying at the Montclair, before leaving for Quebec. They would then sail for London. The couple had one son, John Monson, born May 3, 1932.

On October 11, 1940, the 9<sup>th</sup> Lord Monson died at Brighton Hall at the age of 72. "He had been suffering from heart trouble for some time," the *Times* explained. The article did not mention Lady Monson but added:

His son, John Rosebery Monson, who becomes the tenth baron, is a staff lieutenant at the War Office. The younger Monson married an American girl, the former Betty [sic] Northrop Powell in 1931. She is staying at present in Washington with their two sons, and a daughter.

The late Lord Monson's wife, the former Miss Romaine Stone, passed away on January 1, 1943, at the age of 77. A brief obituary appeared in the *Times* under the headline: "Dowager Lady Monson." (A "dowager" is a widow holding property from her deceased husband, according to Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11<sup>th</sup> edition.) The two paragraph article described Lady Monson's life in these terms:

London, Jan. 1 (U.P.) – The Dowager Lady Monson, the former Miss Romaine Stone, daughter of the late General Roy Stone, U.S.A., died today at her home, Burton Hall, near Lincoln. The Stone family lived at Mendham, N.J.

Lady Monson, whose husband died on Oct. 11, 1940, was the widow of Lawrence Turnure of New York when she was married to Lord Monson in 1903. When a young woman she was prominent in society circles here and in London. During the First World War Lady Monson was engaged in British Red Cross work in Rome, where her husband was stationed as Commissioner General of the British Red Cross in Italy.

Her son, the 10<sup>th</sup> Lord Monson, passed away on April 7, 1958, at the age of 51. Services were held at Lincoln Cathedral followed by private cremation. (The Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Lincoln was built in the years 1185-1311 and was considered the tallest building in the world through the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, surpassing even the Great Pyramid at Giza until the lead-encased wooden spire was blown down by a storm in 1549 and was not rebuilt.) His wife Bettie would remarry, marrying Captain James Arnold Phillips on February 12, 1962, becoming Mrs. Bettie Phillips. She passed away on May 10, 2003.

John Monson, the son of the 10<sup>th</sup> Lord Monson and his wife Bettie, became the 11<sup>th</sup> Lord Monson upon the death of his father. He had married Emma Devas, daughter of an English painter, on April 2, 1955. They had three children, Nicholas John (born October

19, 1955), Andrew Anthony John (May 12, 1959), and Stephan Alexander John (January 5, 1961).

The 11<sup>th</sup> Lord Monson continues to serve in the House of Lords as a Crossbencher. According to the Crossbenchers' Web site:

Peers in the House of Lords who do not take a party whip (ie. they are not told how to vote by a political party) sit on the Crossbenches. They are known for their independent, non-party political stance . . . . Due to their independence Crossbenchers do not adopt any collective policy positions. They speak in debates and vote in Divisions as individuals.

Thus, sayeth the Rambler, ends the begats.

["A Day of Many Weddings," April 28, 1886  
"Society Topics of the Week," October 30, 1887  
"Closing the Season," February 14, 1888  
"Again the Yellows Win," August 3, 1888  
"Society's Sway at Lenox," September 15, 1888  
"Society Events at Lenox," September 16, 1888  
"Mrs. Whitney as Hostess, September 20, 1888  
"Society Topics of the Week," January 26, 1890  
"Society Topics of the Week," March 30, 1890  
"Society Topics of the Week," June 15, 1890  
"Married," July 16, 1890  
"Society Topics of the Week, November 9, 1890  
"Lawrence Turnure Dead," May 2, 1899  
"What is Doing in Society," May 3, 1899  
"What is Doing in Society," May 20, 1902  
"To Marry Lord Monson," May 21, 1903  
"What is Doing in Society," May 22, 1903  
"Of Whom Clubmen Gossip," May 31, 1903  
"Told in Her Boudoir," June 21, 1903  
"Mrs. Turnure Weds Lord Monson in Paris," July 2, 1903  
"What is Doing in Society," October 15, 1903  
"Society at Home and Abroad," December 13, 1903  
"Lord Monson Doesn't Like Us," February 20, 1904  
"Society at Home and Abroad," August 13, 1905  
"Son for the Former Miss Stone," March 21, 1907  
"Few Americans Will See the Actual Coronation," March 26, 1911  
"Party at Sunderland House," May 28, 1911  
"Heat Sends Visitors Away from London," July 16, 1911  
"Presents Americans at Court in London," March 15, 1912  
"Suffragettes Deny Chivalry on Titanic," April 21, 1912  
"Society Folk Study German," April 21, 1912  
"Paris Brightens as Season Grows," June 23, 1912

“London Glows over Big Costume Ball,” December 8, 1912  
“American Women Have \$72,000 Fund,” August 19, 1914  
“Miss Turnure Engaged,” May 17, 1922  
“Miss Turnure Weds T. R. Bevan in London,” July 19, 1922  
“Died,” September 30, 1925.  
“Bettie N. Powell Engaged to Marry,” June 4, 1931  
“Monson-Powell,” August 6, 1931  
“Notes of Social Activities in New York and Elsewhere,” August 24, 1931  
“Lord Monson,” October 12, 1940  
“Dowager Lady Monson,” January 2, 1943  
“Deaths,” April 10, 1958

### **The Rambler on General Stone**

In talking about the proposed Grand Road of America, General Stone said:

It is often easier to do great things than small ones of the same kind, and what the Government undertakes in this regard should be something big enough to excite the imagination and stir the pride and patriotism of the country—something that will put us in respect of roads as far ahead of other nations as we have been behind them heretofore.

Although he was referring to the greatest symbolic object-lesson road of them all, these words could apply just as well to General Stone’s philosophy of life. As early as his service in the Civil War, we see a decisive, fearless individual taking on every challenge. Through July 1, 1963, when he led a valiant battle that held off the Confederate advance and was incapacitated by injury, his Civil War experience had been one of bold strikes, rapid decisionmaking, and strong leadership.

These same characteristics were evident in his post-war years as he took on big projects, tackled risks with new ideas, invented devices for transit and steel trackways to address major problems, and earned the respect of those he worked with. These projects did not always result in success, but he continued to show bold initiative even in his last years when he sketched a steel track speedway for Long Island that, had it been built, would have been a major accomplishment.

His contributions to the Good Roads Movement, however, are his monument. Once he became committed to the cause, he was a tireless advocate, researcher, and disseminator. His body of work – exhibits, object-lesson roads, publications, research, speeches throughout the United States, tabulation of data, and testimony in the U.S. Congress and before State legislatures around the country – on a budget that ranged from \$8,000 to \$10,000 a year is remarkable enough that it seems impossible. The wide range of ideas he conceived and promoted in his Good Roads advocacy reflected his active, fertile, ingenious mind.

General Stone did not expect to live long enough to see his work come to fruition; he understood it was the work of several generations. But he never lost his enthusiasm or his certainty of its success. He laid a foundation for the coalition of forces that not long after his death would result in creation of the Federal-aid highway program in 1916. The program, based on the State-aid programs he thought should be the model, survives to this day and has helped to create the greatest road network and the most mobile society in history.

Neither the *Times* archives nor other sources tell us about General Stone's personal life. What his wife's life was like or what she thought of her husband's activities, we cannot say. We know that they lost a son, Richmond, to illness, but that their beautiful daughter enjoyed social and personal success. The Rambler, who always likes a happy ending, believes the evidence shows that General and Mrs. Stone loved their daughter and were proud of what she accomplished despite the physical distance that circumstances placed between them. In turn, she gave them two grandchildren, and was a support and comfort to her mother in the years after the General's death. If children are a reflection of their parents, Lady Monson tells us that General and Mrs. Stone were loving, caring, thoughtful parents.

On October 3, 1893, General Stone launched an inquiry that goes on to this day as we continue the search he began for best practices.