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## ARREST

### OLIVER CURTIS PERRY,

alias James Curtis Perry, alias "Curt" Perry,

alias Oliver Moore,

### FOR TRAIN ROBBERY.

*Oliver Perry*  
*Ferry St*  
*NY*  
The above likeness is a good one but flatters. His face is not so full and the lips are thinner.

*Oliver Curtis Perry* is described as 26 years of age, 5 feet 6 to 7 inches in height, slight build, weighing about 130 lbs., dark brown hair, small moustache, inclined to be sandy, (probably now shaved off,) brown eyes; high, white forehead, with wrinkles between eyes, giving his face a troubled and thoughtful expression; thin lips, rather long nose, slim white hands, with enlarged knuckles from hard work. Has a scar about three inches long on upper part of forehead, which is noticeable when his hat is off; also has scar on left arm and above right nipple. He is gentlemanly, polite and effeminate in manner, but acts nervous and uneasy; has a girlish voice, dresses in dark clothes, invariably wears gloves, and is noticeably particular about keeping his hands clean. Had gold open face watch, 14 karat, stemwinder, size 18, Samuel C. Tappen, Troy, N. Y., maker, name on dial and movement, nickel movement, case No. 14,608, movement No. 2,672,281; also a gold watch chain. Also wears a ring with stone on little finger of right hand, (probably now wearing diamonds).

From information received Perry may use any of the following names:

*Oliver, Curtis, Perry, Haswell, Van Allen, Havens, Hamlin, Allen, Gavens, James, James Curtis, James Perry, James Curtis Perry, Oliver Moore.*

Perry is said to have been at one time a cattle herder (cowboy). He has also been convicted and sentenced twice for burglary, and while in prison learned the shoemaker's trade.

Recently he has been a freight and passenger brakeman.

He professes religion, and will try to impose on ministers and class leaders of churches, particularly Presbyterian.

# Feb. 22: Outlaw Oliver Curtis Perry leads police on a train chase in Wayne County

**ON THIS DAY IN ROCHESTER HISTORY...**

Meaghan M. McDermott, Staff writer

12:01 a.m. EST February 22, 2014

Feb. 22, 1892: Oliver Curtis Perry hopped aboard the ladder of a car on the American Express Special as it pulled out of the station in Syracuse. He'd single-handedly robbed the same train a year before and had already run through that loot so thought he'd go back for more.

He fixed a rope to the roof, donned a mask and swung through a window of the messenger car. Inside the train, Perry got in a gunfight with a messenger named Daniel McInerney, then retreated to the train's roof and rode there to Lyons, Wayne County.

Spotted jumping from the roof of the train by the local sheriff and a doctor who'd come to treat the injured McInerney, Perry leaped down, ran to another platform, boarded a locomotive, started it up and drove away, headed west. Wayne County Sheriff Jerry Collins commandeered another train, and sped off in pursuit.

Here's an account of the chase from the [Wayne County Historian's Office \(http://www.co.wayne.ny.us/Departments/historian/MFCollins.htm\)](http://www.co.wayne.ny.us/Departments/historian/MFCollins.htm):

When Perry realized that his pursuer was gaining on him, he reversed his engine and shot past the express train who followed suit by reversing its engines! Back and forth several times between Lyons and Newark the two iron horses zoomed past each other. Finally, the dropping steam pressure caused Perry to abandon his locomotive. He ran across a field, stole a horse and cutter, abandoned that and took off on foot. Surrounded and cornered by Collins and his men, the desperate gunman, still armed had a gun battle with his captors before he gave up. This exploit was widely reported throughout the country. In all the accounts Jerry Collins' bravery is praised.

That chase wasn't the end of Curtis Perry's exploits, though. According to the [Mammoth Book of Prison Breaks \(http://books.google.com/books?id=DCpIAgAAQBAJ&pg=PT115&pg=PT115&dq=Oliver+Perry+train++robber&source=bl&ots=3LSFm3lg\\_&sig=spYKKDeNwKGGWMaci1WQnK56uM&hl=en&sa=X&ei=tTMGU6zylpDYkQfN74GYBw&ved=0CCYQ6AEWATgK#v=onepage&q=Oliver%20Perry%20train%20%20robber&f=false\)](http://books.google.com/books?id=DCpIAgAAQBAJ&pg=PT115&pg=PT115&dq=Oliver+Perry+train++robber&source=bl&ots=3LSFm3lg_&sig=spYKKDeNwKGGWMaci1WQnK56uM&hl=en&sa=X&ei=tTMGU6zylpDYkQfN74GYBw&ved=0CCYQ6AEWATgK#v=onepage&q=Oliver%20Perry%20train%20%20robber&f=false), Perry was sentenced to 49 years of hard labor in Auburn Prison. In October 1892, he escaped by

digging a hole in the wall to an adjoining cell. While his inmate neighbor was out of his cell, Perry slipped through the wall and exited the neighbor's unlocked cell. He made it out to the yard and hid in an outhouse until dark, hoping to scale the wall to freedom. But, he was spotted creeping around by guards, who beat him so hard one of their nightsticks broke.

Perry continued to try to escape, even being sentenced once to a 44-day stay in the prison's dungeons. He became more violent and in December 1893, was declared insane and sent to the Mattewan Asylum for Insane Criminals.

In April 1895, though, he and four other inmates there staged a bold break, and he fled to New Jersey. Perry was free for six days before being

recaptured and in the following months, was declared free of his insanity and sent back to Auburn. Shortly thereafter, he deliberately blinded himself with two needles fixed in a piece of wood and was sent back to Mattewan. In 1901, he was sent to Dannemore State Hospital, where he remained until his death on Sept. 5, 1930.

Perry's great train chase was memorialized in a folk song.

<http://youtu.be/LAg71xth-3k>

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