

tors and then contracted for 1600 tons of "superior American T rail, weighing 50 pounds to the yard . . . [which] will complete the track to the town of Union."¹² The T-rail was the latest and best design and is the type still used today, although the weight per yard has increased.¹³

To galvanize the demoralized construction crews into action, Young drove down to Shelton's Ferry—just above the railhead at Lyle's Ford—after his election as president. He reached Shelton's just after sundown.

There was no ferry man to put me across, but soon a boat man came across the river in a little canoe. I ordered my driver to carry my buggy to Dr. Simms at Simmsville and I hired the canoe man to push me across the river.

I tramped through the snow four inches deep, to the place now called Shelton. There was not a solitary person to be seen, nor a spark of fire. Being nearly frozen, I took my valise and marched down the graded track to Lyles Ford, four miles distant. I had several falls off the embankment, getting my clothing filled with snow. I was almost frozen and could scarcely walk when I met a Negro, and after considerable parley secured his consent to carry my valise.

When I got to Lyles Ford there was only one light to be seen on the hill. I went up the hill to the light and knocked at the door and ascertained that this shanty was occupied by Mrs. Gay, the wife of an engineer. Shortly after being admitted to the house and while I was drying and thawing Mr. Gay made his appearance. I ascertained that he was running an engine over the five miles of track laid; that the train had run off, and that he had walked to Lyles Ford, about 16 miles. After rehearsing our misfortunes we were soon on good terms. We then went to bed, his family occupying one corner of the room, and I, a pallet on a mattress two feet shorter than myself in the opposite corner. The wind was blowing from the north pole through the cracks, and I suppose I turned over one hundred times during the night to keep from freezing.

The next morning after an early breakfast, I walked on down the track to the scene of the run off with Mr. Gay and some Negro hands, I had hired at Lyles Ford. The engine

TOWARD SE

was off, s

I avail

had a fire

as to jack

up and w

The r

Giving a

to repair

came bac

let him h

for it and

The m

engine in

Allston w

Building

years before

open for the

dressing room

with "long, p

first opera h

'Lady of Lye

'Box and Co

track, and it

1880s a new

converted int

built about 19

north. Both o

Finally

huzzas of the

been augmen

passenger coa

Grading

Young purch

burg segment

before the tra

When o

Spartanburg,

Union Brass

right behind

was off, sunk to its boiler in soft mud and stiff frozen.

I availed myself of Col. Allston's fence near by and soon had a fire built around the engine to thaw the frozen mud so as to jack it up. We were all day engaged in getting the engine up and walked back to Lyles Ford over very rough country.

The next day we went down with a temporary force. Giving a basket to a Negro I sent him to get some charcoal to repair my broken engine. He was gone nearly all day, and came back without the coal, saying that the man would not let him have it unless I sent him a quarter. There was no help for it and we had to walk back to Lyles Ford to sleep.

The next morning we went back with appliances, put the engine in the track; repaired the broken irons and ran back to Allston with the engine.¹⁴

Building continued. The depot at Union was completed several years before the track reached the town, and Young, his eye always open for the main chance, fitted the building out with a stage and a dressing room at the northern end and filled the rest of the structure with "long, plank benches." Thus the railroad station was Union's first opera house. "The young people played 'Lucretia Borgia,' 'Lady of Lyons,' 'Richelieu,' 'Warwick,' and light comedy such as 'Box and Cox'."¹⁵ The building was to the west of the proposed track, and it later burned in the great fire of 1877. By the early 1880s a new railroad station had been built on the site, but it was converted into a freight depot when a new passenger terminal was built about 1902-03 on the east side of the tracks and slightly farther north. Both of these two buildings are still extant as of this writing.

Finally Young pushed the rails through to Union, arriving to the huzzas of the townsfolk on 18 October 1858. The rolling stock had been augmented by the purchase of three new locomotives, two passenger coaches, and several more freight cars.¹⁶

Grading toward Spartanburg had already been in progress, and Young purchased seventy thousand crossties for the Union-Spartanburg segment. Another hundred thousand dollars had to be invested before the track reached Spartanburg.

When on 25 November 1859 the first train finally puffed into Spartanburg, the flag-bedecked engine and cars were greeted by the Union Brass Band and a large, cheering crowd. Another train was right behind the first one, and hordes of passengers and greeters