

Today in Columbus History:

On Tuesday, March 17, 1874, a story appeared in the *Daily Columbus Daily Enquirer* announcing "The North & South Railroad, Terrible Accident – Conductor Stunned – Engineer, Bragg Yonge, Killed – Wood Passer Mortally Scalded and Mashed – Fireman Badly Cut – Train Wrecked."

The accident happened the morning before, about seven and half miles from Columbus close to Cleghorn station near Nance's old shop. It had been raining heavily for several days. Earlier that morning, track inspector Stringfield and conductor F. S. Grimes of the outbound train carefully examined the trestle (No. 4 ½) where the accident later happened and the train passed over it safely. On the return trip, they traversed the same section slowly, about six miles per hour. This time, the trestle gave way.

Conductor Grimes was in the passenger car and in his words was "badly frightened but not demoralized." Fireman Tom Jones sustained a severe cut on his head when he leapt from the train to safety. Grimes found engineer Bragg Yonge crushed to death under the boiler and sixteen-year-old, wood passer and Yonge's nephew Willie Taylor was scalded over most of his body and near death.

Yonge's body was taken to his home on Oglethorpe and prepared for burial. Taylor was moved a short distance to Nance's. He died early the next morning and was brought back to Columbus. Both Yonge and Taylor shared a funeral procession to Linwood Cemetery on the afternoon of March 17.

Yonge's death generated three funeral notices in that day's paper. The first one was from his wife, the former Fannie Kittrell, whom he married in Columbus in 1866. Yonge was about thirty-five years old and had two children.

Another notice was from his labor union, the Machinists and Blacksmith's Union No. 4 that represented railroad workers. The local Union attended the funeral in full force and had Yonge's death notice printed in the union's national journal in May 1874.

The last notice was from sisters' families. His sister Roberta Yonge was married to J. Rhodes Browne, the president of the Georgia Home Bank, Georgia Home Savings Bank and Georgia Home Insurance company. Another sister, Eliza, was married to Abram Gammel, a livery operator. She was stepmother to Gammel's daughter Martha Robinson, the mother of Willie Taylor.

This was the railroad's first accident since it began running, eighteen months earlier. The N&S was chartered in October 1870, with the hope of travelling between Columbus and Chattanooga. By the time of the accident, the track only went as far as Kingsboro, about twenty miles or so.

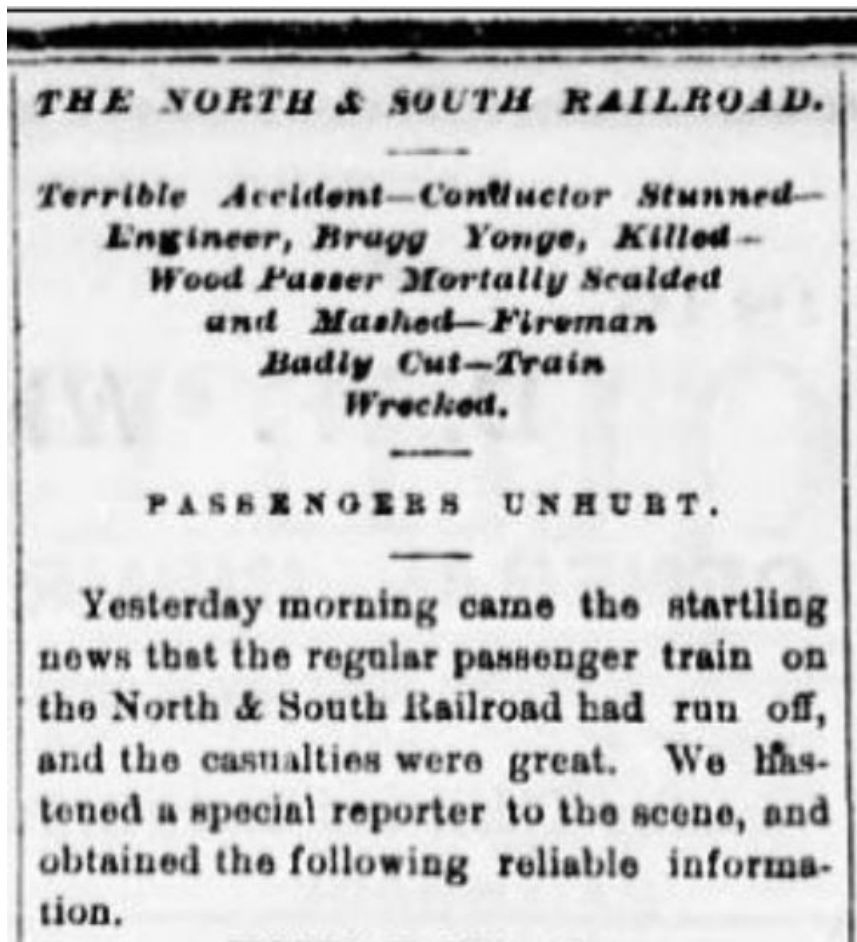
The engine John King had arrived in Columbus only about six months earlier in September 1873. A description of the engine from the *Weekly Sun* of September 9, 1873 matches with the that of another engine, the *Onward*, built in 1872. Both narrow gauge engines were built by William Mason of Taunton, Massachusetts with a connected tender, 0-4-4 wheel configuration, 10X15 cylinders, and 33 inch drivers.

The crash was just the beginning of the problems for the N&S. Shortly after the wreck, on April 22, it held a shareholders' meeting. President T. E. Blanchard told the gathering that the railroad was in dire straits. After the accident, Blanchard paid for the repairs to the track out of his own pocket. However, \$9,400 in interest past due on its state-endorsed bonds, with no funds to pay it. On April 24, Governor Smith seized the railroad and assigned a new superintendent until it the state could find a buyer.

Compiled by Daniel A. Bellware, Muscogee Genealogical Society

Clipping from Georgia Historic Newspapers (GALILEO).

Our weekly snippets of Columbus history are usually based on a few days-worth of searching through the most popular sources for Muscogee County history. Meant to inspire readers to explore more about Columbus history, they are not exhaustive dissertations on the topic and may contain mistakes. If you have corrections or additional information, feel free to share them with the group.



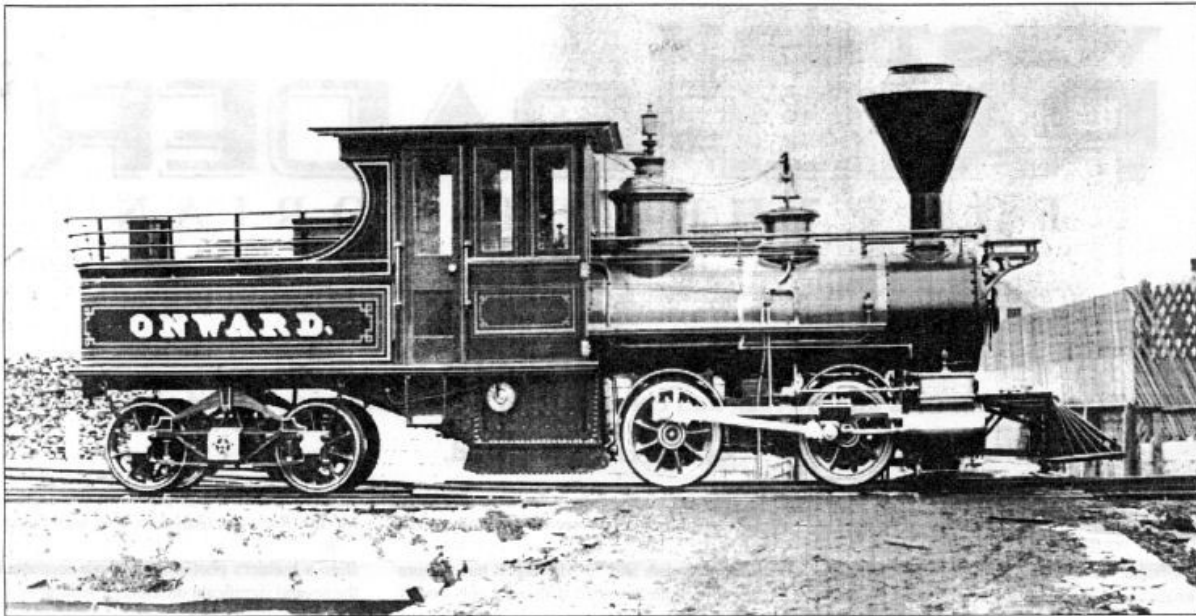
THE NORTH & SOUTH RAILROAD.

**Terrible Accident—Conductor Stunned—
Engineer, Bragg Yonge, Killed—
Wood Passer Mortally Scalded
and Mashed—Fireman
Badly Cut—Train
Wrecked.**

PASSENGERS UNHURT.

Yesterday morning came the startling news that the regular passenger train on the North & South Railroad had run off, and the casualties were great. We hastened a special reporter to the scene, and obtained the following reliable information.

Article on "The North & South Railroad" from the *Columbus Daily Enquirer*, March 17, 1874, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>.



Onward posed for its portrait at the Mason Machine Work's Taunton, Massachusetts works in early 1872. It was a small 14-ton locomotive with 10x15" cylinders and 33" drivers. This was also Mason's first narrow-gauge locomotive, and was given construction number 461 when shipped to its first owner, the American Fork Railroad of Utah. The reason for differences between the photo and the engraving are noted in the text. *Arthur W. Wallace collection.*

The description of the *Onward* is almost identical to the *John King* (<https://utahrails.net/images/tufford2.jpg>)

Arrival of Another Narrow Gauge Engine—The "John King."

The second engine for the North and South Railroad arrived Tuesday night on the Western Railroad. It came via Louisville. It now can be seen on the North and South track near the depot on the North Common.

It was built by Wm. Mason, at Taunton, Massachusetts. The engine and tender are connected. There are no leading wheels on trucks. There are four driving wheels, two on each side, and four wheels in the truck frame under the tender. The engine is very powerful, much more so than the "Estes" and better constructed.

The cylinder is ten inches in diameter, with a fifteen inch stroke; the drivers are of thirty-three inch diameter; fire box is nine square feet on grate; tubes are eighty-one in number and of two inch diameter, and eight feet two inches long; the tank is of eight hundred gallons capacity.

Notice of the arrival of the engine *John King* in Columbus from the *Weekly Sun*, September 9, 1873, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>.

NORTH AND SOUTH RAILROAD SCHEDULE.

On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays the
Passenger train will leave

Kingsboro at..... 8 00 A M

Columbus at..... 8 20 P M

On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays the
Freight train will leave

Kingsboro at..... 8 00 A M

Columbus at..... 8 20 P M

Freight train has passenger coach attached

On each Monday a passenger train will
leave Columbus at 6 A M, and on each Satur-
day a passenger train will leave Kingsboro at
5:30 P M.

The schedule for the N&S Railroad. From the *Hamilton Weekly Visitor*, February 13, 1874, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>. The 6:00 am Monday train passed over the trestle near Cleghorn station without incident on the way to Kingsboro. The return trip ended in disaster.

FUNERAL NOTICE.

The friends and acquaintances of Mr.
and Mrs. BRAGG YONGE, are respectfully
invited to attend the funeral of the for-
mer from his late residence, on Ogle-
thorpe street, this (Tuesday) afternoon at
4 o'clock.

FUNERAL NOTICE.

Members of M. & B. Union No. 4, of
Georgia, will assemble at their Hall at 3
o'clock this (Tuesday) afternoon, to at-
tend the funeral of their late Brother,
BRAGG YONGE.

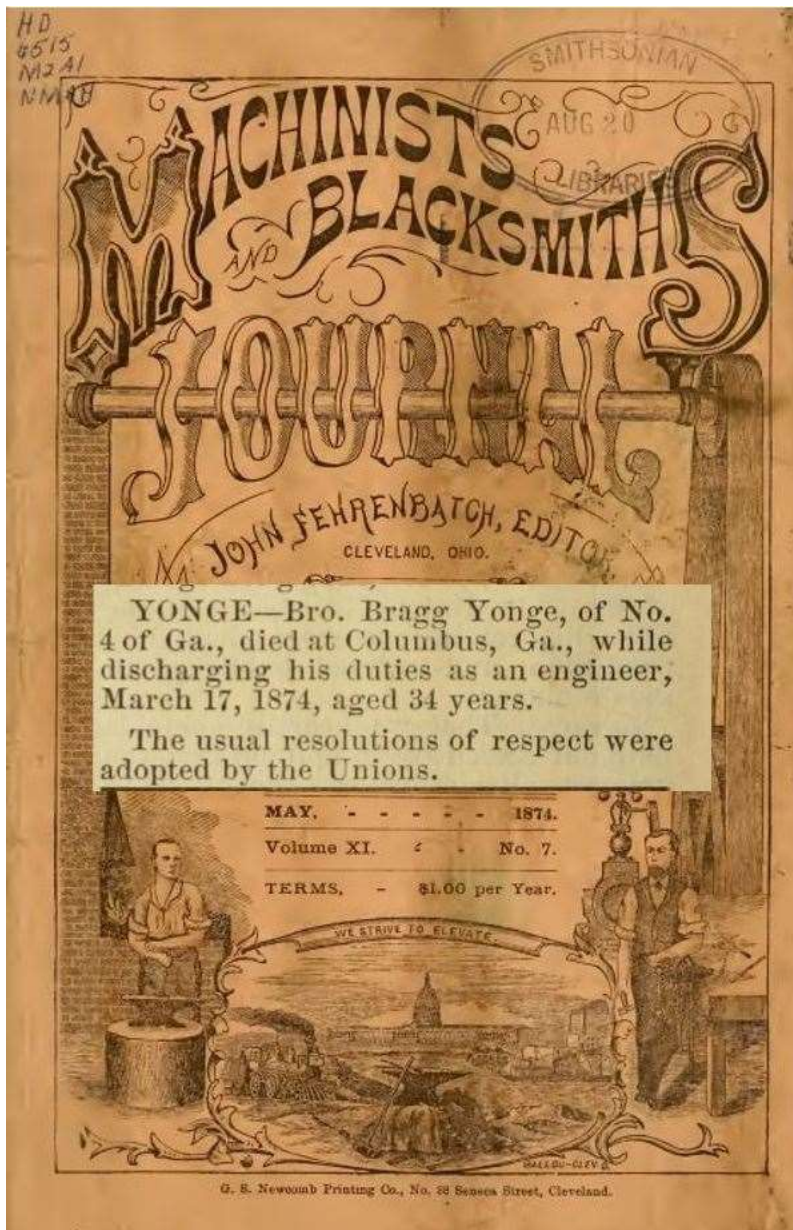
By order of the President.

* E. R. WELLS, Rec. Sec'y.

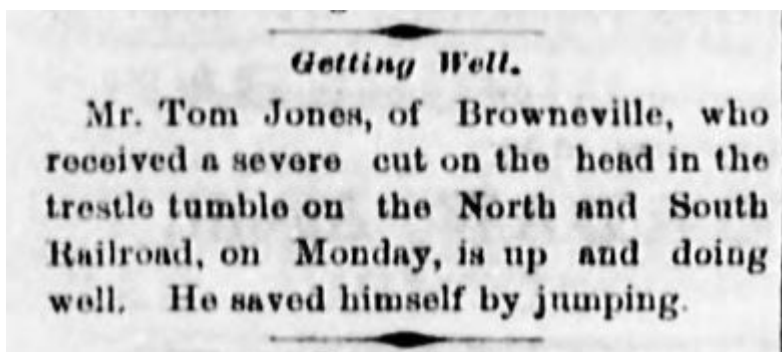
FUNERAL NOTICE.

The friends and acquaintances of Mr.
and Mrs Bragg Yonge, Mr. A. Gammel
and family, and Mr. and Mrs. J. Rhodes
Browne, are respectfully invited to at-
tend the funeral of Mr. YONGE, from his
late residence on Oglethorpe street, above
Bridge, this (Tuesday) afternoon at 4
o'clock.

Bragg Yonge's death generated three funeral notices in the *Columbus Daily Enquirer*, March 17, 1874, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>.



Yonge's death notice superimposed on the cover of the *Machinist and Blacksmith's Journal*, May 1874, <https://library.si.edu/digital-library/book/machinistsblac1171874fehr>



A short note on the condition of fireman Tom Jones in the *Columbus Daily Enquirer*, March 18 1874, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>.

*Another Victim of the N. & S. Railroad
Disaster.*

Willie Taylor, the wood-passer who was scalded so badly in the accident on Monday, when Bragg Yonge, the engineer, was killed, died at Nance's at 2 A. M. yesterday. He was a step-son of Mr. Tom Robinson, a nephew of Mr. Bragg Yonge, and also of Mr. A. Gammell. His remains were brought to Columbus on a special train at 2 P. M. The remains and those of his uncle were followed to the cemetery by the same funeral procession. Rev. Dr. Key officiated at the grave. Notwithstanding the rain, the M. & B. Union turned out in full force.

Willie Taylor was only sixteen years of age. He was a quiet, clever, reliable youth, with a passion for railroading amounting to enthusiasm.

Willie Taylor's story in the *Columbus Daily Enquirer*, March 18, 1874,
<https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>.