



# The Great American Railroad War: How Ambrose Bierce and Frank Norris Took On the Notorious Central Pacific Railroad

*Dennis Drabelle*

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## The Great American Railroad War: How Ambrose Bierce and Frank Norris Took On the Notorious Central Pacific Railroad Dennis Drabelle

How two of America's greatest authors took on the Central Railroad monopoly

The notorious Central Pacific Railroad riveted the attention of two great American writers: Ambrose Bierce and Frank Norris. In *The Great American Railroad War*, Dennis Drabelle tells a classic story of corporate greed vs. the power of the pen. The Central Pacific Railroad accepted US Government loans; but, when the loans fell due, the last surviving founder of the railroad avoided repayment. Bierce, at the behest of his boss William Randolph Hearst, swung into action writing over sixty stinging articles that became a signal achievement in American journalism. Later, Norris focused the first volume of his trilogy, *The Octopus*, on the freight cars of a thinly disguised version of the Central Pacific. The Great American Railroad War is a lively chapter of US history pitting two of America's greatest writers against one of America's most powerful corporations.

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