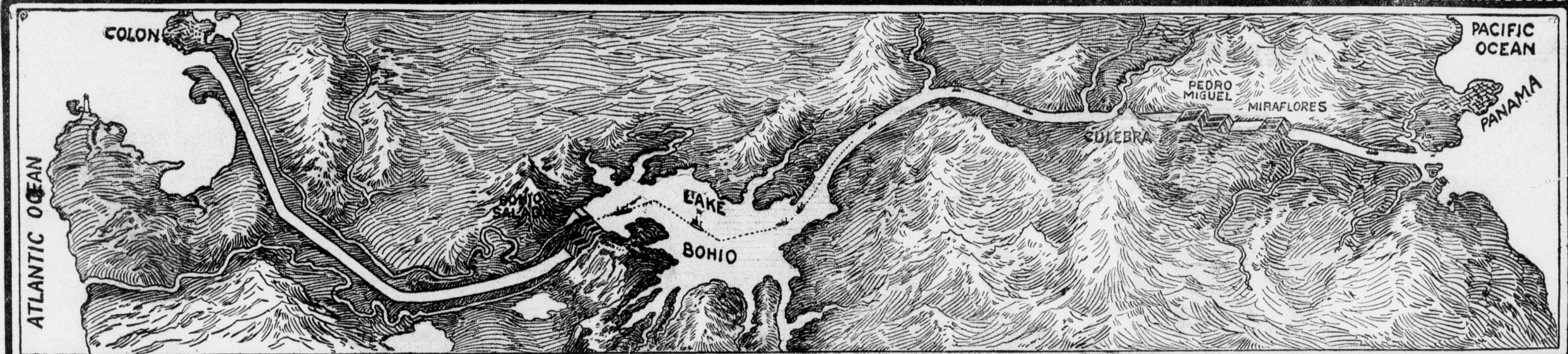


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THE MEN WHO ARE BUILDING THE CANAL



When the United States Senate, a short time before the Adjournment of Congress, unexpectedly voted for a lock canal across the Isthmus of Panama, thus concurring with the House, the President said:

"As soon as I receive official notice of the action of Congress, I'll tell Shonts to cut loose."

THEODORE P. SHONTS, chairman and executive head of the Isthmian Canal Commission, soon received this word from Mr. Roosevelt, and he, in turn, lost no time in passing it on to John F. Stevens, chief engineer of the Commission and his right-hand man. After many weary months of preparation for the work, these two men have well under way the actual construction work connected with the biggest engineering project ever undertaken by man.

and along the whole length of the canal route the dirt is flying with characteristic American energy.

It is a peculiar fact that until both Mr. Shonts and Mr. Stevens were selected for their present work, their existence was undreamed of by the great American public, which now has their names on its lips daily.

When the President determined to reorganize the Canal Commission he naturally looked about for the proper man to head it. Elihu Root refused the task; he was wedded to the law. Henry C. Frick did not want it; he had already done his work. One day Paul Morton, then in the cabinet as Secretary of the Navy, suggested the name of Theodore P. Shonts, a friend of his.

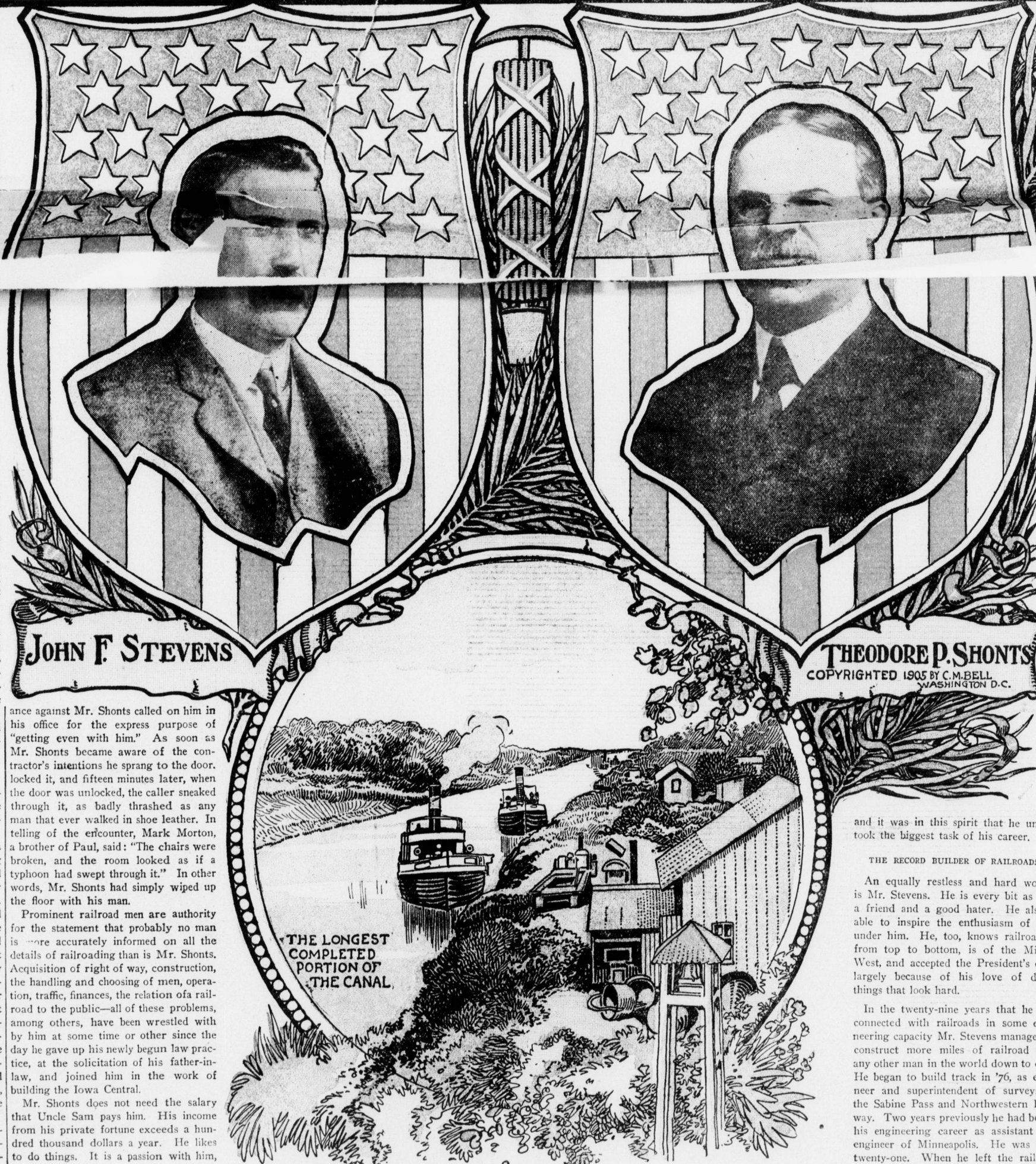
As the good old expression has it, the President took to Mr. Shonts at once, and when the latter frankly stated that he would not consider taking the position unless he could have full authority, and his judgment would be final in all matters wherein there was a difference of opinion, that settled it. Mr. Shonts was straightway offered the position under this condition, and as promptly accepted, thus leaping from obscurity, as president of a third-rate railroad, to international prominence, as executive head of the world's greatest engineering undertaking.

HOW SHONTS WON HIS WIFE.

That Mr. Shonts has a habit of accomplishing to the queen's taste what he sets out to do, is illustrated by two incidents furnished by his career.

As young men will do, there came a time when he fell in love with a young lady. She was the daughter of General Francis M. Drake (afterwards Governor of Iowa) and a musical enthusiast. Somehow, Shonts got it into his head that to win her he would have to become proficient in music, and, nothing daunted by the circumstance that from his earliest boyhood he had never been able to carry a tune or distinguish one note from another, he set resolutely to work to master the art. It was hard work, but he kept at it, and before long he was being complimented by Miss Drake on his unsuspected accomplishment. Still later he was rewarded for all his trouble by gaining from the young lady's lips the word he longed most to hear. To this day, music is one of Mr. Shonts' hobbies. He has only two—the other is work.

The second incident occurred in Chicago, the Shonts' home town. A railroad contractor who harbored a griev-



world he was chief engineer and second vice-president of the Chicago, Rock Is-

land and Pacific.

His greatest engineering feat was accomplished while he was in the employ of the Great Northern, James J. Hill's road. At the same time he had his most thrilling adventure, or, rather, series of adventures.

It was in 1890, the year that he went with the Great Northern as principal assistant engineer, that he undertook to get the road across the Cascade Mountains and Washington State. To find a pass in the mountains through which the road could be run, and to locate the line, Engineer Stevens disappeared one day in the wilderness with two Indian guides and a pack mule. There befell adventure sufficient in scrambling up mountains, skirting yawning precipices, treading virgin territory; but on top of all this the guides turned deserters and the pack mule lay down and gave up the ghost.

Imagine yourself in an untamed country under such circumstances. Would you push on intrepidly? That is just what John F. Stevens did, and he not only discovered Stevens Pass (named after him by a grateful employer), but in addition located the line so admirably that it remains unchanged to this day.

This bit of strenuous endeavor made Mr. Stevens chief engineer of the road five years after going with it, and some time later he became its general manager. As such he did much to make the road the wonderful property it is to-day. From the Great Northern he went to the Rock Island, as chief engineer and fourth vice-president.

"I'LL STICK," SAYS STEVENS.

Mr. Stevens was born down East fifty-three years ago. To be exact, his birthplace is West Gardiner, Me. He is three years older than Mr. Shonts, who was born in Crawford County, Pa., but was raised in Iowa. Mr. Stevens did not go west until he had given up teaching school for engineering, being led to take the step largely because he had an uncle who was a famous engineer in his day. "I am going to stick," Mr. Stevens announced, when it became news that he was to succeed John F. Wallace as chief engineer of the canal.

The man's dogged determination and his ability to preserve a cheerful face and crack a smile in the face of apparently insuperable difficulties, are leading characteristics. They have done a lot to win him the devotion of the men who work under him, as well as to pull him triumphantly through numerous tight places.

and it was in this spirit that he undertook the biggest task of his career.

THE RECORD BUILDER OF RAILROADS.

An equally restless and hard worker is Mr. Stevens. He is every bit as true a friend and a good hater. He also is able to inspire the enthusiasm of men under him. He, too, knows railroading from top to bottom, is of the Middle West, and accepted the President's offer largely because of his love of doing things that look hard.

In the twenty-nine years that he was connected with railroads in some engineering capacity Mr. Stevens managed to construct more miles of railroad than any other man in the world down to date. He began to build track in '76, as engineer and superintendent of surveys of the Sabine Pass and Northwestern Railway. Two years previously he had begun his engineering career as assistant city engineer of Minneapolis. He was then twenty-one. When he left the railroad