

HISTORICAL FEATURE OF THE WEEK

THE STOLEN WATCH



Where was he headed? Where did he think he was going at such a young age and by himself? Just what was he running from? And why did he think stealing was way to get him to wherever he was going?

It was a humid summer morning when Peter, age 15, made the decision to run. But how was he going to run with no money? Not a penny to his name or in his pocket. On that early Monday morning, Peter made the decision that would affect the rest of his life. He snuck into Ms. Bunting's house and then into a bedroom in Rocky Point and quietly removed a gold watch with chain valued at \$75.00. Once the watch was in his pocket, he quietly snuck back out of the house and proceeded through the woods to the Rocky Point Depot and boarded the train headed north. He tried to keep out of sight. He sat in the back, low in the seat and avoided making eye contact with the train conductor.

Captain Cutts was the train conductor on the Wilmington to Weldon Rail Road that day. He was one of the nicest individuals one could meet and hardly ever missed a day of work. As he walked up and down the aisle, he noticed the young man, sitting nervously by himself and could tell that he was doing everything he could to avoid eye contact. As Capt. Cutts approached him, Peter began to squirm in his seat. Capt. Cutts asked him for his payment. Peter, knowing he had no money, showed Capt. Cutts the watch and hoped that would suffice as payment. Capt. Cutts thinking something was afoul, placed Peter in the care of the constable, I. H. Brown and he was removed from the train once they arrived in Burgaw.



Peter was tried for larceny before Justice McQuigg. He confessed his guilt and placed in jail under a \$200 bail until his next appearance before the Superior Court. His trial took place in October 1869 and judgement suspended.