

**A FIELD TRIP
FOR THE
ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD CLUB**

JUNE 26 - JULY 2, 1988

LEADERS:

**Rich Dais
Darlene Edgerton
Cathy Lawry
Tom Lawry
Ardie Schoeninger
Zona Stephens
Cyndi Trombly**

Hi!

We are glad to have you along on the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club's 50th Anniversary's week of Colorado ghost railroading. Before we begin, please take a few moments to review the following "Rules of the Road" to ensure a safe and enjoyable trip.

1. The leader sets the pace; don't go ahead of the leader.
2. Watch for the person behind you when turning, wait for the person following you so they know where to turn.
3. Leave sufficient space between vehicles for other vehicles to pass through the caravan; don't tailgate.
4. Do not leave the group without notifying the leader.
5. Don't litter. Don't destroy plant life. Leave only footprints, take only pictures.
6. Respect private property.
7. Don't enter mines or tunnels.
8. When we stop, pull in as close to the car in front of you as possible, so that the people at the back of the caravan don't have to walk a mile. For lunch stops, leave space so the car in front of you can get into their tailgate.
9. Parents are responsible for their own children.
10. Pets must be kept on a leash when they are outside of the vehicle.
11. Two blasts on the horn means return to your car; 2 whistle blasts means gather around the leaders.
12. While on the road, we will be on Channel 14 on the CB with more information.

LET'S HAVE FUN!!!!

RIO GRANDE SOUTHERN

"For over six decades, the Rio Grande Southern carried the economy of the San Juans in its consist. One person was born aboard the swaying cars, while a few others died - but most were only scared to death." Mallory Hope Ferrell

The story of the RGS begins in 1889 with a man who will become very familiar to you on this trip through the San Juans -- Otto Mears, "The Pathfinder of the San Juans. In 1882, the Denver & Rio Grande (D&RG) completed their "San Juan Extension" from Durango to Silverton with plans to continue the line to Ouray. However, Thomas Wigglesworth, D&RG surveyor, advised against the Silverton to Ouray line because of the treacherous country and the need for 7 and 8% grades in the canyon of the Uncompahgre. Otto Mears, who had opened the San Juans to the outside world through wagon toll roads, had mining interests in the Silverton area and when he realized that the D&RG was not going past Silverton, he decided to build his own railroad from Silverton to Ouray using his Ouray & San Juan wagon road (The Rainbow Road). By 1889, the Silverton railroad had made it through Corkscrew Gulch to Ironton, but, because of the grades required, he could not make it the final six miles to Ouray. Because he was determined to open up the rich mining areas of Telluride and Rico by rail and, probably, because he refused to be defeated by a mere range of mountains, he conceived of his Rio Grande Southern Railroad, a 162 mile "detour" from Durango to Ridgway through some of the most glorious mountain country in the U. S.

The RGS is considered to be Otto Mears' greatest achievement. Experienced railroad men of the time claimed it could never be built. In the late summer of 1889, David Wood, owner of a large freight and stage line from Dallas into the mining areas, organized the "San Juan Southern" to build a railroad from Dallas, a station on the D&RG, and the rich mines at Telluride and Rico. Nothing more was done. The Rio Grande Southern was incorporated October 2, 1889, and a separate RGS Construction Company with Otto Mears as president of both. The Rio Grande used in the name was in honor of the D&RG which aided Mears in promoting and constructing the RGS.

Construction was to have begun simultaneously from Durango and Dallas, a town of 541 people on a D&RG narrow gauge spur between Ouray and Montrose. However, the RGS was unable to purchase the necessary site for terminal and shops from David Wood. Undaunted, Mears and Company bought land for a town 2.7 miles to the south and called it Dallas Junction - soon to be known as Ridgway Junction (after R. M. Ridgway, RGS supervisor), and later Ridgway. Thus, Mears figured he saved around \$40,000 and another town, Dallas, bit the dust. A similar happening was soon to occur near the south end of the line, when the town of Dolores sprang up from a construction camp and the community of Big Bend, 1.5 miles south packed up and moved north. The D&RG line up the Uncompahgre River into Dallas was on the east side of the river (approximately the same as the present day highway). To connect the Ouray line with the new RGS terminal at Ridgway, the track was moved to the west side of the river, building across the Uncompahgre. Grading began out of Ridgway April 14, 1890. Later a two-story depot was built there at a cost of \$5,000 as a joint RGS and D&RG facility. When C. W. Gibbs surveyed the line, he placed it approximately on the old Mears toll line along Leopard Creek over Leopard Divide (later Dallas Divide). However, the town of Placerville (originally located where Leopard Creek emptied into the San Miguel River) could not accommodate all the rail facilities and had to be relocated one mile up the San Miguel River. On December 19, 1891, the two ends of the railroad met between Rico and Dolores and the RGS ran its first through passenger train from Ridgway to Durango on January 2, 1892.

When it was finished, the RGS covered 162 miles through some of the most magnificent, rugged country in the West, crossing four passes - the highest being Lizard Head Pass at 10,250 feet - and requiring 142 bridges and trestles. The longest and highest of the bridges was at milepost 8 & 9 outside of Ridgway at 836.6 feet long and 134 feet high with a 4% grade and a 20° curve. It had a 246.6 foot pile trestle approach on the north, a 388 foot trestle on the south and a 202

foot Howe deck truss center span. This bridge, though quite an engineering feat, was very unsteady and engines were not allowed to exceed 6 miles per hour on it. It was said to vibrate so badly when being crossed that water sloshed out of the water barrels. It was replaced by a fill in 1903. Of course, the most amazing bridging and trestling was found at Ophir with a series of bridges traversing the side of Yellow Mountain then crossing the gully to the new townsite of Ophir - two miles from the original town of Ophir, then doubling back on the same mountain slopes and continuing the grade in the opposite direction high above the line. Today, these fantastic structures are gone - gone to time and the elements as is the Rio Grande Southern. However, this amazing little railroad survived against all odds. When the two ends of track finally met in December, 1891, Otto Mears' dream finally came true, by travelling 162 miles on the RGS plus 63 miles on the Animas branch of the D&RG and the Silverton railroad, it was now possible to avoid the six miles from Albany to Ouray.

As each section was completed, trains started running. With the completion of the entire line and the beginning of 1892, trains were running almost around the clock. Silver was King! The future looked very bright. The 1892 net earnings were in excess of 126 thousand dollars. Less than two years after the completion of the RGS, silver was demonetized with the repeal of the Sherman Act and the roof caved in. Almost overnight hundreds of mines closed down. With the mines, went most of the RGS traffic. Mears lost the RGS to bankruptcy. On August 2, 1893, the D&RG took over in receivership. After 34 years, the D&RG had milked all it could out of the RGS and was changing much of it's line to standard gauge. Victor A. Miller was appointed receiver. When the line was turned over, there was not a cent in the treasury, interest on bonds was eight years in default, taxes on its property were one and a half years in default, an April, 1929 mudslide split the line in half, and the equipment was in disrepair and there were no supplies for repairs. Mr. Miller rehabilitated the line as much as possible and with any spare funds put in new ties, repaired bridges and rebuilt equipment. Operating expenses were paid and no new debts incurred. After his plan for reorganization was opposed, he resigned and the railroad went into two more receiverships before its request for abandonment was approved in 1951.

If other railroads had problems with the elements, the RGS, because of its location, had more. The RGS right-of-way bisected the maximum precipitation area of Colorado. All too regularly the Dolores and San Miguel Rivers took its tracks in floods. Almost every winter land and snowslides suspended service. The 1929 mudslide at Ames split and crippled the railroad for more than a year.

But the railroad that should never have been built certainly should never have survived. But survive it did and for 60 years! It never prospered but limped along until 1952. How? In the pre-auto days, the best way to see the sights was a trip on the "Narrow Gauge Circle." The RGS while in receivership with the D&RG was a big calling card for this excursion. By 1914, the automobile had cut into business and the "Narrow Gauge Circle" no longer ranked with Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon as one of the tourist attractions of the West. The stockyards at Placerville, at one time, was the second largest cattle and sheep shipping point in the State, being exceeded only by Rifle. Not silver, not gold, but vanadium was a major factor in keeping the RGS going. In 1896, Henry Becquerel discovered that uranium emitted radiation. In southwestern Colorado, an ore called carnotite containing potassium, uranium and vanadate was common. Hundreds of carloads of this precious and highly dangerous material - practically all the uranium in the world was shipped out on the RGS. In 1923, a richer uranium containing ore called pitchblende was discovered in Africa and again the RGS lost out. Then in 1942, there was a renewal of interest in vanadium. Under a cover of secrecy, the U.S. Army started shipping vanadium out on the RGS. It wasn't until the bombs fell on Nagasaki and Hiroshima that people realized the renewed interest in carnotite. The RGS was being kept alive with Government loans so that atomic bombs could be built.

Finally, it was the innovative rail busses, nicknamed the "Galloping Geese, which kept the RGS on the tracks until the early 1950's. In the early 1930's,

Victor A. Miller, second receiver, was the force behind the building of busses out of old automobiles. Three of the Geese were made out of old Buicks and four out of old Pierce-Arrows. These strange contraptions carried the mail, cargo and passengers for almost twenty years more economically than steam trains. The Galloping Goose became the herald for the RGS until its demise.

In the early 1950's, the RGS was in serious trouble. Many mines had shut down and those still operating were shipping by truck. Bad management had lost most of the traffic on the railroad including the mail. In 1952, it was declared bankrupt and scrapped. There was a grassroots attempt by L. A. Bartholomew of Santa Barbara, California, attempted to induce the government to have it saved and declared a National Monument. However, without support, this idea never got off the ground. Another plan was presented by Robert LeMassena, representing a group of RGS minority bond owners, proposed operating the section between Ridgway via Telluride to the top of Lizard Head Pass for summer tourist trade. This plan was rejected. Isn't that too bad! Just think, if the RGS had been declared a National Monument or had been operated as a summer tourist attraction, we could be riding the train instead of driving the grade.

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Passenger Department of the Denver & Rio Grande RR Around the Circle in 1892:
Miles by Rail Through the Rocky Mountains

Wolle, M.S., Stampede to Timberline
Timberline Tailings

WHO WAS OTTO MEARS?

Otto Mears was born in Russia in 1840 of an English father and a Russian mother. When orphaned at the age of 5, he was sent to an uncle in Russia, then to England, then to another in New York. After keeping him a year, the New York uncle dispatched him in 1851 to another uncle in San Francisco by ship. When Otto arrived in San Francisco, his uncle had left for Australia. An old lady took care of him and got a job selling papers. He was naturalized and served in the 1st Regiment of the California Volunteers. In 1864 he mustered out of the service in New Mexico. In 1865, he moved to Conejos County, just over the Colorado Territorial border. There he began a store, raised wheat and built a grist mill. From there, he got government land in the Saguache area and grew wheat for the mining camps in the Leadville area. The route to Leadville was almost impassable. In 1867 Mears built the first of his many roads, from Saguache to Nathrop via Poncha Pass which connected with the Denver-Leadville road. Between 1867 and 1883, Otto Mears built ten roads totalling about 450 miles - all of which are still in use, either as roads or railroad grades. Marshall Pass was originally an Otto Mears toll road which he sold to General Palmer. From roads he went to railroads - The Silverton, 1887-1889; the Rio Grande Southern, 1890-1892; the Silverton-Northern, 1893-1904; and the Chesapeake Beach (from Washington, D.C. to the beach). He was a successful freighter and packer, was one of the developers of the Mack Truck Company. He was a State Representative and the major negotiator in the final treaties which stripped the Ute Indians of all of their Colorado land. After the demonetization of silver and the defeat of William Jennings Bryant in 1896, Otto Mears left Colorado for New York. After a brief return to Colorado (1907-1917), he returned to California, where he died in 1931.



ITINERARY -- Sunday, June 26, 1988

Today we will leave Durango where the Rio Grande Southern used the D&RG facilities, along route 160, then onto highway 141 and some of the back roads following the grade, approximately. We will arrive in Hesperus "the back way" the way the train would have. Of the two story depot, water tank, section house and storage tracks, nothing is left. We will then get back on 160 toward Mancos. The grade is above us on the right. Weather and conditions permitting, we will either drive or hike part of the grade at this point. Past Mancos we lose the grade in Lost Canyon, now on Mountain Ute private property. Following around, we meet up with the grade again in Dolores. As we stop here for lunch, provided by the city for those of you who wish, make sure you check out the Galloping Goose in the park which the city is planning to restore. The RGS built this town and laid out the park, which was a gift to the town on abandonment. Originally, Dolores had a two-story depot, a section house, a water tank, a wye, passing tracks and a freight house.

From Dolores, we will head up the Dolores River following the grade, which at times is very evident. After going through Dolores Canyon, we reach Rico. Started in 1879, it was desperate for transportation. Before the RGS reached it, Rico's supplies were brought in and ore taken out by way of Scotch Creek and Hermosa Park to Rockwood and the D7RG connection to Durango. In its prime Rico was the midpoint on the RGS and boasted a two-story depot, engine house, wye, coal pocket, a water tank, section house and bunkhouse. Today, all that remains is the lonely, dilapidated tank. Rico means "rich" in Spanish and rich was the area around Rico. Unfortunately, most of the riches were in silver and the silver panic of 1893 started the town on a decline it has never recovered from.

After stopping for a quick look at the tank in Rico, we will take back to the main road toward Lizard Head Pass, the highest point on the RGS. Before reaching the summit, the railroad found it necessary to loop back on itself in order to gain altitude crossing over the Dolores River over the Gallagher trestles. Where the railroad leaves the present day road to loop back, we will stop and take a hike on the grade. The hike is over gentle grade where we can see both upper and lower grades in fields of flowers dotted with old RGS ties (sorry no rails) and magnificent mountain vistas. From Lizard Head Pass, we will head into Telluride for the get acquainted barbecue and the evening.

ITINERARY -- Monday June 27, 1988

This morning we will meet at the old Telluride depot. Nestled in a box canyon rich with ore, the community of Columbia boasted a population of about 100 in 1876. At the time, it was being rivaled by San Miguel City about a mile down river which boasted 200 men and 5 women in 1880. Today, there is no trace of San Miguel City. In 1881, Columbia was renamed Telluride (derived from the abundance of tellurium ores found there) or as one of the RGS conductors called it "To Hell You Ride". Because of its isolation, Telluride was slow to grow until 1890 when the RGS arrived from Ridgway. In 1892 it claimed 2,500 inhabitants. In spite of the silver crash, gold was plentiful in the area and the Smuggler-Union, Liberty Bell, and Tomboy mines continued to ship car loads of ore out of Telluride on the RGS. In its prime, Telluride had a long station, water pipe, a wye, section house, and there were 2 passenger and 2 freight trains a day, as well as, many excursions. The decline began in 1907 and continued until the 1970's, when Telluride boomed as a ski and tourist center, losing much of it's old Western charm.

Now we will back track to the Ophir Loop area. You will be truly amazed to see how the RGS managed to climb out of the San Miguel canyon on its way to the summit of Lizard Head Pass. The grade, which we will follow later, had followed the San Miguel River out of Telluride, could no longer follow the San Miguel because the grade was too steep. Therefore, one of the most fantastic railroad engineering feats was constructed. Crossing the canyon and the river at Butterfly Bridge, named for the mine nearby, the Ophir Loop skirts the side of Yellow Mountain at a steady 3% grade. It then crossed the valley on a 476 foot long, 92

foot high curved trestle into Ophir. Out of Ophir, the grade continued on the same mountain but high above the lower line using 7 more bridges. In the span of 2 miles, the railroad had utilized 9 bridges and gained over 500 feet in altitude. riding over the trestles at Ophir has been described as being like a "lady of ill repute," with no visible means of support.

Ophir was probably named for the biblical location of King Solomons mines. The Gold King mine was discovered in 1878 and the town of Ophir was platted. When the RGS came in 1891, however, they put the depot 2 miles from the town of Ophir. Although a small settlement arose around the railroad facilities, both towns coexisted for many years. On February 20, 1897, a huge slide took out the depot. A new depot was built at a safer location. Snowslides were always a problem in the Ophir area.

Now we will backtrack to the top of Lizard Head Pass (10,250 feet). where the RGS covered the wye and a part of the main track with a substantial snowshed to protect its trains from the worst snow drift area on the railroad. At one time there was a wye, passing track, section house, and, at one time, a station. Now, all there is left is a pile of cinders.

From the top of Lizard Head Pass, we get on the grade, for a pleasant ride down to Trout Lake. Along the way is one of the few remaining trestles still standing on a line famous for its bridges and trestles. Then on to Trout Lake and the restored water tank just waiting for the "Goose" to arrive. Leaving Trout Lake, we will continue along the grade to Matterhorn. Originally, called San Bernardo after the mine on the opposite mountain, Matterhorn had a section house and 2 spurs.

At Ophir, we will turn off the main road and head for the San Miguel River. We will pass by Ames, the world longest running alternating current power plant, built to power the Gold King Mine 2.6 miles above Ames, the closest source of water. Because the cost of coal to power the mine was running \$2500 per month, the manager, L.L. Nunn, thought electricity would be the answer. Unfortunately, direct current could not be transmitted that far. In 1890, Nunn contacted George Westinghouse, who had an alternating current motor on the drawing board, but not yet built. Early in 1891, two heavy motors arrived on the RGS, one for Ames and one for the mine. On June 20, 1891, the motors began to power the mine at a cost of \$500 per month. Today the mine is decaying, but the power plant is still in service.

On the way down the road, we can watch the railroad and its steady 4% grade coming down the valley above us on the left. After crossing the San Miguel river near Ilium, we will stop at Vance Junction. This is where the line into Telluride split from the main line. Vance Junction had a two story station, a spur, a coal tipple, and several cars used as offices. The coal tipple is all that now remains.

Heading back to the main road (145), we will head away from Telluride, still along the San Miguel River. Along this road, there will be many opportunities to leave the highway and drive the grade. The first is close to Vanadium. Originally called Newmire, the name was changed in the 1940's, when the importance of the element for the Manhattan Project and the building of the first atomic bomb really kept Vanadium alive -- although most of this life was veiled in secrecy.

On and off of the highway, we will be following the grade along the river. Placerville, platted in 1877 and named for the placer gold found in the area. The placers soon played out and the city grew slowly, even after the railroad arrived. When ranching came into its own, Placerville boomed, becoming one of the top livestock shipment points in western Colorado. First came cattle, then sheep, then violent range wars. Finally, the two factions learned to live together and fall stock trains became a real highlight of the RGS.

Placerville, we will turn onto highway 62, which follows the grade pretty closely. Remnants of the grade can be spotted along the way as it follows the old Mears toll road along Leopard Creek, including grade, trestle and bridge embankments and one trestle that is still intact. The road and the grade climbed

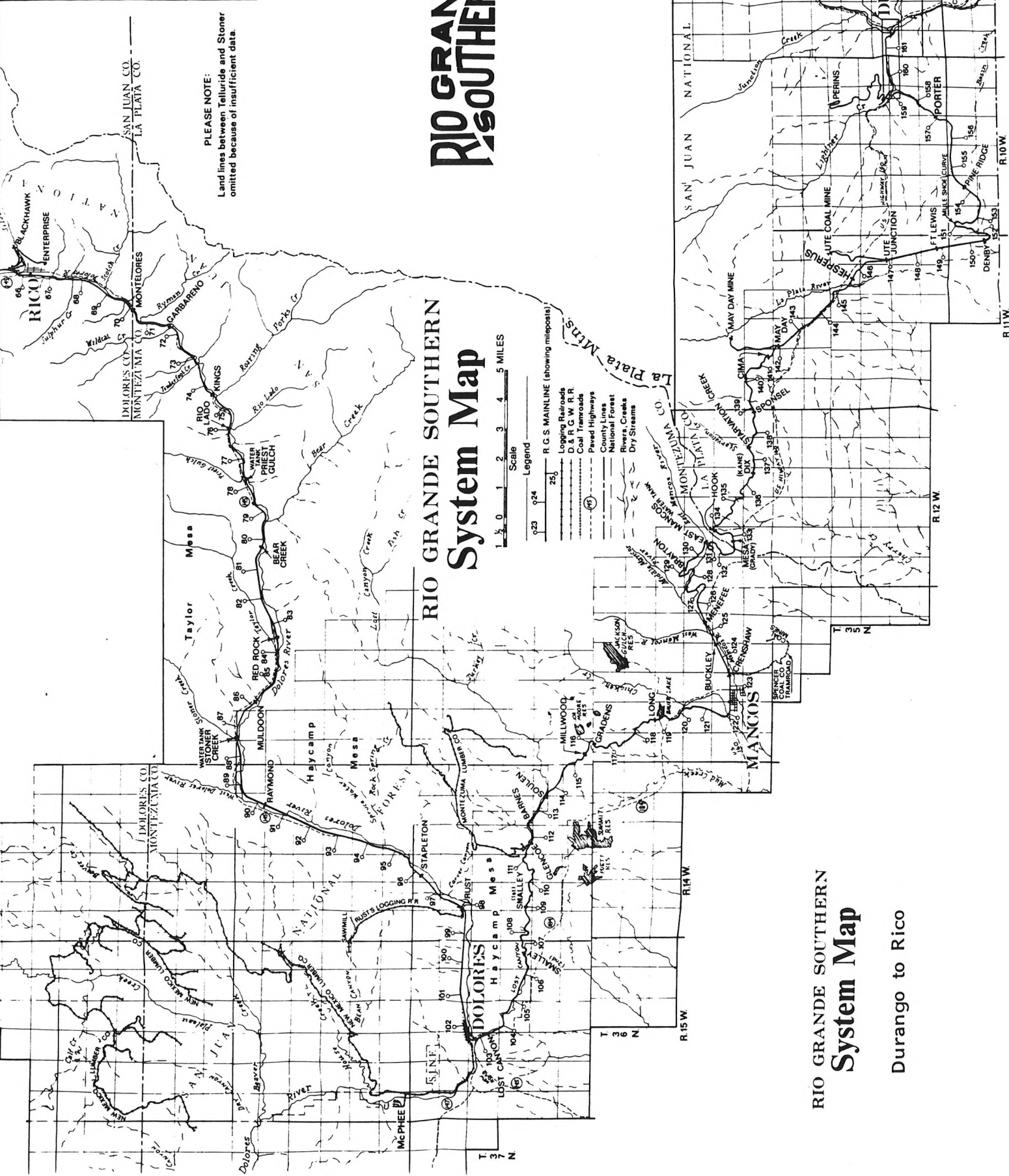
until Dallas Divide. Originally, at the top of Dallas Divide there was a wye, coal platform, section house and bunkhouse. The bunkhouse is still standing in the trees on private (Ralph Loren's) property.

Down from Dallas Divide, the grade dropped down into Pleasant Valley. Most traces of the railroad have disappeared and we will not attempt to follow it into Ridgway. From Dallas Divide we will follow Rt. 50 into Ridgway. As we approach town, remnants of the old wye can be seen. Besides the joint RGS/D&RG depot, Ridgway had a roundhouse, wye, shops, water tank and coaling facilities. When the RGS went into its second receivership in 1929, the shops at Ridgway were again opened and all repairs were made at these shops, instead of D&RG shops. The Galloping Geese were constructed here in the 1930's. Today, all that remains is the depot, which has been moved and is a private residence. We will take a short stop to take a quick look at the depot.

RIO GRANDE SOUTHERN

RIO GRANDE SOUTHERN System Map

PLEASE NOTE:
Land lines between Telluride and Stoner omitted because of insufficient data.



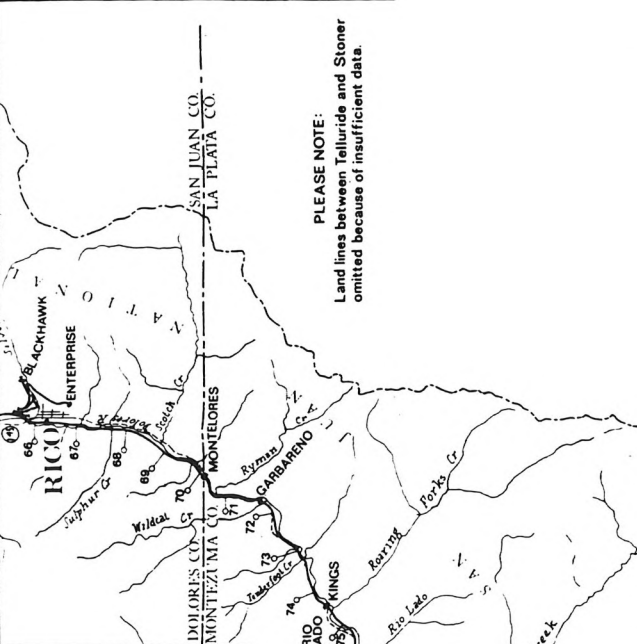
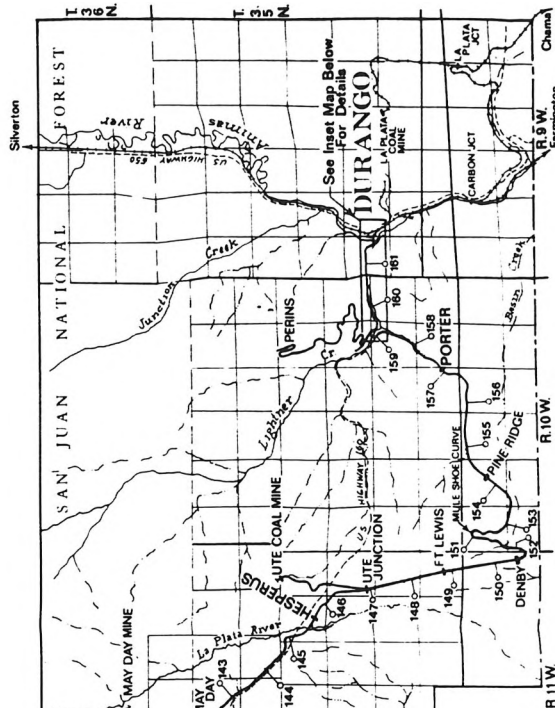
1 2 3 4 5 MILES

- Scale
- Legend
- R.G.S. MAINLINE (showing mileposts)
 - Logging Railroads
 - D & R. C. W. R.R.
 - Coal Tramroads
 - Paved Highways
 - National Forest
 - County Lines
 - Rivers, Creeks
 - Dry Streams

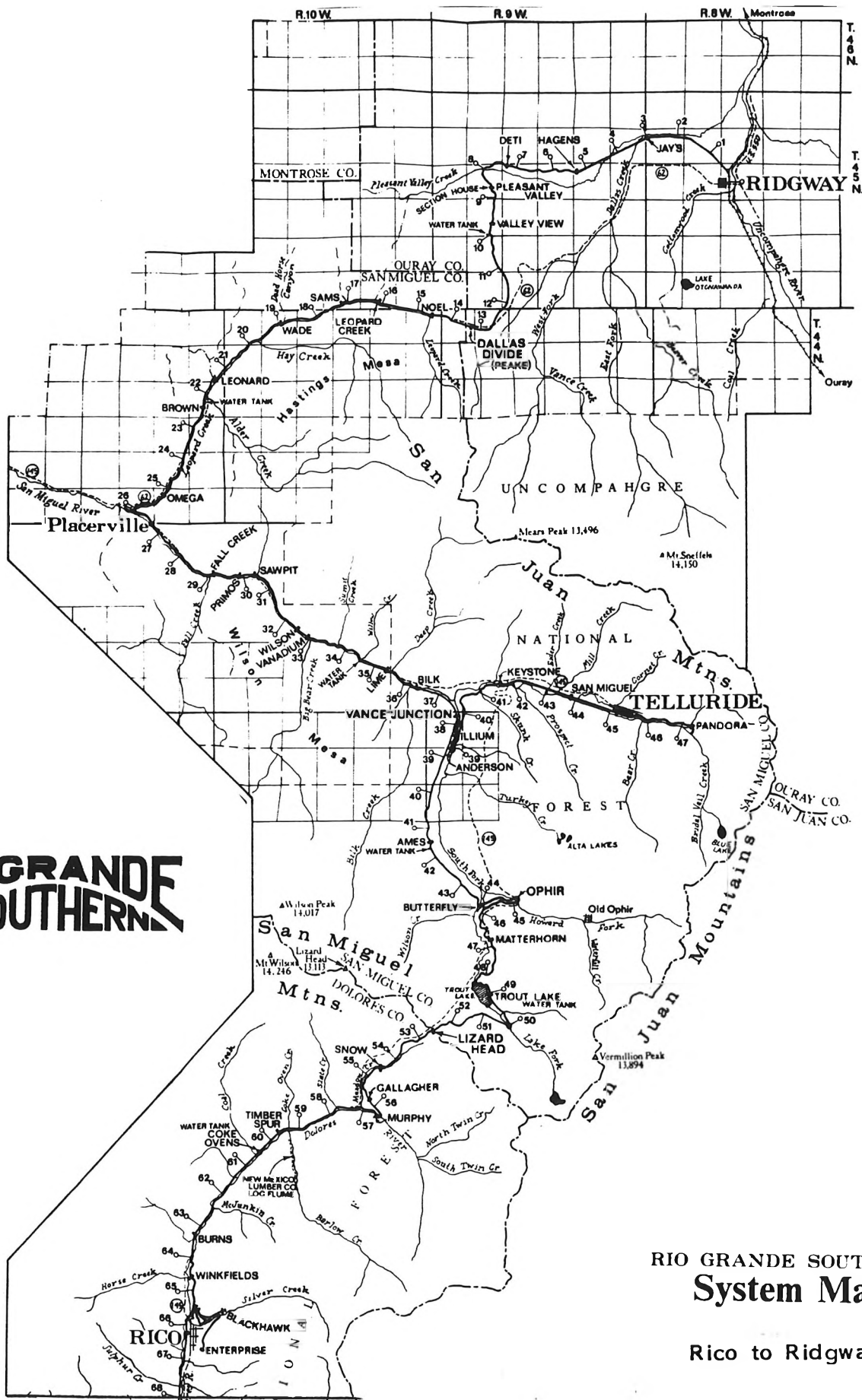
RIO GRANDE SOUTHERN System Map

Durango to Rico

See Inset Map Below For Details



**RIO GRANDE
SOUTHERN**



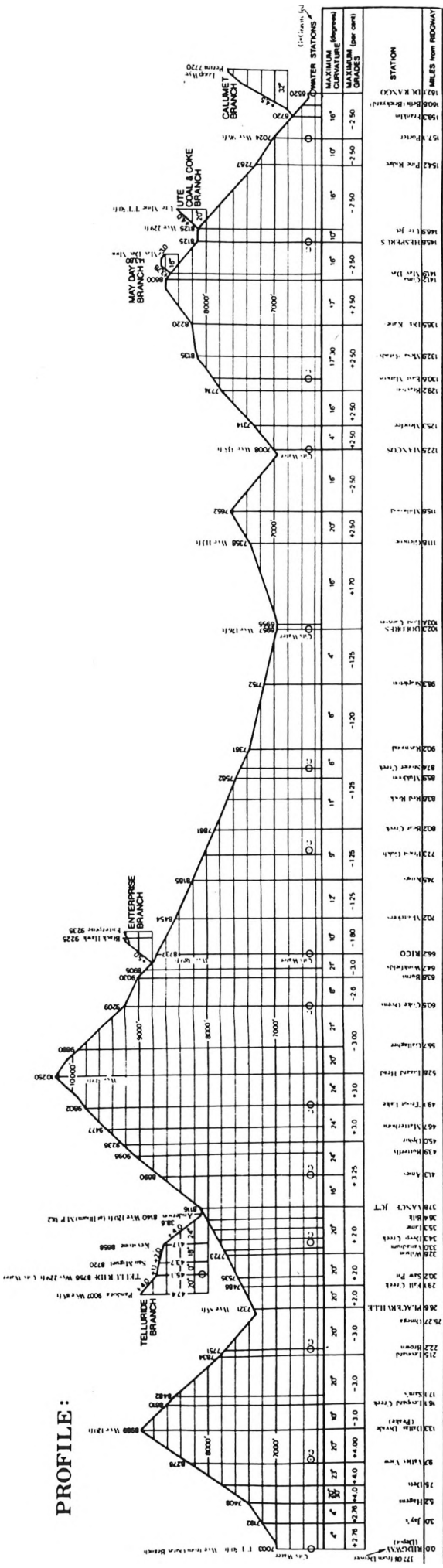
**RIO GRANDE SOUTHERN
System Map**

Rico to Ridgway

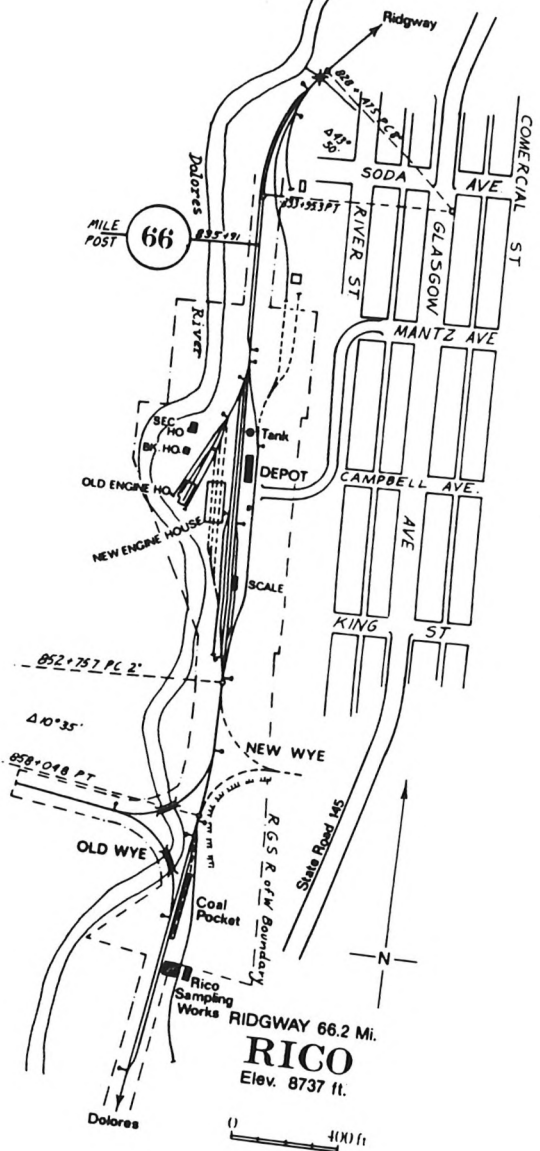
RIO GRANDE SOUTHERN RAILROAD

THE RIO GRANDE SOUTHERN RAILROAD

PROFILE :

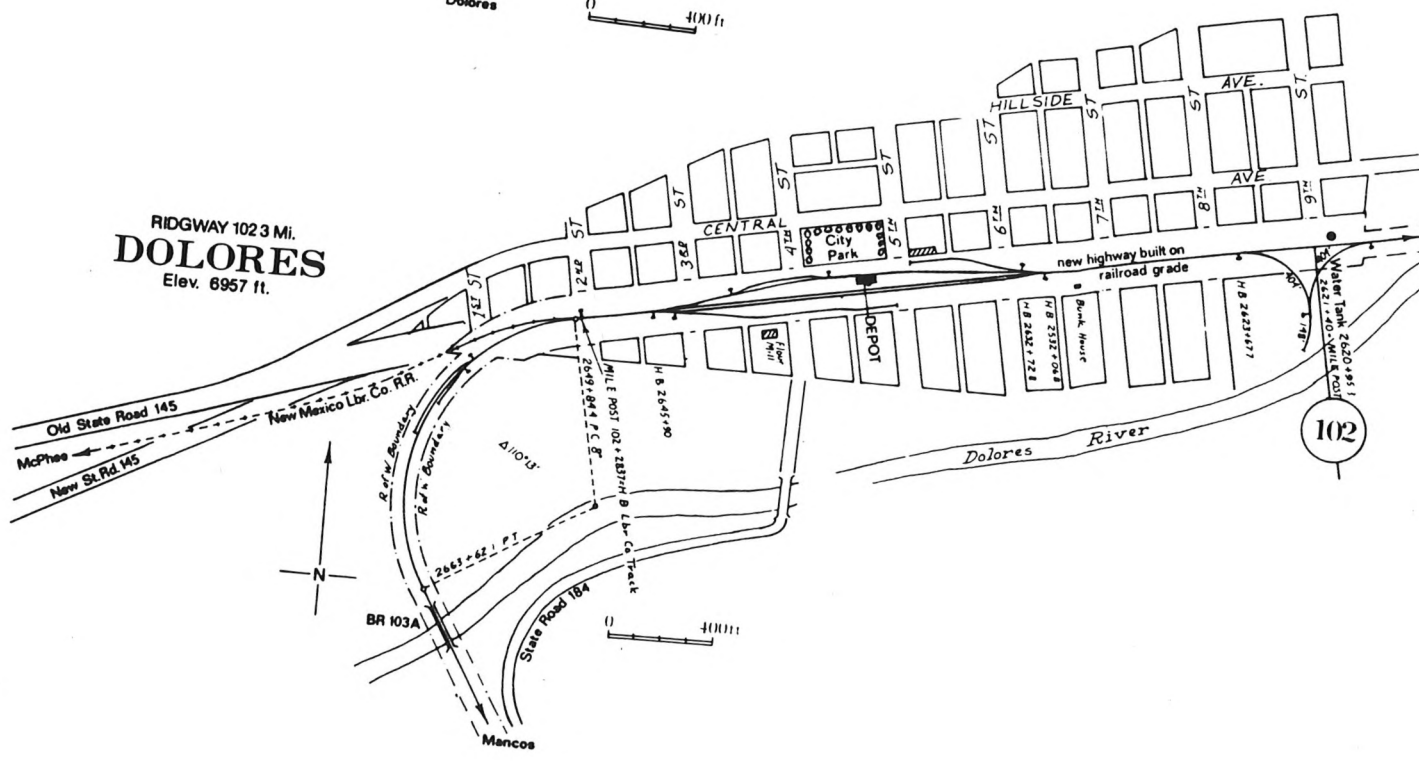


STATION	MAXIMUM CURVATURE (Degrees)	MAXIMUM GRADES (Per cent)	STATION	MAXIMUM CURVATURE (Degrees)	MAXIMUM GRADES (Per cent)
00	12.78	+2.28	10.0	10.0	0.0
10	4.0	+2.28	9.0	10.0	0.0
20	4.0	+2.28	8.0	10.0	0.0
30	4.0	+2.28	7.0	10.0	0.0
40	4.0	+2.28	6.0	10.0	0.0
50	4.0	+2.28	5.0	10.0	0.0
60	4.0	+2.28	4.0	10.0	0.0
70	4.0	+2.28	3.0	10.0	0.0
80	4.0	+2.28	2.0	10.0	0.0
90	4.0	+2.28	1.0	10.0	0.0
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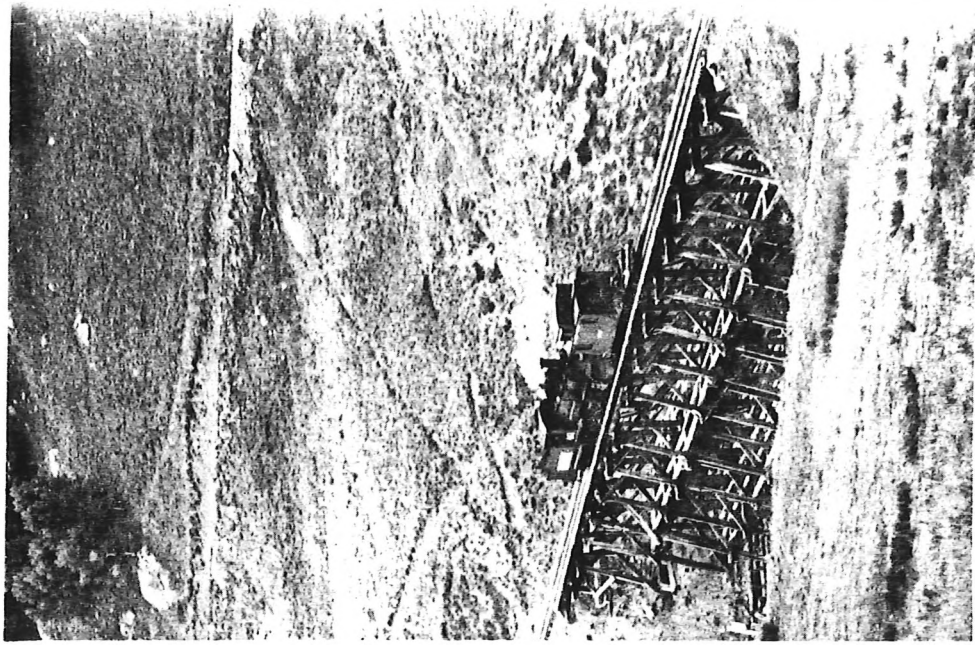


RIO GRANDE SOUTHERN

RIDGWAY 102.3 Mi.
DOLORES
 Elev. 6957 ft.



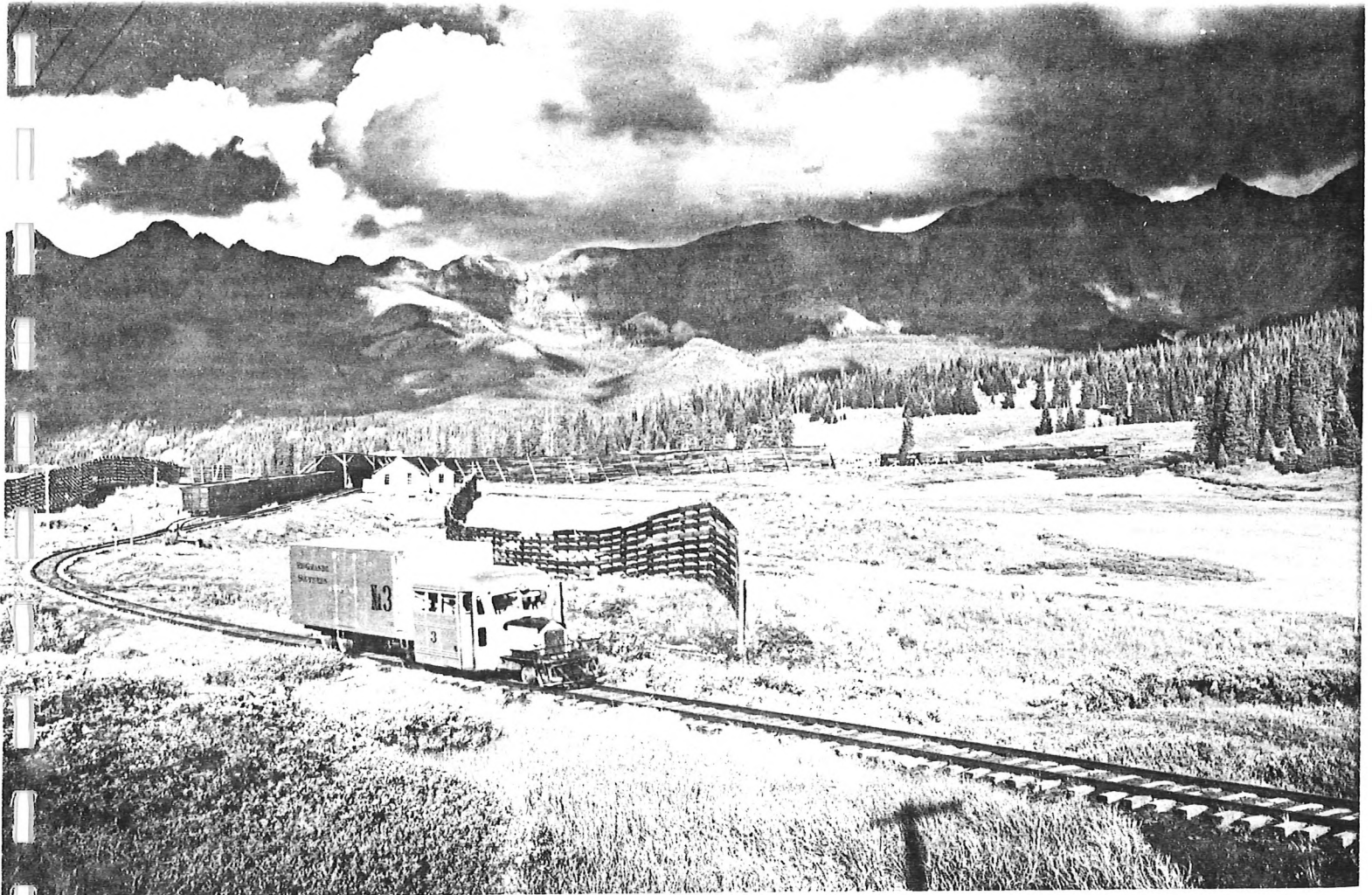
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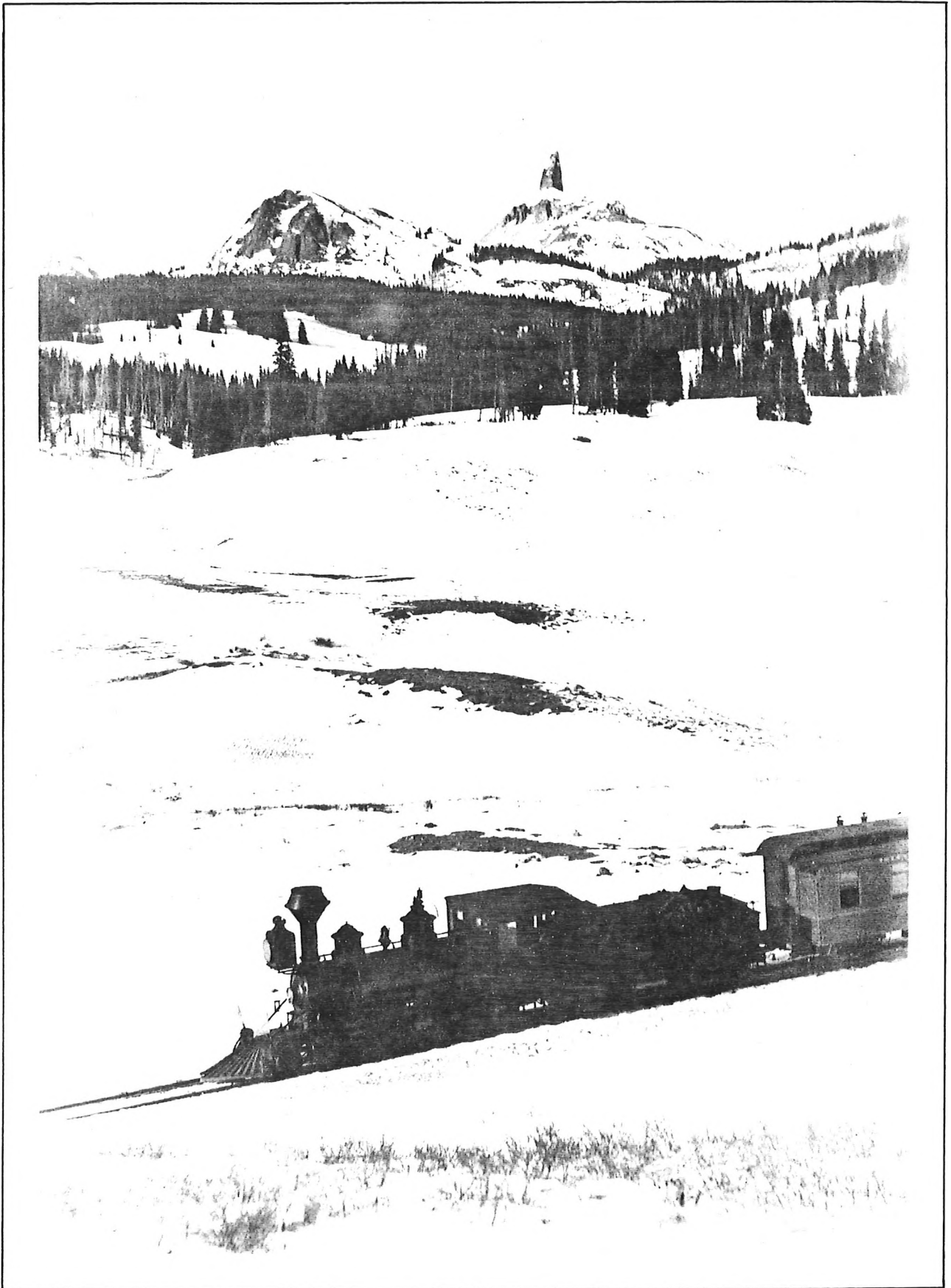


Philip A. Rortor



Philip A. Rortor

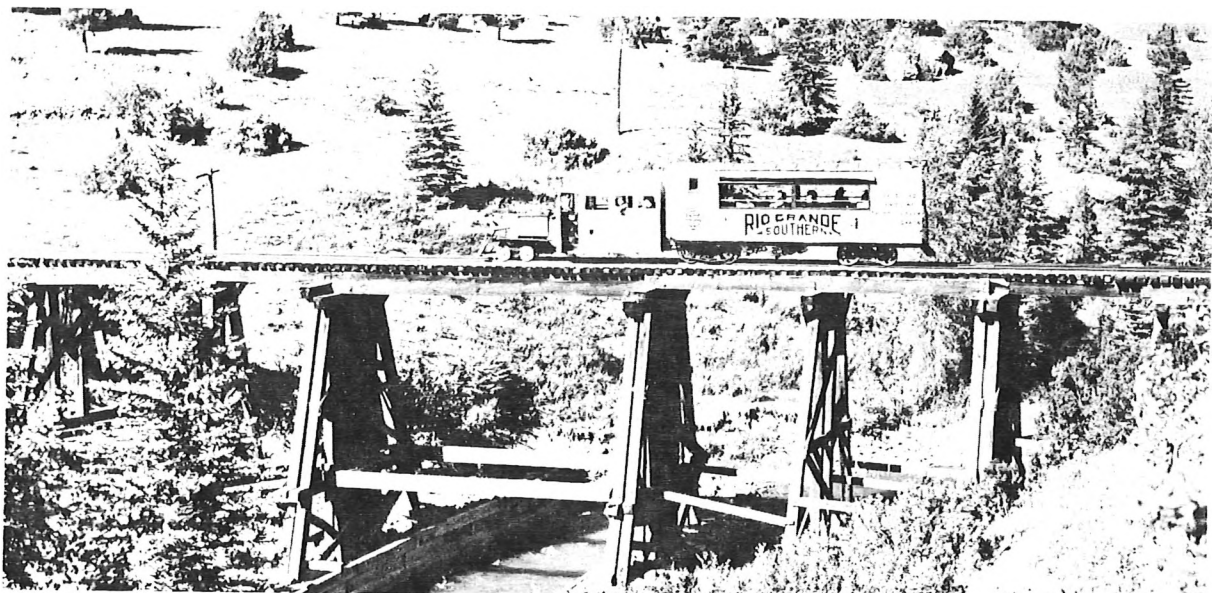
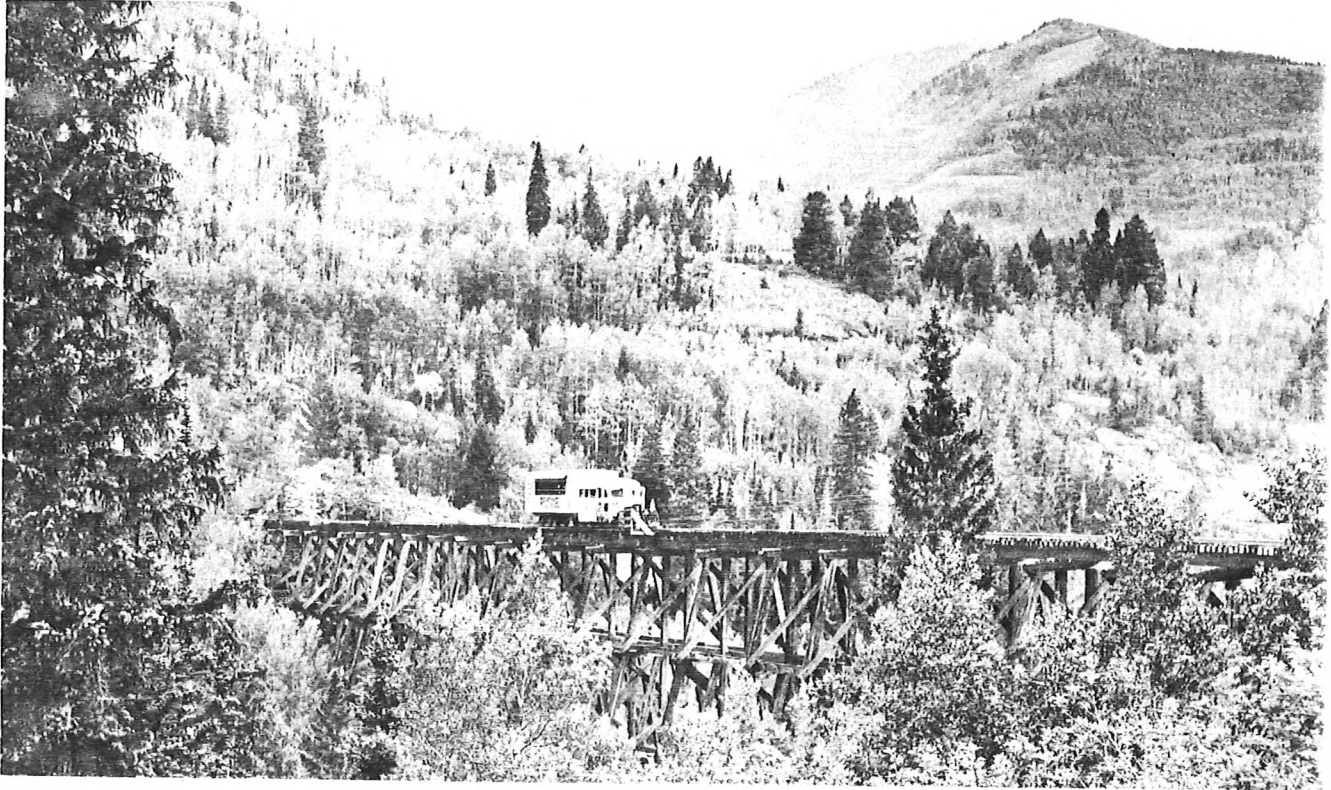




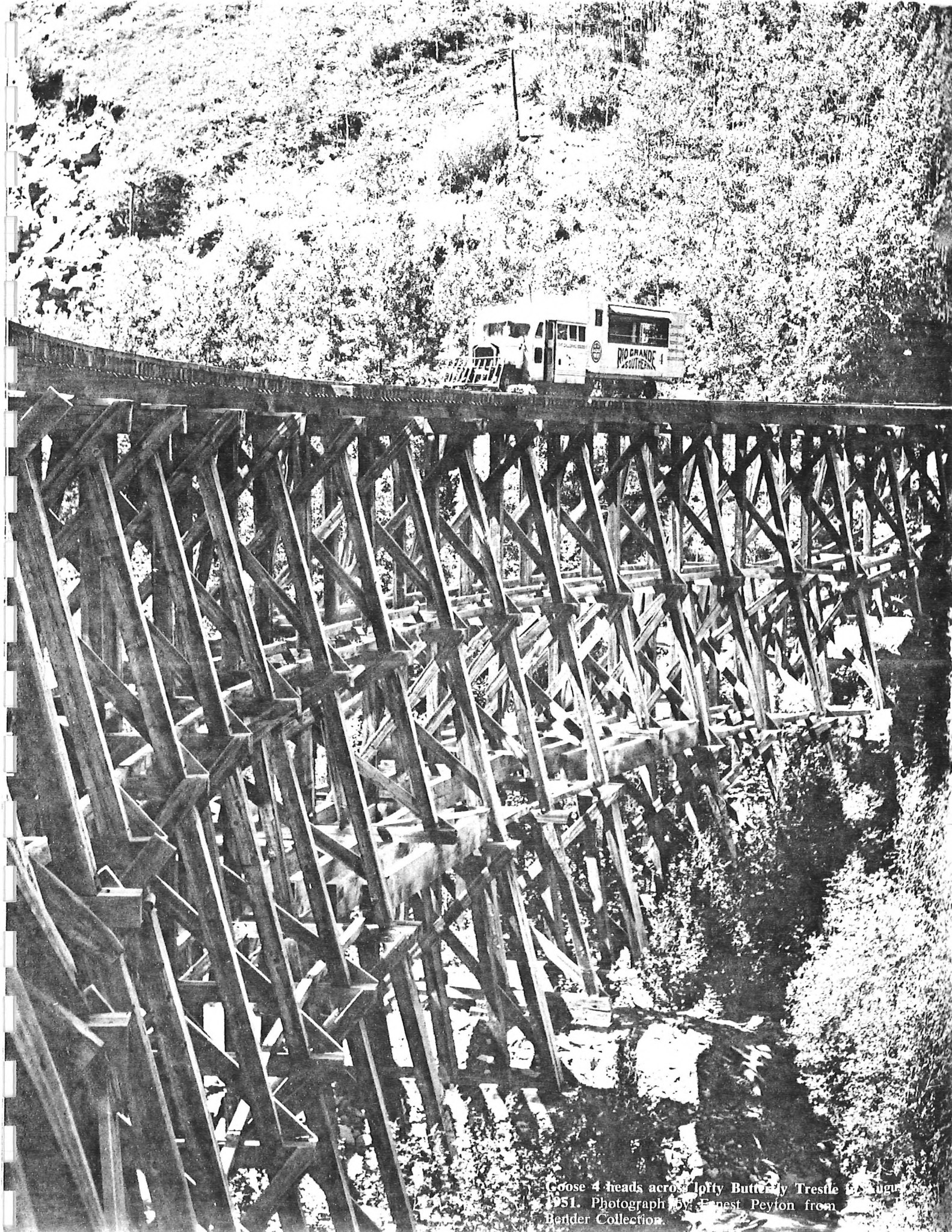
W. H. Jackson Photograph, SHSC



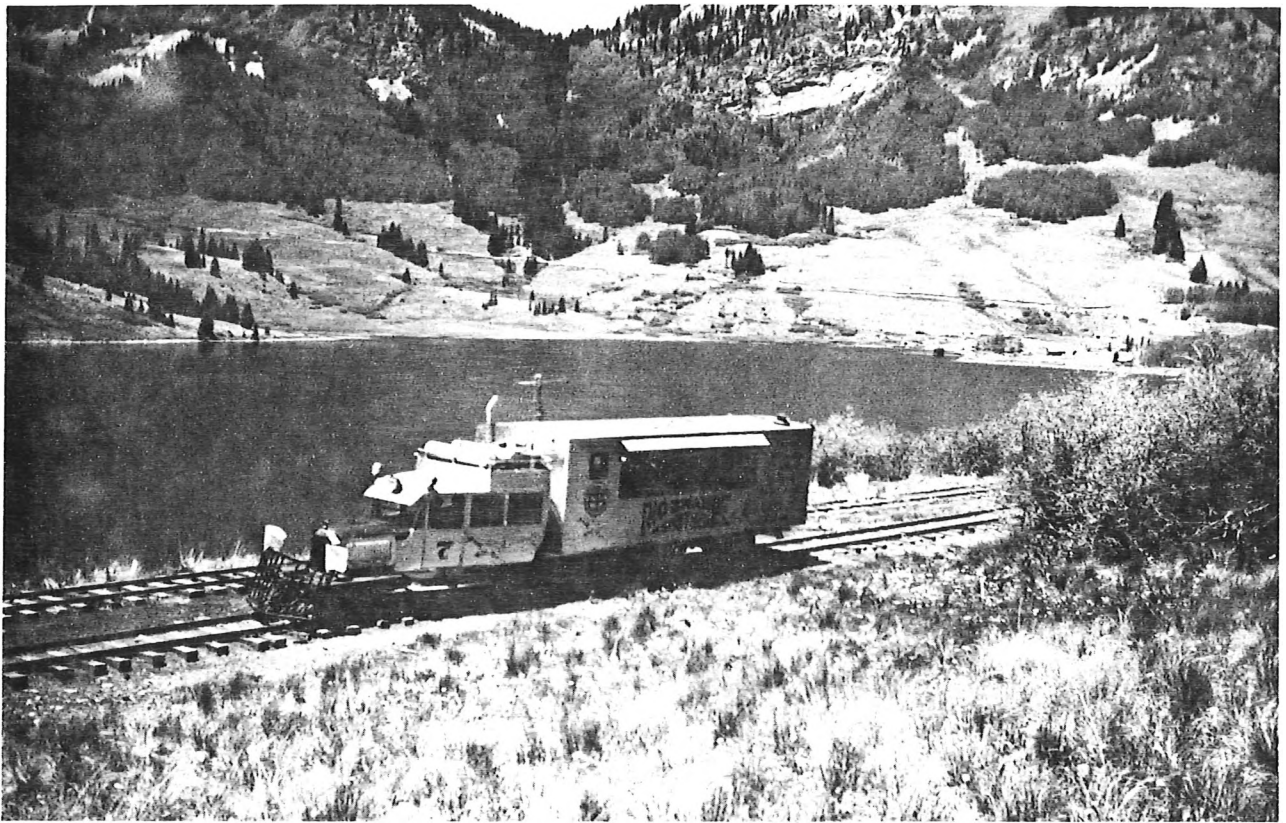
The solitude of the San Juans is reflected in this 1947 vignette at Ophir, one-time booming mining community. The motorman has gone into the depot to discuss world affairs with the agent, and the youthful driver of the kiddie car parked by trackside has followed the excitement indoors. Depot bench and "platform" are bathed in warm mountain sunshine as the lone passenger—one of those "railfan nuts with a camera"—records the scene on film. (C. W. Hauck)





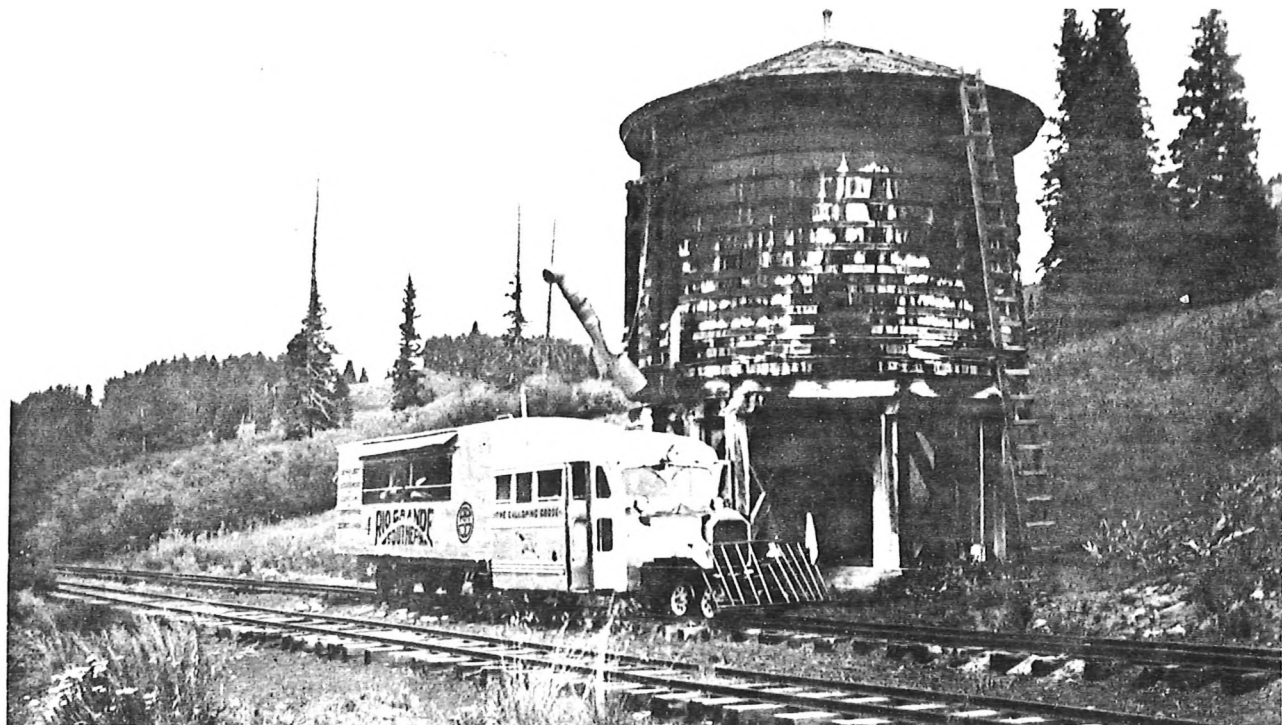


Goose 4 heads across lofty Butterfly Trestle August 1951. Photograph by Ernest Peyton from Bender Collection.



Photographer Fred M. Springer photographed Goose 7 beside Trout Lake on June 29, 1951. Goose 4 crosses Butterfly trestle with the Ophir high line in the background on August 19, 1950. —Fred M. Springer.





A Pause At Trout Lake



Trout Lake was a regular stop for the summer Galloping Goose runs out of Ridgway to Lizard Head Pass and return. Goose 4 pauses with a special on August 19, 1950. —Fred M. Springer. Outhouses were built for the tourists at Trout Lake. —Robert W. Richardson.

Bill Pennington rode the line in 1940 and photographed Goose No. 5 in locations that were to become familiar to many railfans — right, at Placerville depot, and below, by the depot at Vance Junction. The old coach-section house was a remnant of the RGS' plusher days. (Guy Dunscomb Coll.).



14



THE SILVERTON RAILROAD

The Silverton Railroad, the first of Mears' four railroads, was begun in 1887. It followed the old survey of 1883 made for the Denver & Rio Grande. The Silverton was incorporated on July 5, 1887, and by October the rails had been laid as far as Burro Bridge. In November the railroad purchased a Baldwin 2-8-0 from D&RG, which was then given the number 100 and named "Ouray". Many photos of this locomotive have been published.

Although the Silverton was a short line of just less than 20 miles, extending from the D&RG in Silverton to Albany, it was renowned in its time. A paper of 1890 reported that the Silverton had the reputation of being the steepest (5% grade), the crookedest (30 degree curves), and the best paying railroad in Colorado. Mears' later railroads, the Silverton Northern and the Silverton Gladstone & Northerly, could at a later date claim sharper curves and steeper grades, but much that was innovative in railroad location engineering is credited to the Silverton Railroad. This originality of design began with C. W. Gibbs. In the spring of 1888, C. W. Gibbs, formerly with the Colorado Midland, was hired as chief engineer by Otto Mears. Gibbs started the construction from Burro Bridge, and by July of 1888, Gibbs had crossed the summit of Sheridan Pass on Red Mountain.

A couple of miles past Burro Bridge was the town of Chattanooga. It was near here that Gibbs had begun his innovative engineering accomplishments with the Chattanooga Loop. By constructing a long hairpin-shaped loop up mill creek, the grade rises 550 feet in an area that is itself only a quarter of a mile in length. In other words, Gibbs managed to fit one and three-quarters miles of track, all at 5% grade into a quarter mile space. In other areas of the grade, there were vertical curves that transitioned from level to five percent in 60 feet.

The town of Red Mountain Town had moved back and forth over the saddle of Sheridan Pass, on the flanks of Red Mountain peak, several times in the 1880's. In September, 1888, the first train arrived in Red Mountain. From this time, the townsite was situated next to the National Belle mine. Ruins of this mine's buildings and the town still stand. The location of the town between steeply sloping sidehills gave no room for a balloon loop, and the rock formation was difficult for a turntable pit; Gibbs laid out a wye and placed the depot in the wye. The legs of the wye were only long enough for a locomotive and two cars. Switching moves were sometimes complex.

After crossing the summit and passing through Red Mountain Town, the grade entered the rich mining district which was the real reason for the railroad being built. The boom in this area began in 1881 with Robinson's discovery at Guston. Spurs were then and later laid to the Yankee Girl, Vanderbuilt, North Star, Silver Bell, Guston and Treasury Tunnel. From there the grade headed toward Corkscrew Gulch.

Neither the approach to Corkscrew Gulch nor the steep and narrow gulch itself had space for a passing siding, a loop or a wye. Here Gibbs created a surprising solution by building a turntable on the main track, the previous switchback in the gulch having caused many operational problems during the winter of 1888. The 50 foot turntable was long enough to turn the locomotive, with grades adjusted to let the coupled cars to be fed through by gravity in both directions. The gallows-type turntable was built in 1889 and was a gallows-type turntable.

The railroad had reached the town of Ironton by November of 1888, and the town of Albany and the Saratoga Mill early the next year. Mears' original idea had been to connect the D&RG line at Durango by way of Silverton to the D&RG that had recently been extended into Ouray. Although Ouray was less than 7 miles from Albany, the steep Uncompahgre River canyon left no room for switchbacks. The Mears' toll road through the area had been placed in the only place a roadbed could be placed and its grades, in some places, was 19%, an impossible grade even for C. W. Gibbs to negotiate. To put a railroad in the canyon, would have had to be blasted out of solid rock with rockslides and snowslides would have been impossible to

conquer. So close to his goal, yet so far, Mears had to temporarily shelve his dream of connecting the Durango and Ouray by rail.

Although the Silver Panic of 1893 started a general decline from the bonanza days in the mining districts, the fame of the railroads in this area is well remembered. The beautiful passes that Otto Mears issued frequently included the delightful "Rainbow Route" logo of the Silverton. Since the Silverton ran passenger trains and mixed trains, as well as freight, its engineering marvels and the beauty of its scenery were relatively well known. The circle tours, also referred to as "Trip around the Circle", were sponsored by the Denver & Rio Grande and included the Silverton Railroad.

REFERENCES:

Sloan, Robert E., & Carl A. Skowronski, 1975, *The Rainbow Route*, Sundance Publications Ltd.

Crum, Josie Moore, 1960, *Three Little Lines*, Durango Herald News

ITINERARY -- Tuesday, June 28, 1988

Our morning activity will be a hike to the Corkscrew Gulch turntable. This hike is optional -- those who prefer not to hike will have the morning free to relax, go shopping, swim in Ouray's Hot Springs pool, or sightsee on your own.

For Non-hikers: Your trip leaders recommend a trip to Box Canyon on the southwest end of town, a walk around Ouray to view some of the fine old Victorian homes, especially Oak Street on the west end of town, and a visit to the Ouray Historical Museum (1-blocks east of Main on 6th Ave.). Lunch is on your own.

Hikers: Meet at 8:30 am at Rotary Park just north of Ouray. Wear your hiking boots, bring drinking water and rain gear, and a picnic lunch to eat after the hike. We will drive south on US 550 toward Red Mountain Pass, parking at the site of Joker Mine boarding house.

The hike requires crossing the creek on logs and bushwhacking a short distance uphill to the Silverton Railroad grade, most of which is heavily overgrown. This is the biggest obstacle of the hike. Once we are on the grade we will be among ties on a grade abandoned over 80 years ago. The remainder of the hike is a gentle railroad grade. We will return around noon and have lunch before meeting the rest of the group for the remainder of today's tour.

Afternoon activity:

The non-hikers should plan to meet the hikers at Ironton Park on US 550 south of Ouray at 1 pm. (Ironton Park is the large, flat, natural "park" at the base of Red Mountain Pass - we will meet near the stone highway maintenance garage on your left at the top of the switchbacks as the highway climbs out of the canyon and you see the Red Mountains directly ahead of you.)

We will proceed south on US 550, turning left on a graded gravel road for a short distance to visit the ghost town of Ironton before returning to the highway via the same road. Continuing south on 550, we will view the many branches and sidings of the Silverton railroad on the way to the summit of Red Mountain Pass. Just past the summit, we will take a dirt road (suitable for passenger cars) to the left to visit the ghost town of Red Mountain Town on the Silverton railroad grade. Returning again to the highway on the same road, we will continue on to the historic railroad town of Silverton, terminus of the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge. The day's trip will end here, allowing you to stay later in Silverton, if you wish, and return to Ouray via US 550 at your own pace.

In Silverton, be sure to visit the D&RGW depot, the Silverton Northern Railroad enginehouse, the Silverton, Gladstone & Northernly depot, "Casey Jones" (the Silverton Northern's railbus), and Otto Mears' home.

SILVERTON, GLADSTONE & NORTHERLY RAILROAD

Incorporated on April 6, 1899, the Silverton, Gladstone, & Northerly Railroad was promoted by Willis Z. McKinney, President of the Gold King Mining Company at Gladstone, to haul concentrates from the mills along Cement Creek to the Denver & Rio Grande connection at Silverton.

The seven and a half miles of main line and one half mile of sidings were completed in July of 1899, with 45 pound rail throughout and maximum grades of 5.5%. A 2-stall engine house was built on the west bank of Cement Creek in Silverton, and a used locomotive was purchased from the D&RG, named the "Gold King". In addition to various boxcars and gondolas, a brand new combination car was purchased. A typical consist on the SG&N was a combine and two freight cars. Later, two other locomotives and another combine were acquired.

The little railroad prospered early on, with plenty of freight going to and from the bustling mines along the route. Many picnic excursions were run on the line, and sometimes "columbine trains" were sent out to load up with thousands of flowers for local celebrations or to ship out on the Rio Grande.

In January, 1910, Otto Mears, Jack Slattery, & James Pitcher (Mears' son-in-law) leased the Gold King Mine and Mill along with the railroad. After some lean years, the SG&N was sold to the Silverton Northern Railroad in June of 1915. In 1917, Mears and company gave up the lease on the Gold King, and Mears departed for California, never to return.

Although occasional trains were run on the SG&N as late as 1923, lack of business doomed the railroad, and the tracks were torn up around 1926. All of the road's rolling stock went to the Silverton Northern.

REFERENCES

- Sloan, Robert E., & Carl A. Skowronski, 1975, *The Rainbow Route*, Sundance Publications Ltd.
- Crum, Josie Moore, 1960, *Three Little Lines*, Durango Herald News

THE SILVERTON NORTHERN RAILROAD

Otto Mears, the "Pathfinder of the San Juans," had built a toll wagon road from Lake City to Silverton via the Animas River and Cinnamon Pass in 1877, and, as early as 1889, he envisioned extending the Silverton Railroad to Eureka, a small mining camp some eight miles upstream. Meanwhile, brothers Edward and Gastave Stoiber were developing the Silver Lake Mine in Arrastra Gulch, and a large mill was constructed on the Animas two miles from Silverton. An aerial tram carried ore from the mine to the mill nearly 2600 vertical feet below.

Near the mill, Mr. & Mrs. Edward Stoiber built an elaborate mansion named "Waldheim" (forest home in German), where they entertained lavishly. Edward's wife Lena was no shrinking violet: she had been married once before Edward, and tied the knot twice more after his death. She bossed the miners (probably Edward, too), and had a reputation for not getting along with her neighbors; when the Stoibers lived in Silverton, she had a high fence built around her property to keep the neighbors out. Later, when the Silver Lake was sold to the Guggenheims, Edward and Lena moved to Denver, where they built an even more spectacular mansion, complete with a high wall to keep the neighbors at bay. The house - and the wall - are still standing.

In 1892, the Silverton Railroad completed grading and track work to the Silver Lake Mill, but the Silver Crash of 1893 halted any further construction. On September 20, 1895, the Silverton Northern Railroad was incorporated with Fred Walsen as President and Otto Mears as Vice President. By July of 1896, the eight and a half miles to Eureka were completed, and an elaborate ceremony was held on the fourth of July, complete with a golden spike driven by Lena Stoiber.

Further up the Animas at the mining camp of Animas Forks, the Gold Prince Mine was prospering and Mears proposed extending the SN to this area. In late May, 1903, a car-load of survey equipment and camp supplies (including a 350-pound cookstove) was shipped to the end of track at Eureka and packed on burros to establish a camp at Animas Forks. The snow was so deep and soft on the toll road that the packers had to spread out gunny sacks for the burros to step on. The poor burro with the stove on his back was "especially prone to sink into the snow too deeply".

After a camp was set up, the surveyors first fought their way through even deeper snows to survey a line from Animas Forks to the top of 12,600 foot Cinnamon Pass, "in case Mr. Mears should decide to run the railroad on to Lake City". Next, they surveyed the Animas Canyon downstream to Eureka, running a line on the east side of the valley, although the route was later changed to the west side to utilize the 1877 toll road grade.

A crew of some one hundred Navaho Indians was brought in to build the railroad, but work progressed slowly because the Indians were easily distracted, especially by the numerous marmots (the Rocky Mountain version of the ground hog), and they took delight in chasing them. Eventually, Mears came up with a solution - he supplied a crew of local boys with rifles and ammunition and sent them ahead of the railroad crew to reduce the marmot population, and work progressed a little faster. The Animas Forks branch was completed in the late fall of 1904, but due to the heavy snows, the first trains to run on the line were in June of 1905.

In addition to other rolling stock, Mears bought an old sleeping car from the Rio Grande, painted it bright green with gold lettering, christened it the "Animas Forks," and installed a kitchen and dining space in one end. A porter cooked and served meals from a fairly elaborate menu, and poured drinks from an extensive wine list. Unfortunately, the car was too long for the sharp curves on the line, and after two bad wrecks, the car was taken out of service.

Due to the steep grades - up to 7% - on the Animas Forks branch, the locomotives could only haul one car of coal and one empty upgrade and three

carloads down, and the engines always pushed the cars up to prevent runaways. To answer the obvious need for a turntable at Animas Forks, a crew was sent to the seldom-used Corkskrew Gulch turntable on the Silverton Railroad to cannibalize it for parts.

Avalanches were a consistent problem on the SN, and Mears had an elaborate long snowshed built at one of the worst spots. However, the very first slide to come along smashed the snowshed to pieces, and no more were built along the line.

The Panic of 1907 permanently crippled the nation's mining industry, but the SN managed to survive a little longer. Although the Eureka-Animas Forks branch ceased operations in 1913, there was considerable traffic from Silverton to Eureka to serve the Sunnyside Mill, which had opened in 1899. During World War I, Eureka thrived due to the demand for zinc, but when the war ended, business fell off greatly. The Sunnyside managed to hang on until 1939, when a miners' strike forced the mill to close. The mine owners couldn't reach a settlement with the miners, and the mill never reopened.

With the mill business gone, the Silverton Northern had no reason to exist, and in the summer of 1942, it was sold for back taxes. The rails were torn up for scrap, and the last three of the SN's locomotives were shipped off to Skagway, Alaska, to operate on the White Pass and Yukon Route.

REFERENCES

Sloan, Robert E., & Carl A. Skowronski, 1975, *The Rainbow Route*, Sundance Publications Ltd.

Crum, Josie Moore, 1960, *Three Little Lines*, Durango Herald-News

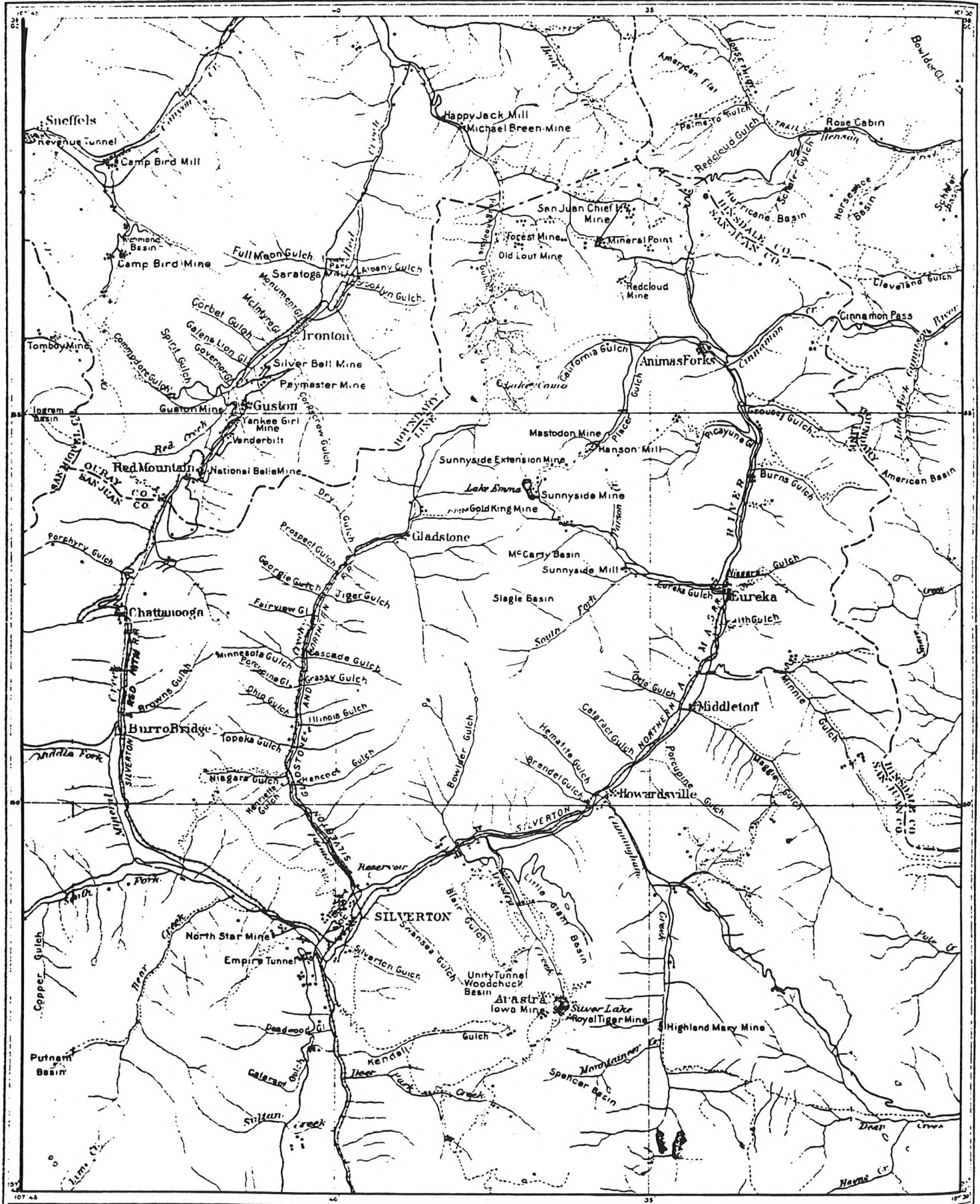
ITINERARY -- Wednesday, June 29, 1988

Meet at the Silverton Historical Museum at 9:30 am. We will proceed northwest of town up Cement Creek, following the Silverton, Gladstone and Northerly grade to Gladstone. The grade is on your left along the lower portions of the road, crossing over to the right side of the road as we approach approach Gladstone. Warning: This road is graded gravel, but is very dusty! Also, there is an active mine and mill at Gladstone, so watch for ore trucks. After returning to Silverton via the same route, we will again stop at the museum parking lot before breaking up for lunch.

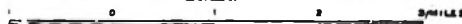
You can either bring your own lunch or plan to eat at one of Silverton's numerous restaurant -- but be aware that they may be crowded due to train passengers arriving on the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge.

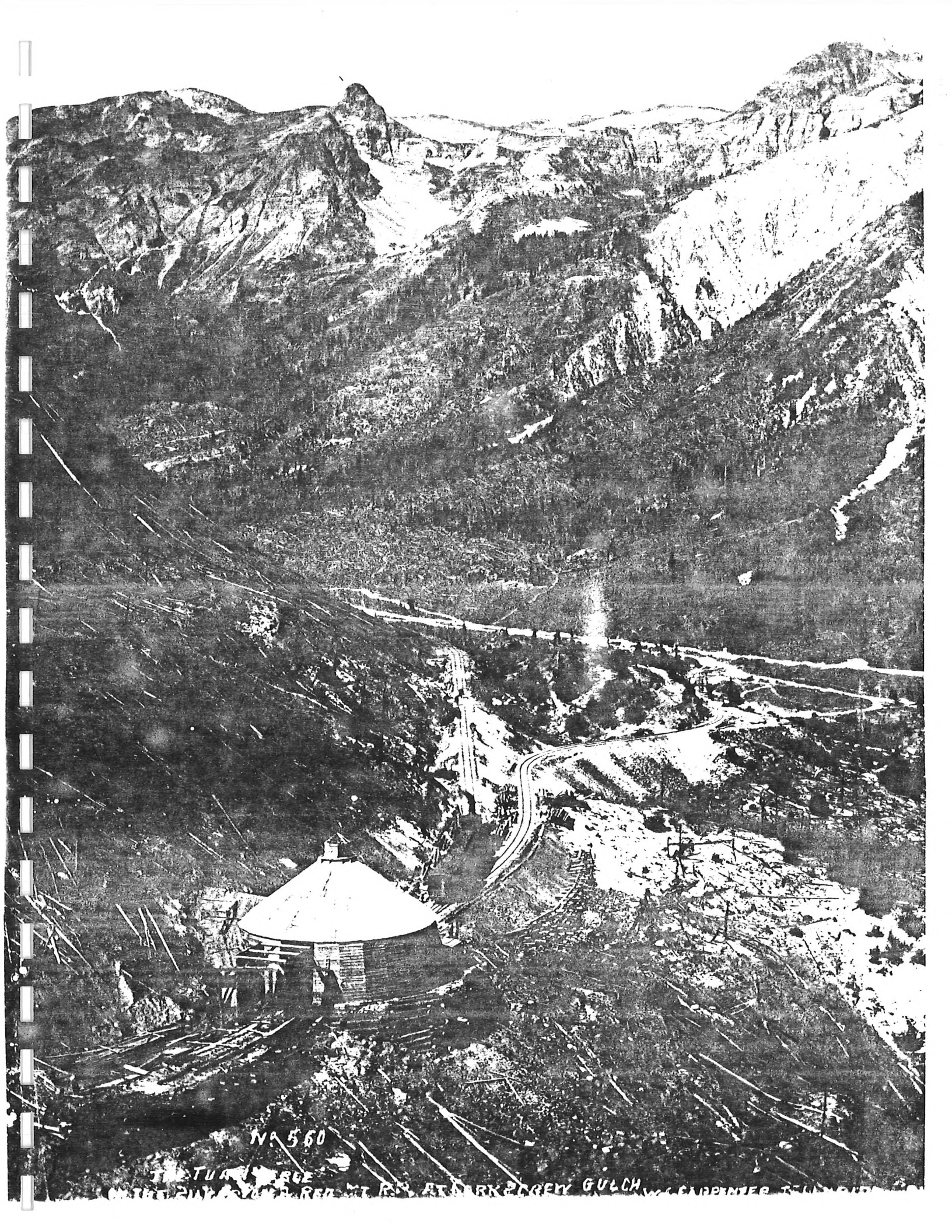
After lunch, we will drive up a graded gravel road along the Silverton Northern grade to the site of Eureka. At Eureka, we will carpool for the trip up to the ghost town of Animas Forks and the end of the Silverton Northern grade. This road should be passable for higher clearance cars.

Along the route, we will be directly on top of the Silverton Northern grade most of the way. At the site of the Silverton Northern's turntable, we will park the cars and ferry the group in 4-wheel drive vehicles the short distance to the townsite of Animas Forks. Returning to the cars, we will backtrack along the same route to Eureka and on to Silverton and the end of today's trip.



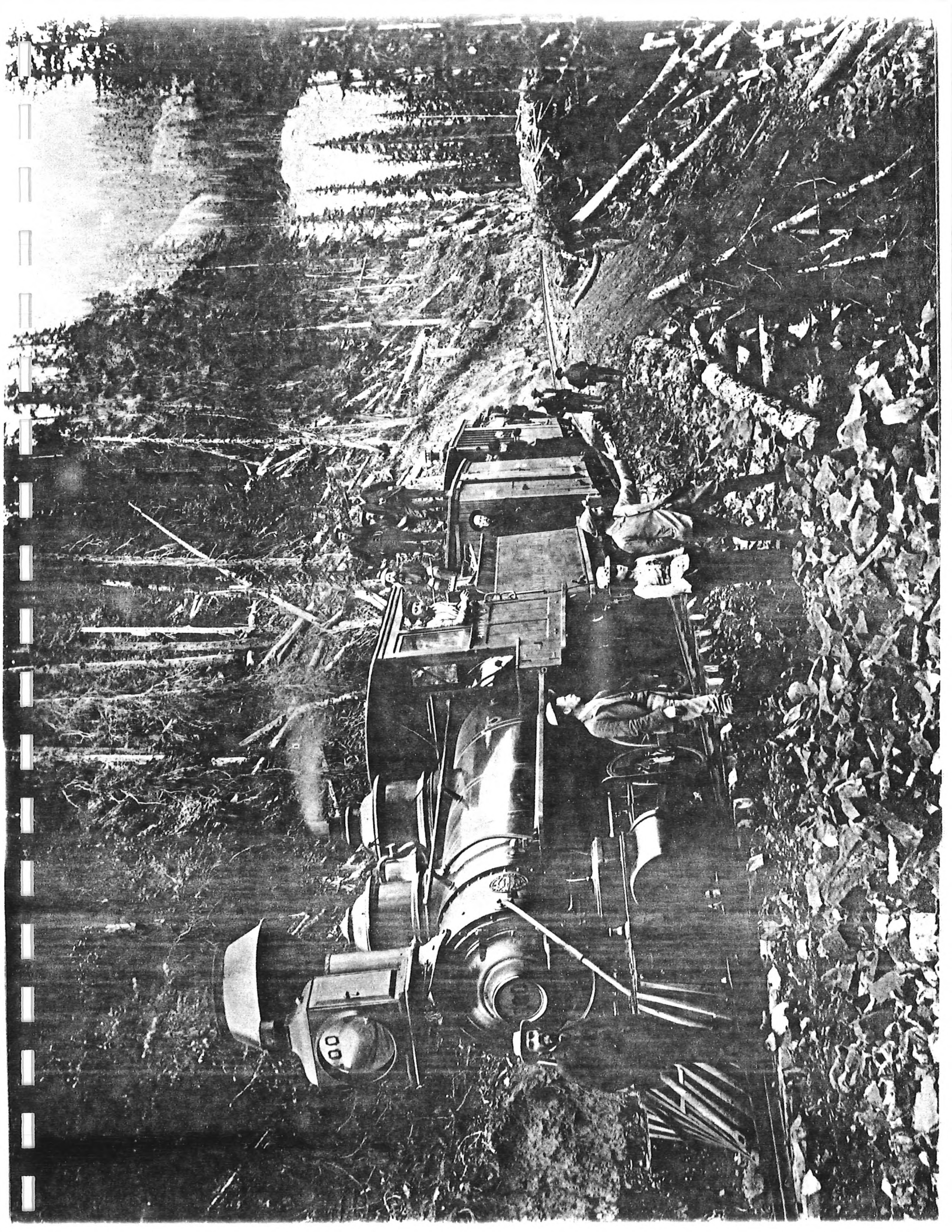
OUTLINE MAP OF THE SILVERTON QUADRANGLE, COLORADO

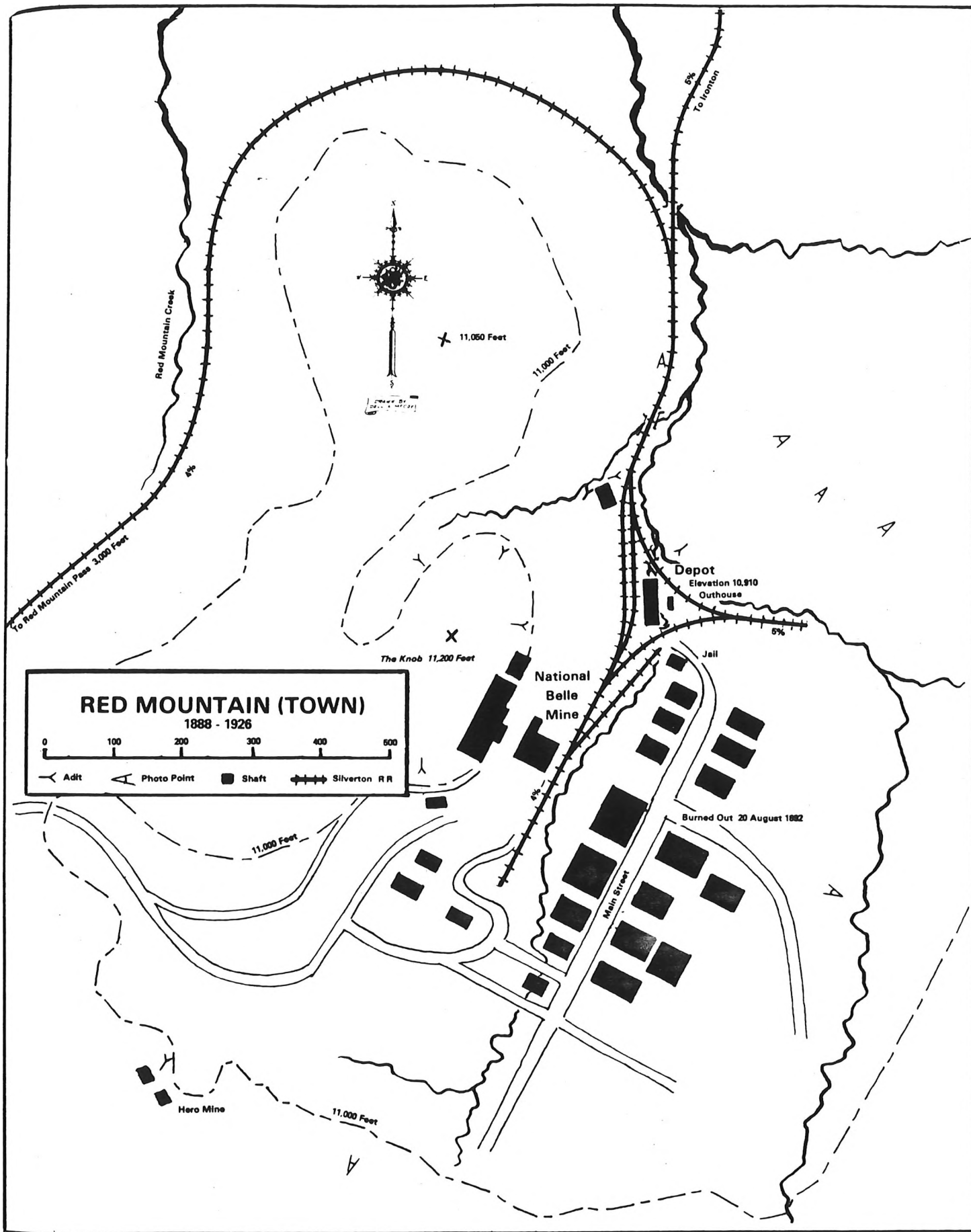




NA 550

THE TURN OF THE MOUNTAIN AT DARK GREY GULCH W. CARPENTER TEL. 1007





RED MOUNTAIN (TOWN)
1888 - 1926

0 100 200 300 400 500 600

← Adit ◁ Photo Point ■ Shaft ⇄ Silverton R.R.

RED MOUNTAIN (TOWN)
1888 - 1926

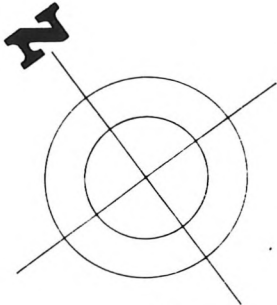
0 100 200 300 400 500 600

← Adit ◁ Photo Point ■ Shaft ⇄ Silverton R.R.

RED MOUNTAIN (TOWN)
1888 - 1926

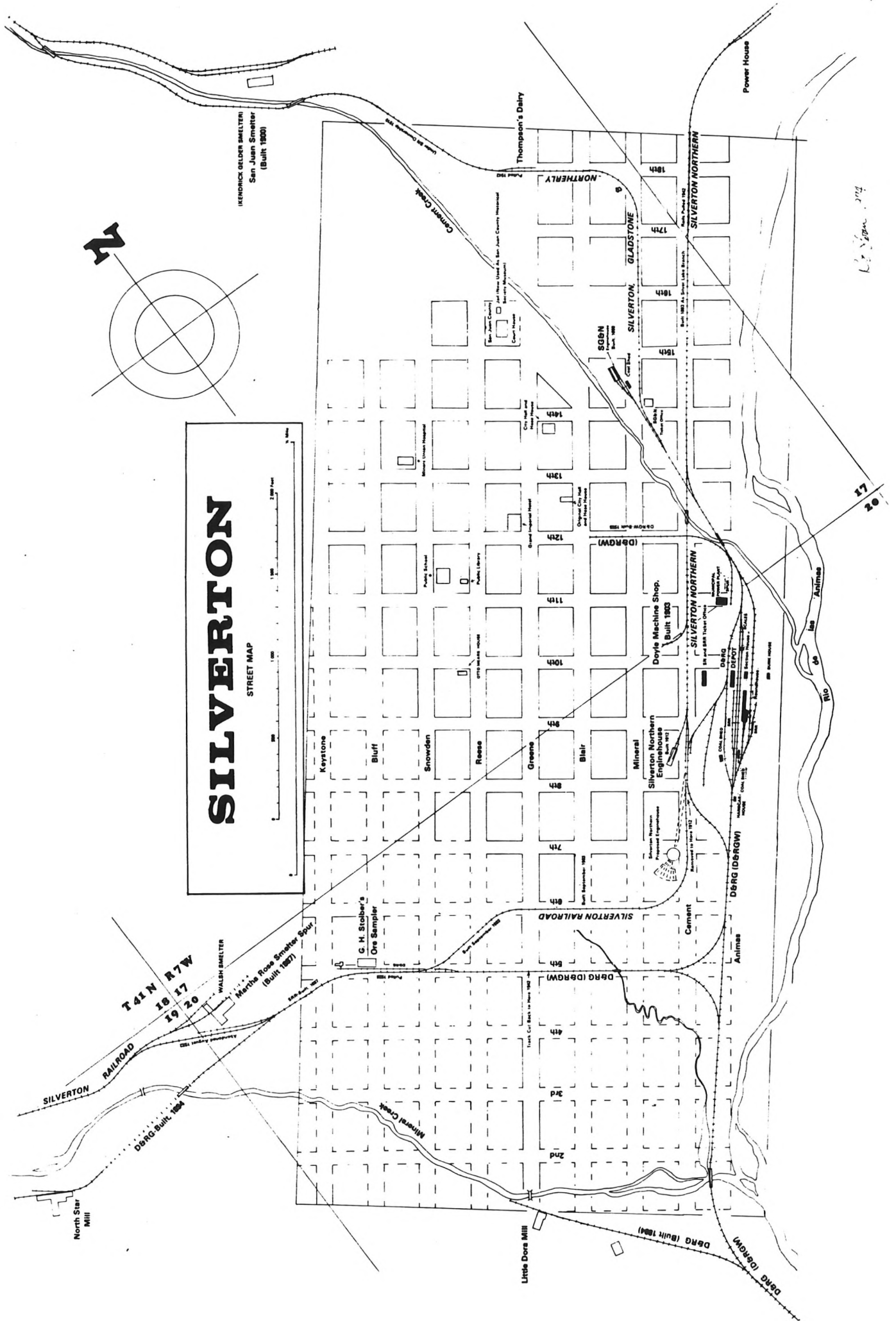
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← Adit ◁ Photo Point ■ Shaft ⇄ Silverton R.R.



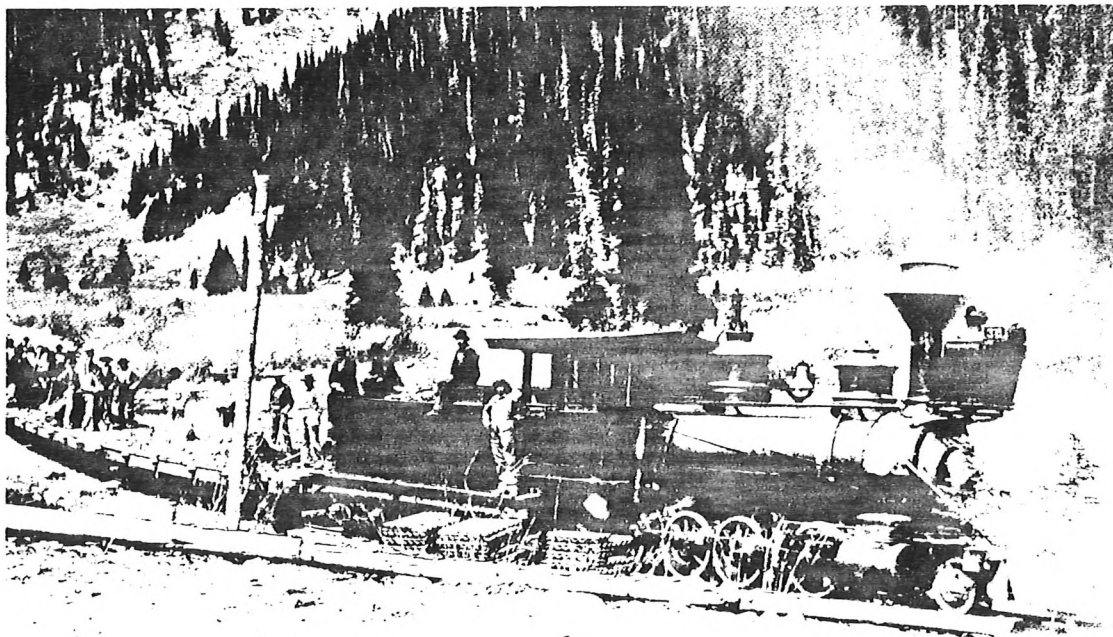
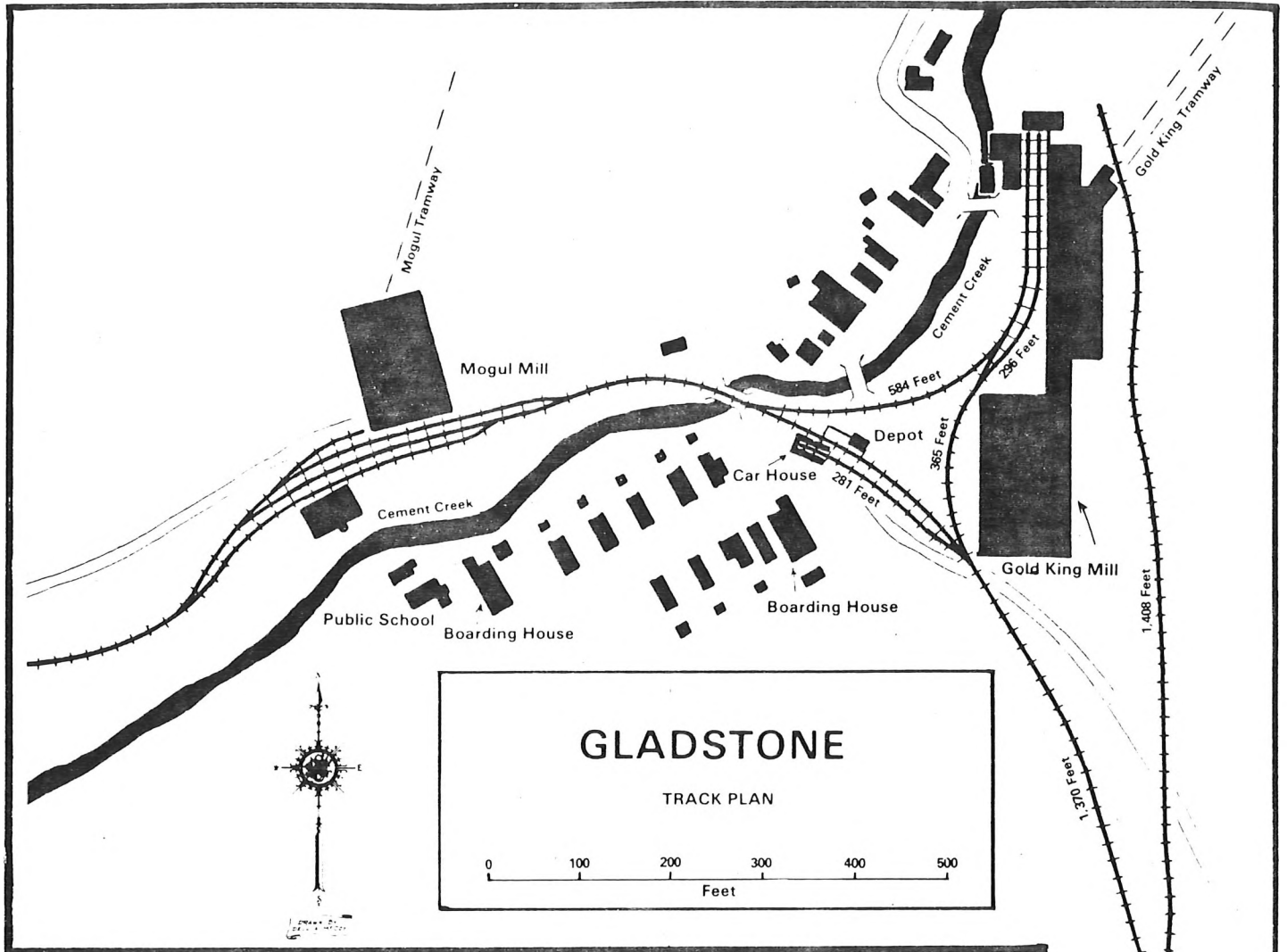
SILVERTON

STREET MAP



L.S. [unclear]

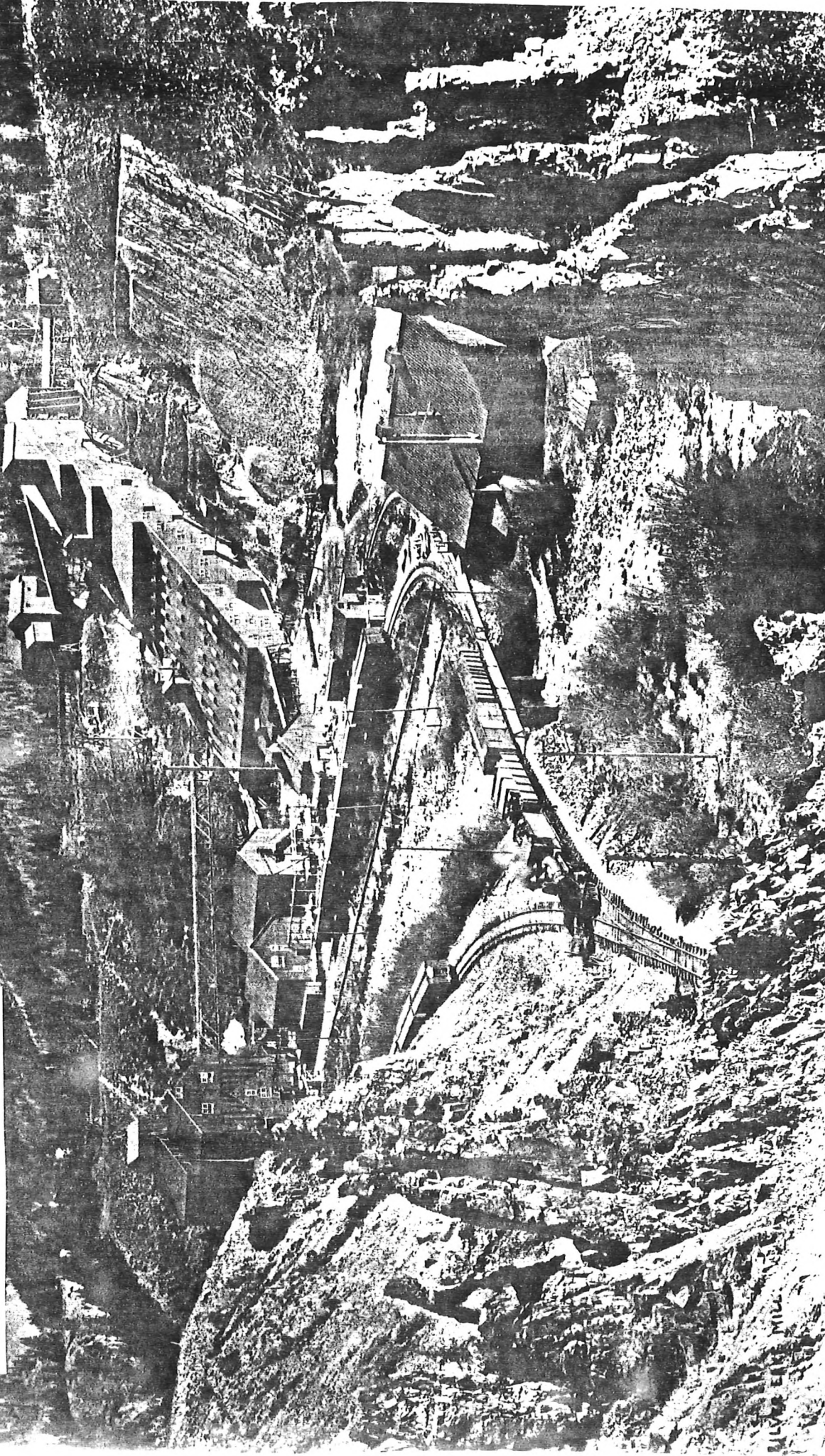
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20



THOMAS T. TABER COLLECTION

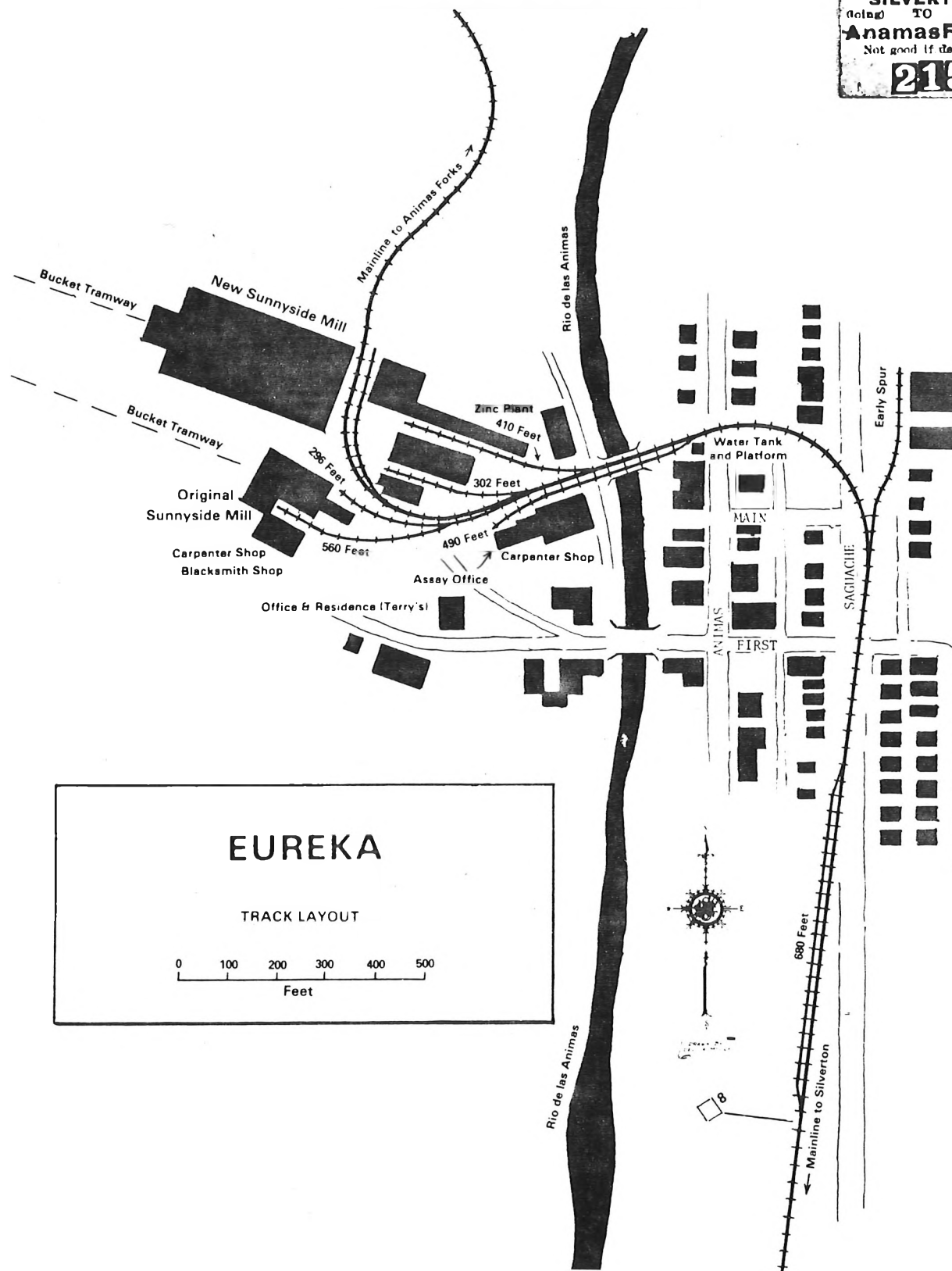
Silverton, Gladstone & Northerly engine 32, the *Gold King*, was pulling a work train when this view was made during the fall of 1899. The engine was hauling a work train, helping to ballast new track. Notice the rail joiners stacked beside the locomotive.

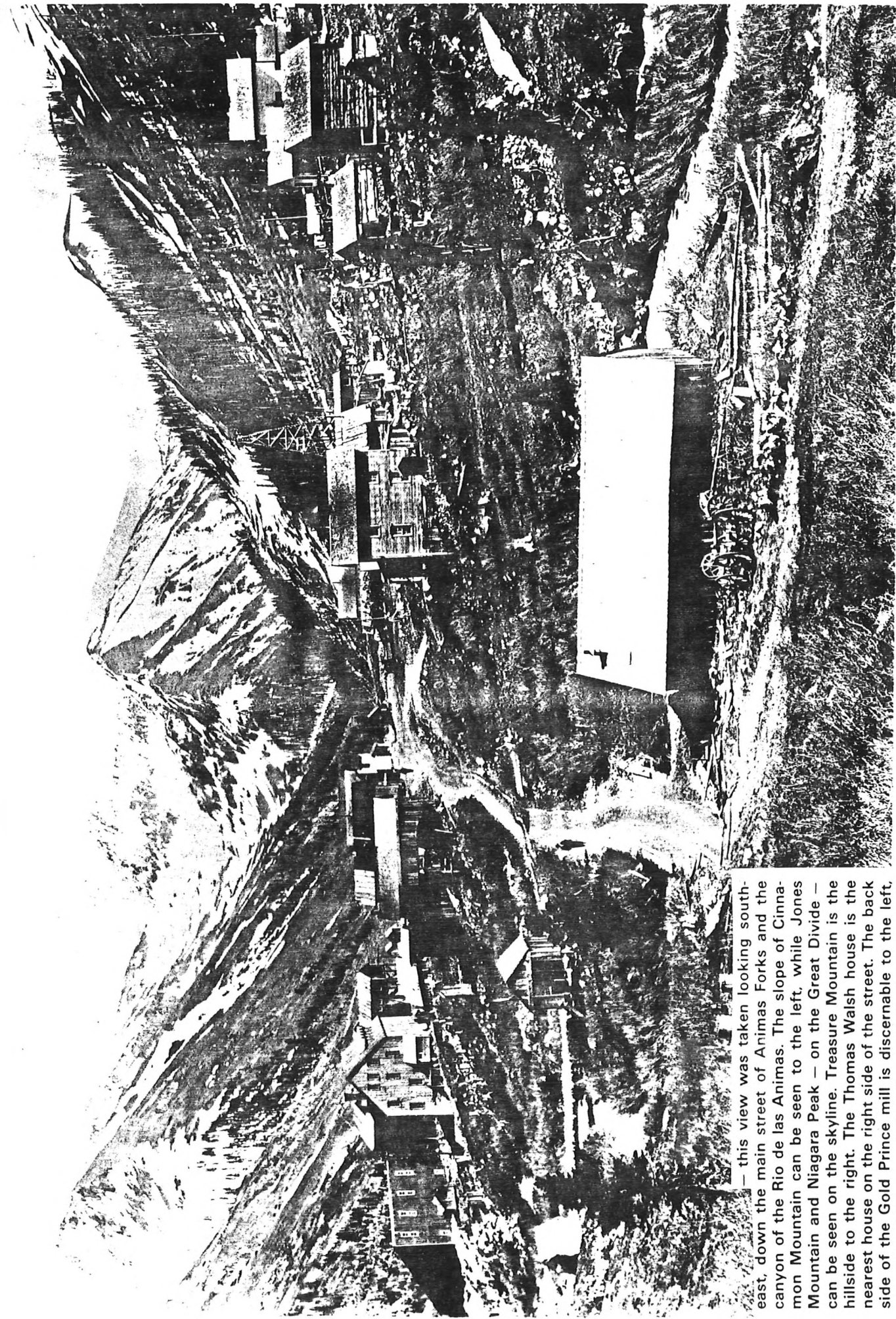
— during the fall of 1903, the Silver Lake mill was concentrating ore by the trainload. The pithead was near the top of Kendall Mountain, and ore traveled to the mill via cable tramway. The Silver Lake mill was the biggest producer on the Silverton Northern, turning out over \$7-million-worth of ore.



<p>THE SILVERTON NORTHERN RAILROAD CO. Gladstone Branch UNLIMITED TICKET GOOD FOR ONE FIRST CLASS PASSAGE WHEN STAMPED ON BACK SILVERTON TO GLADSTONE NO. 11614</p>	<p>THE SILVERTON NORTHERN RAILROAD CO. Gladstone Branch UNLIMITED TICKET GOOD FOR ONE FIRST CLASS PASSAGE WHEN STAMPED ON BACK Gladstone to Silverton NO. 11614</p>
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9912
 Silverton Northern R.R. Co.
FIRST CLASS
 Good for One Continuous Passage
Anamas Forks
 Return TO (Coupon)
SILVERTON
W. H. ...
 President
 Silverton Northern R.R. Co.
FIRST CLASS
 Good for One Continuous Passage
SILVERTON
 TO (Coupon)
Anamas Forks
 Not good if detached
2156





— this view was taken looking southeast, down the main street of Animas Forks and the canyon of the Rio de las Animas. The slope of Cinnamon Mountain can be seen to the left, while Jones Mountain and Niagara Peak — on the Great Divide — can be seen on the skyline. Treasure Mountain is the hillside to the right. The Thomas Walsh house is the nearest house on the right side of the street. The back side of the Gold Prince mill is discernable to the left, with its cableway entering the open shed on the right side of the top level.

DENVER AND RIO GRANDE

Route of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison

The Denver and Rio Grande Railway was incorporated on October 27, 1870. The initial purpose of the railroad was to provide service in a north-south direction from Denver, south to the Mexican border. However, after the much publicized battle with the Santa Fe, the D&RG was forced to turn its interests westward instead of to the south.

By 1880, the railroad had built through the Royal Gorge to Salida and in early 1881, after purchasing the Otto Mears toll road over Marshall Pass, began building toward Gunnison. At the same time, the railroad was also building the San Juan extension over Cumbres Pass toward Durango, the Eagle River extension over Ten Mile (Fremont) Pass north of Leadville; the Grape Creek extension to Westcliff; and the South Park extension through Platte Canyon.

Meanwhile, the Denver South Park & Pacific Railroad was also racing to Gunnison by another route just to the north of what is now Monarch Pass in an attempt to beat the D&RG to the coal fields north of Gunnison and the rich mining districts to the west. However, the South Park became bogged down at the Alpine tunnel and the D&RG won the race to Gunnison. The first train reached Gunnison on August 6, 1881.

Not wanting to be caught resting on their laurels, the D&RG began immediately building a branch north to Crested Butte and Floresta to tap the rich coal fields to be found in this area. They also started to immediately build further west into the Black Canyon. By August 9, 1882, rails had reached the townsite of Cimmaron, at the point where the rails came out of the canyon. On Sunday, August 13, 1882, the first passenger train left Gunnison to travel into the Canyon.

Construction continued to Montrose, Delta and Grand Junction and on to the Utah border to connect with the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railway. The D&RGW railway had been incorporated in Utah by General Palmer to build and operate trackage in the Territory of Utah because the D&RG was not incorporated in Utah. On March 30, 1883, construction was completed on the line all the way from Denver to Salt Lake City. It only remained to build from Salt Lake to Provo to connect with the Central Pacific to have a direct link from the east to the west coast by way of the D&RG. Immediately after construction was completed, the job of upgrading the system began. Hastily constructed bridges were rebuilt, some grade was realigned to smooth the grade and some of the original 30# rail was replaced with heavier rail.

In 1889, the British writer Rudyard Kipling was travelling across the United States and rode this narrow gauge line. He was most impressed with the Black Canyon of the Gunnison:

"We had been climbing for very many hours, and attained a modest elevation of some seven or eight thousand feet above the sea, when we entered the gorge, remote from the sun, where the rocks were two thousand feet sheer, and where a rock splintered river roared and howled ten feet below a track which seemed to have been built on the simple principle of dropping miscellaneous dirt into the river and pinning a few rails a-top. There was a glory and a wonder and a mystery about that mad ride which I felt keenly (you will find it properly dressed up in the guide books), until I had to offer prayers for the safety of the train. There was no hope of seeing the track two hundred yards ahead. We seemed to be running into the bowels of the earth at the invitation of an irresponsible stream. Then the solid rock would open and disclose a curve of awful twistfulness. Then the driver put on all steam, and we would go round that curve on one wheel chiefly, the Gunnison River gnashing its teeth below. The cars overhung the edge of the water, and if a single one of the rails had chosen to spread, nothing in the wide world could have saved us from drowning. I knew we would damage something in the end -- the somber horrors of the gorge, the rush of the jade-green water below, and the cheerful tales told by the conductor made me certain of the catastrophe."

By the late 1880's, the Rio Grande was facing the threat from the Colorado

Midland of the construction of a standard gauge line to the west. The Midland was building a standard gauge from Colorado Springs to Aspen, Glenwood Springs and points west. The Rio Grande, now the D&RG RR after reorganization, hurriedly completed its link through Glenwood Canyon and into Glenwood Springs. The Rio Grande and the Midland built joint trackage from Glenwood to Grand Junction. In order to meet competition, the track from Canon City to Glenwood Springs and in Utah was also converted to standard gauge. By November 15, 1890, a standard gauge line was complete between Denver and Ogden.

This left the narrow gauge portion through the Black Canyon to stand alone on the local traffic as there was no more through traffic. This was not all bad, however, as the local ore and coal mining traffic was supplemented by local livestock and agriculture traffic. Occasionally, converting to standard gauge was considered, but this was never done. Trains ran until the line was dismantled in the canyon in 1949.

Today, much of the line through the Black Canyon of the Gunnison is under water as the construction of the Morrow Point dam has flooded much of the canyon.

It is still possible to walk on part of the old D&RG grade in the bottom of the canyon. Those who will be taking the boat tour for the cruise on Morrow Point Lake will walk on about a mile of the old grade getting to the marina.

REFERENCES

- "Marshall Pass -- A Field Trip for the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club" by Rich Dais.
- "Scenic Line of the World" by Gordon Chappell and Cornelius W. Hauck, Colorado Railroad Museum 1977.

ITINERARY -- Thursday, June 30, 1988

Today, there will be no organized caravan on leaving Ouray. Each party will make their way north from Ouray to Montrose on US Highway 550 and then east about 20 miles on US 50 to Cimarron. Turning north at Cimarron the National Park Service has a couple of boxcars and a corral set up as it would have been when the D&RGW was still providing service to the area. It is a great display. Be sure to set some time aside to see it. Travelling down to the Gunnison River, toward the Morrow Point Dam, D&RGW No. 278, a boxcar and a caboose are on display on a portion of one of the Railroad's original trestles as a monument to the little train that traversed the Black Canyon of the Gunnison. While there, you may wish to visit the Morrow Point Dam.

For those who are taking the boat trip in the Black Canyon, the trips will be scheduled at three different times -- 10:30am, 12:30pm, & 2:30pm. Each party will be assigned a time to meet at the boat dock. The 10:30 group will proceed directly to the Pine Creek Marina without stopping at Cimarron. That group will have plenty of time to backtrack to Cimarron later in the day. Lunch opportunities are almost nonexistent, so it will be necessary to bring a lunch.

At a point just west of the Blue Mesa Dam is a parking lot for the Pine Creek Marina (allow ~45 minutes from Cimarron). Park in the lot and walk down the steps (only 234 steps) to the bottom of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison. At this point, turn left and you are on the old Denver and Rio Grande grade. Walk about a mile down the grade to the Pine Creek Marina where we will board 30-passenger boats for a spectacular ride down the Black Canyon of the Gunnison. We will pass Chipeta Falls and the famous Curecanti Needle, both famous landmarks of the Rio Grande. After the boat ride you may wish to follow the grade a short way past the Marina until it finally disappears into the lake.

Hiking back up to the parking lot need not be difficult providing you take it easy. The opportunity to hike a little of the grade and see the beautiful scenery of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, up close and personal, makes this minor effort well worth while.

After returning to the parking lot, the days activities are concluded and you can make your way to Gunnison (or back to Cimarron and then to Gunnison) for the night at your own pace.

Denver and Rio Grande

RAILWAY

DENVER AND OGDEN LINE.

WESTWARD.		Local Time		EASTWARD.	
No. 49.	Pacific	In effect Jan. 15, 1884.	Miles.	Atlantic	No. 10
Emigrant.	Express.			Express.	Emigrant.
8 30 p.m.	7 50 p.m.	Lv. Denver	Ar.	9 00 p.m.	7 15 a.m.
8 44 "	8 02 "	Burnham	Lv.	8 30 "	7 00 "
8 57 "	8 06 "	N. O. Crossing	"	8 38 "	6 50 "
9 18 "	8 15 "	Petersburg	"	8 29 "	6 18 "
9 30 "	8 18 "	Littleton	"	8 22 "	6 05 "
10 06 "	8 37 "	Acedula	"	8 09 "	5 23 "
10 43 "	8 52 "	Sedalia	"	7 58 "	4 40 "
11 04 "	9 02 "	Mill No. 2	"	7 44 "	4 15 "
11 22 "	9 10 "	Castle Rock	"	7 35 "	4 00 "
11 25 "	9 17 "	Douglas	"	7 29 "	3 40 "
11 52 "	9 27 "	Glade	"	7 22 "	3 30 "
12 18 a.m.	9 39 "	Larkspur	"	7 14 "	3 07 "
1 25 "	9 52 "	Greenland	"	7 05 "	2 45 "
1 28 "	10 16 "	Palmer Lake	"	6 54 "	2 13 "
2 00 "	10 24 "	Monument	"	6 33 "	1 52 "
2 25 "	10 33 "	Borata	"	6 25 "	1 18 "
2 05 "	10 48 "	Husted's	"	6 16 "	12 50 "
2 55 "	11 00 "	Edgerton	"	6 04 "	12 13 a.m.
4 45 "	11 18 "	Colorado Sp's	"	5 44 "	11 10 p.m.
5 10 "	11 26 "	Widefield	"	5 22 "	9 45 "
5 40 "	11 38 "	Fountain	"	5 13 "	9 20 "
6 05 "	11 46 "	Little Buttes	"	5 01 "	8 45 "
6 25 "	11 55 "	Wigwam	"	4 51 "	8 20 "
7 08 "	12 08 a.m.	Pinon	"	4 40 "	7 48 "
7 35 "	12 18 "	Cactus	"	4 28 "	7 17 "
7 50 "	12 25 "	Nada	"	4 15 "	6 45 "
8 40 "	12 40 "	Ar. So. Pueblo	Lv.	4 00 "	6 30 "
9 05 "	12 50 "	Goodnight	Ar.	3 50 "	5 00 "
9 20 "	1 00 "	Meadows	"	3 40 "	4 33 "
9 37 "	1 18 "	Swallows	"	3 30 "	4 02 "
10 22 "	1 25 "	Carlie Springs	"	3 20 "	3 30 "
10 27 "	1 30 "	Beaver Creek	"	3 18 "	2 46 "
10 42 "	1 39 "	Thompson	"	3 09 "	2 29 "
11 15 "	1 52 "	Florence	"	2 50 "	2 15 "
12 10 p.m.	2 10 "	Canon City	"	2 30 "	1 30 "
12 30 "	2 17 "	Grape Creek Junc.	"	2 22 "	12 50 p.m.
1 10 "	2 45 "	Parkdale	"	2 11 "	11 30 a.m.
1 48 "	3 00 "	Spike Buck	"	1 43 "	11 00 "
2 40 "	3 22 "	Texas Creek	"	1 21 "	10 06 "
3 22 "	3 39 "	Cotopaxi	"	1 06 "	9 23 "
4 01 "	3 57 "	Wagon	"	1 00 "	8 40 "
4 24 "	4 09 "	Howard	"	1 05 "	8 12 "
4 48 "	4 14 "	Badger	"	1 07 "	7 58 "
5 25 "	4 23 "	Cleora	"	1 00 "	7 12 "
5 45 "	4 40 "	Ar. Salida	Lv.	12 15 p.m.	7 00 "
6 40 "	4 48 "	Lv. Poncha	Lv.	11 55 a.m.	5 00 "
7 05 "	5 03 "	Otto	"	11 42 "	4 32 "
7 37 "	5 23 "	Mears	"	11 15 "	4 20 "
8 10 "	5 40 "	Shirley	"	11 05 "	4 05 "
8 00 "	5 49 "	Gray's Sliding	"	10 40 "	3 28 "
9 25 "	6 27 "	Pocoyo	"	10 20 "	2 00 "
10 05 "	6 45 "	Marshall Pass	"	10 05 "	2 35 "
10 30 "	7 02 "	Hillesden	"	9 45 "	2 05 "
11 10 "	7 25 "	Chester	"	9 30 "	1 30 "
11 47 "	7 47 "	Buxton	"	8 57 "	1 00 "
12 25 a.m.	8 00 "	Ar. Sargent	Lv.	8 40 "	12 35 "
12 50 "	8 20 "	Lv. Crooks	Ar.	8 30 "	12 05 a.m.
1 35 "	8 42 "	Dnyls	Lv.	7 58 "	11 18 p.m.
1 58 "	8 52 "	Flytes	"	7 50 "	11 05 "
2 30 "	9 06 "	Gumpton	"	7 35 "	10 19 "
2 48 "	9 26 "	Kezar	"	7 10 "	9 35 "
4 45 "	10 05 "	Cebolla	"	6 42 "	8 10 "
5 25 "	10 23 "	Sapinero	"	6 05 "	7 37 "
6 05 "	10 48 "	Currecanti	"	5 45 "	7 03 "
6 50 "	11 08 "	Crystal Creek	"	5 25 "	6 30 "
7 30 "	11 31 "	Ar. Cimarron	Lv.	5 15 "	5 55 "
7 41 "	11 38 "	Lv. Cerro	Ar.	5 13 "	5 45 "
8 00 "	11 58 "	Cedar Creek	Lv.	4 50 "	4 50 "
8 40 "	12 33 p.m.	Montrose	"	4 15 "	3 55 "
9 25 "	1 03 "	Colorow	"	3 45 "	3 00 "
10 25 "	1 20 "	Delta	"	3 15 "	1 52 "
11 40 "	1 59 "	Escalanti	"	2 48 "	1 00 p.m.
1 00 p.m.	2 16 "	Dominguez	"	2 12 "	11 60 a.m.
2 05 "	2 51 "	Bridgeport	"	1 54 "	11 16 "
2 32 "	3 08 "	Kahnab	"	1 33 "	10 35 "
3 03 "	3 39 "	White Water	"	1 02 "	9 35 "
3 55 "	4 04 "	Grand Junction	"	12 31 "	8 16 "
4 14 "	4 04 "	Round Hill	"	12 10 a.m.	8 00 "
6 15 "	4 45 "	Road	"	11 47 p.m.	6 44 "
6 35 "	5 01 "	Fruitvale	Lv.	11 32 p.m.	6 10 a.m.
7 35 p.m.	5 15 p.m.				

Denver and Rio Grande

RAILWAY

DENVER AND OGDEN LINE.—Continued.

WESTWARD.		STATIONS.		EASTWARD.	
No. 49.	Pacific		Miles.	Atlantic	No. 10.
Emigrant.	Express.			Express.	Emigrant.
7 40 p.m.	6 31 p.m.	Lv. Crevasse	Lv.	446	11 20 p.m.
8 08 "	5 44 "	Shale	"	452	11 05 "
8 40 "	5 56 "	Excelsior	"	457	10 54 "
9 15 "	6 08 "	Acheron	"	463	10 38 "
10 13 "	6 22 "	West Water	"	474	10 19 "
10 45 "	6 46 "	Cottonwood	"	479	9 57 "
11 55 "	7 08 "	Cisco	"	490	9 23 "
1 23 a.m.	7 46 "	Sagers	"	501	8 50 "
2 10 "	8 02 "	Thompson's	"	507	8 20 "
2 39 "	8 15 "	Crescent	"	516	8 00 "
3 17 "	8 30 "	Little Grand	"	531	8 15 "
3 55 "	8 45 "	Sollitude	"	539	7 57 "
6 15 "	9 15 "	Green River	"	587	7 40 "
6 30 "	9 45 "	Desert	"	545	7 30 "
7 45 "	9 55 "	Ar. Lower Price Cross	Lv.	558	6 50 "
8 00 "	10 15 "	Lv. Grassy Trail	Lv.	570	6 25 "
9 00 "	10 48 "	Sunny Side	"	589	6 10 "
9 46 "	11 07 "	Farmham	"	591	5 44 "
10 55 "	11 30 "	Castle Gate	"	600	5 00 "
1 05 p.m.	12 40 a.m.	Pleasant Valley Junc.	"	624	4 20 "
2 55 "	1 25 "	Soldier Summit	"	687	3 40 "
4 20 "	1 55 "	Clear Creek	"	644	3 15 "
5 20 "	2 25 "	Mill Fork	"	651	2 55 "
6 10 "	2 57 "	Thistle	"	658	2 35 "
7 10 "	3 30 "	Spanish Fork	"	669	2 15 "
8 05 "	4 00 "	Springville	"	680	1 55 "
8 55 "	4 10 "	Ar. Provo	Lv.	684	1 35 "
9 15 "	4 28 "	Lv. Battle Creek	Ar.	689	1 20 "
10 00 "	4 48 "	American Fork	"	699	11 51 p.m.
10 17 "	4 55 "	Lv. Lehi	Lv.	702	11 48 "
10 36 "	5 08 "	Draper	"	705	11 45 "
11 45 "	5 40 "	Bingham Junction	"	718	11 05 "
12 20 a.m.	5 54 "	Salt Lake	Lv.	734	10 52 "
1 15 "	6 20 "	Lv. Wood Cross	Lv.	735	10 30 "
1 50 "	6 30 "	Farmington	"	748	10 20 "
2 35 "	7 07 "	Kaysville	"	760	10 08 "
3 12 "	7 15 "	Hooper	"	764	9 50 "
4 25 "	7 40 "	Ogden	Lv.	771	9 33 "
5 00 a.m.	7 55 a.m.				6 47 "

Passengers holding Second-Class tickets are carried in handsome Coaches attached to Express Trains. At present Third-Class through Passengers are also transported on Express Trains in Free Emigrant Sleepers.

Ogden, Bingham and Springville Local Trains.

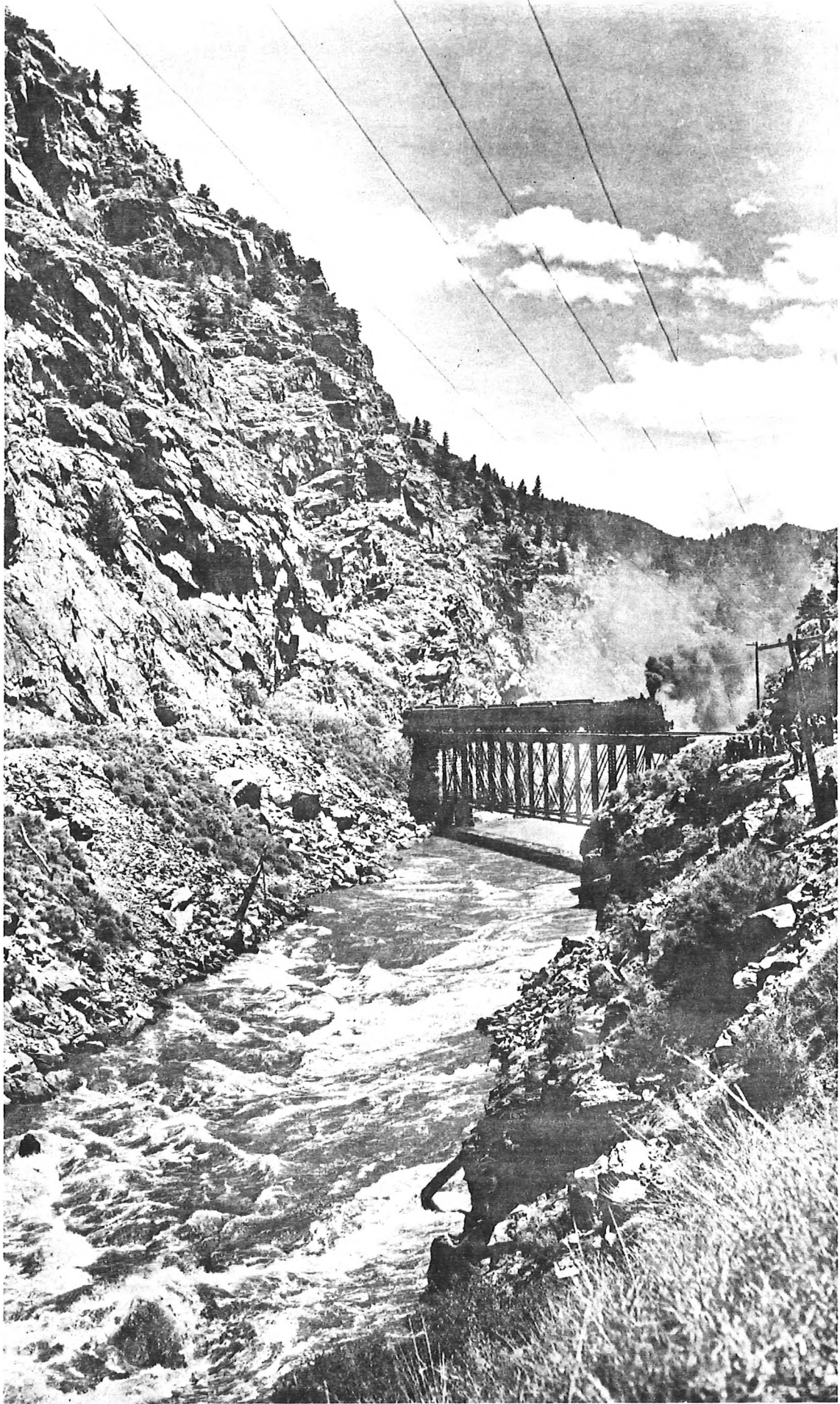
NORTHWARD.		STATIONS.		SOUTHWARD.	
Bingham	Springville		Miles.	Springville	Bingham
Passenger.	Passenger.			Passenger.	Passenger.
7 25 a.m.	Lv. Springville	Ar.	87	7 30 p.m.	
7 39 "	Battle Creek	Lv.	78	7 05 "	
8 02 "	American Fork	"	83	6 43 "	
8 10 "	Lehi	"	69	6 23 "	
8 20 "	Draper	"	66	6 25 "	
8 51 "	Bingham	Ar.	53	5 52 "	
2 30 p.m.	Bingham Junction	Lv.	47	5 56 "	9 10 a.m.
4 00 "	Salt Lake	Lv.	36	5 10 "	7 55 "
4 10 "	Ar. Salt Lake	Ar.	47	5 00 "	8 00 p.m.
4 35 "	Woods Cross	Lv.	28	4 25 "	7 40 "
4 51 "	Farmington	"	22	4 18 "	7 22 "
5 00 "	Kaysville	"	17	4 10 "	7 18 "
5 25 "	Hooper	"	7	3 45 "	6 47 "
5 40 p.m.	Ogden	Lv.	..	3 20 p.m.	6 30 p.m.

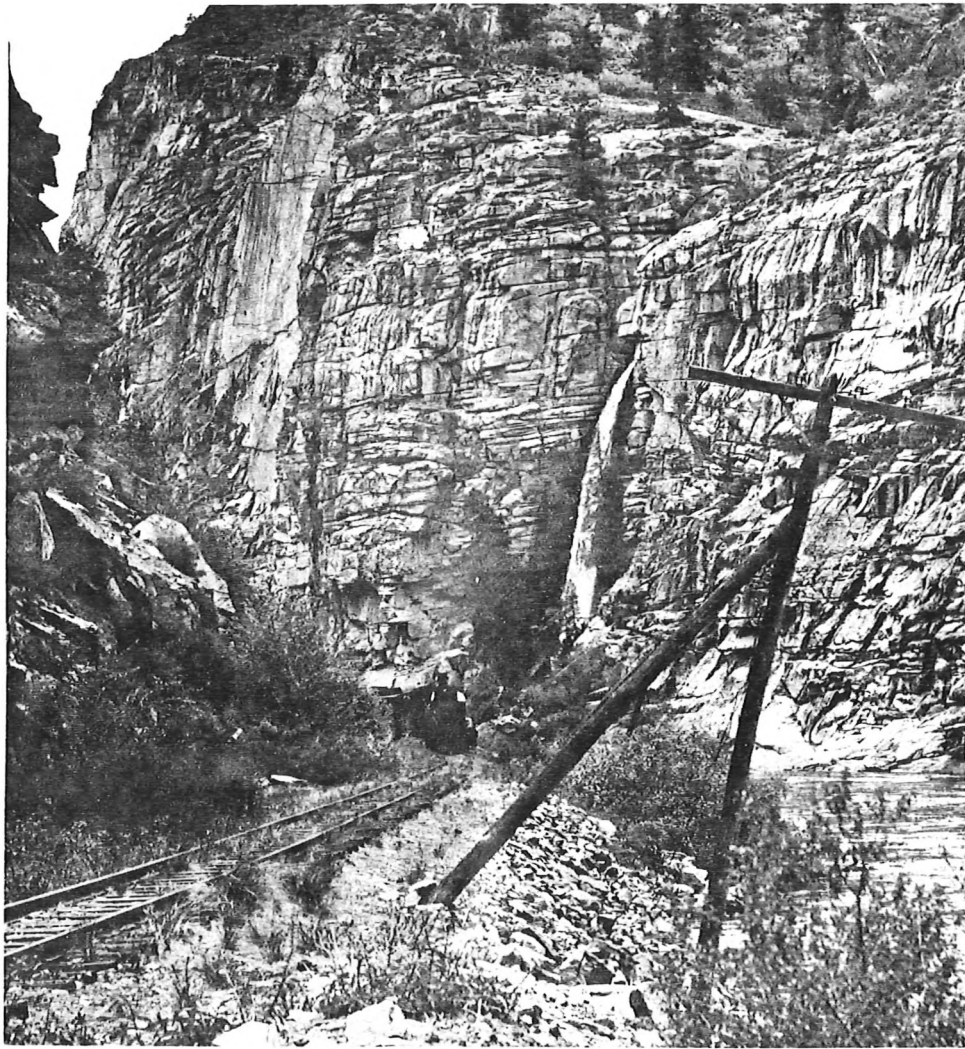
SAN LUIS BRANCH.

SOUTHWARD.		STATIONS.		NORTHWARD.	
Passenger.			Miles.	Passenger.	
7 15 p.m.	Lv. Denver	Ar.	120	7 10 a.m.	
12 55 a.m.	South Pueblo	"	120	1 55 "	
7 30 "	Salida	"	117	5 35 p.m.	
8 55 "	Mears	"	128	4 20 "	
9 23 "	Poncha Pass	Lv.	231	3 50 "	
9 47 "	Round Hill	"	234	3 25 "	
11 10 "	Villa Grove	"	347	2 30 "	
12 10 p.m.	Hot Springs	Lv.	356	12 50 p.m.	

The timetable above shows the through schedules as of January 15, 1884. Curiously, the Royal Gorge is not even mentioned. To see the scenery along the entire route, a tourist would have to ride both directions; either way, it was a 36 hour trip on the "Pacific" or "Atlantic" Express. But consider nos. 49 and 10, the "Emigrant", which consumed 4 nights and three days going from Denver to Ogden — 80 hours for 771 miles! This must have been a very leisurely "mixed" train! (Museum Coll.)

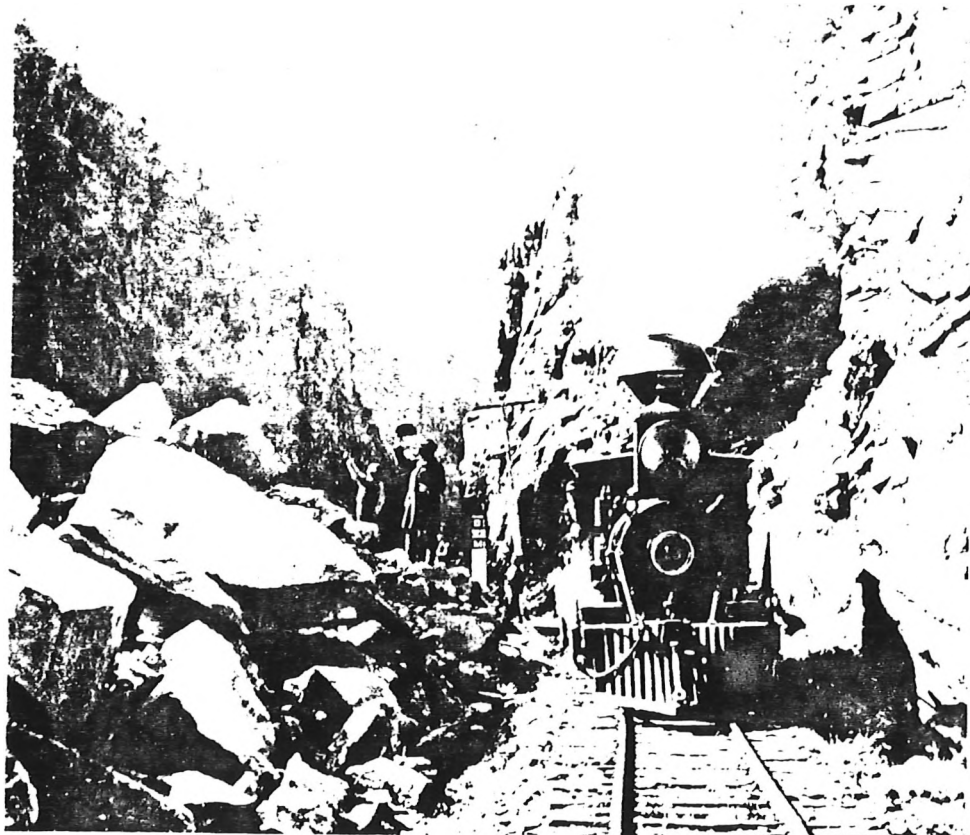




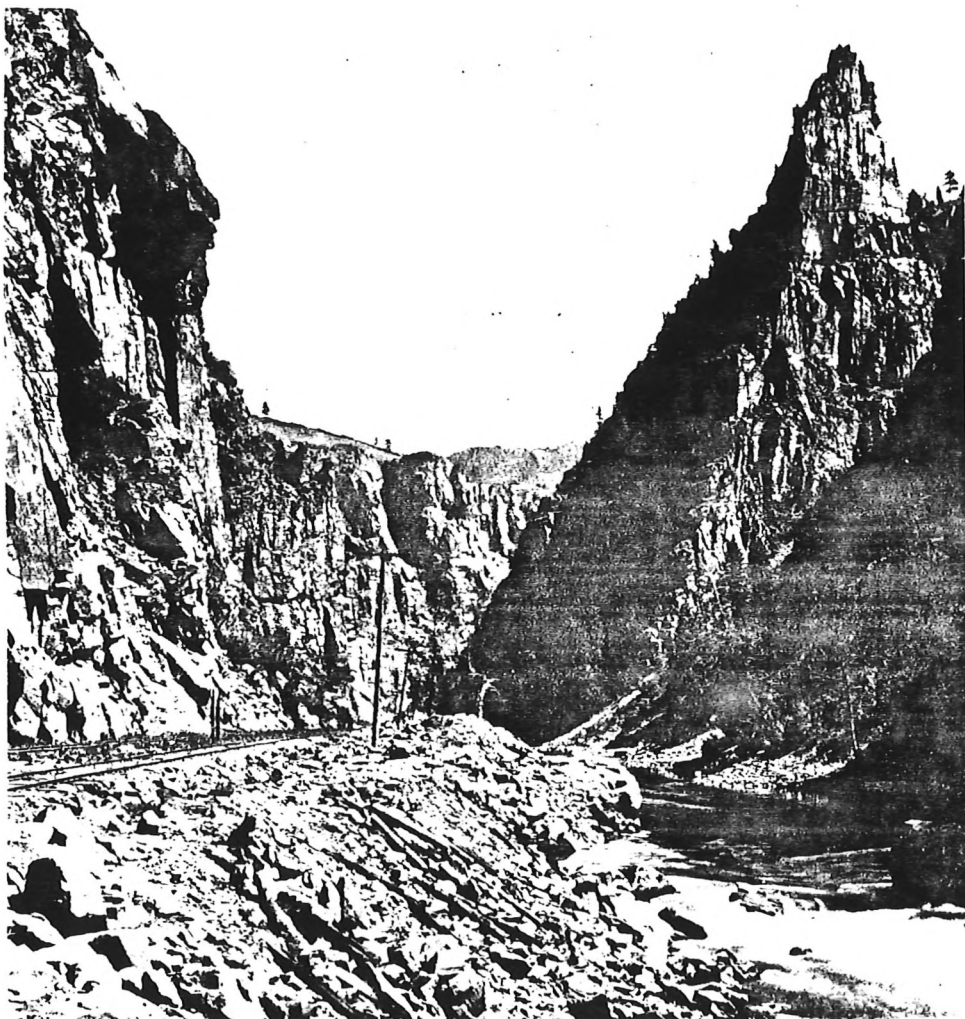


The Rocky Mountain Railroad Club had a final excursion over the line on Memorial Day 1949, shortly before it was dismantled. Bob Richardson was on the trip and made these memorable photographs. Above, the 361 at Chipeta Falls eastbound, and below, taking water and wyeing the train at Cimarron. On the page opposite, the entire company turns out to witness the 361 smoking across the Crystal Creek bridge for the last time. It marked the end of $\frac{2}{3}$ of a century of passenger service through the Canon. (3 photos. R. W. Richardson.)





The Black Canon soon became a major tourist attraction, and the tourists at right (or perhaps they're merely railroad dignitaries) are gazing upwards (while little mogul no. 13 simmers on the main) at the scene below — the Curecanti Needle, just across the narrow stream-bed from their track, and thrusting a thousand feet or more into the sky. The fame of the Curecanti Needle was assured when the D&RG elected to engrave it on the road's fancy new herald, where it was to remain until the 1920's.



DENVER, SOUTH PARK & PACIFIC Route Over Ohio Pass

As with many railroads that were just beginning in the late 1800's, the original objectives were rather grand and the ultimate achievements were usually different. In the case of the South Park, the reasons were that someone had beaten them to the objective. After some of their original objectives were no longer desirable, the South Park amended their articles of Association to add authority to build, among other places, west to the Utah border over Ohio Pass, Kebler Pass to the north fork of the Gunnison, down that stream to its confluence with the Grande (Colorado) River, and on west to Utah.

The South Park chose a route over the Continental Divide to Gunnison which would allow pushing west toward Lake City, Ouray and Rico, as well as to fulfill their desire to push westward to Utah via Ohio Pass just to the north of Alpine Tunnel, the Denver & Rio Grande reached Gunnison first and immediately pushed westward to the lucrative mining markets in Ouray and beyond.

The Denver & Rio Grande had completed a branch to Crested Butte by 1881, with an extension another four mile to Anthracite in 1882. This line followed a different route than the South Park had wanted to follow, and, moreover, the Rio Grande was showing no inclination to go any farther. Therefore, the South Park continued with construction of the line over Ohio Pass with Utah the destination, and ultimately, the Pacific. By the fall of 1882, the South Park surveyors had run a complete, final location as far as the Utah border.

Construction north of Gunnison had commenced in 1880. On January 27, 1882, the "Pitkin Mining News" claimed that most of the grading from Gunnison to over Ohio and Kebler Passes was completed except for a three mile stretch just south of Ohio Pass. This stretch included some heavy rock work, including a large section which was being filled with a stone bridge or palisade (similar to the palisades near the Alpine Tunnel) 300 feet up on the mountain side, a big balloon loop, and beautifully hand-constructed rock culverts. The unfinished rock wall is built of large blocks hewn out of the mountain side and fitted together without mortar. However, by this time management apparently was having doubts about completing this line, for by March, 1882, it was reported that all work on the Utah Extension had stopped and the construction crews were sent to work on the Oregon Short Line Railway. By September, 1882, the railroad commenced laying track with the coal mines at Baldwin, about 14 miles north of Gunnison, the objective. At the site of the town of Castleton, the South Park built a branch up Carbon Creek to the east to the town of Kubler and the Kubler mine. From this, there was also a branch to the west to the Baldwin mine. The track reached Baldwin in November of 1883. The track was extended only 3.09 miles to the north.

By November, 1882, the Denver & Rio Grande had reached Grand Junction and was headed toward Utah. The South Park had lost another race. In January, 1881, the South Park came under control of the Union Pacific and all major decisions were made in Omaha. The Gunnison boom was collapsing, but the large coal deposits in the area could not be ignored. After the tracks arrived in Baldwin, the UP decided it need to go no further. Construction was never to resume north of Baldwin and the partially graded section over Ohio Pass was lost and, for the most part, forgotten. When Mac Poor wrote the original manuscript for the Denver, South Park and Pacific he could find very little information on the Ohio Pass Extension. On August 30, 1954, Bob Richardson, now of the Colorado Railroad Museum, while ghost towning on a badly deteriorated wagon road over Ohio Pass, found some remnants of the obviously graded but unused grade. In 1955, Gunnison County constructed a new dirt road replacing a portion of the long-abandoned wagon road.

In 1893, the Rio Grande built a branch from Crested Butte over Kebler Pass to Floresta to a coal mine owned by the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company.

In 1910, when it became apparent that the Alpine Tunnel would never be

reopened, the South Park (now the Colorado & Southern after reorganization in 1898) proposed a trade of operations of their western slope branch from Pitkin to Baldwin for a branch the Denver & Rio Grande owned from Leadville to Dillon. This was to take effect in 1911.

Thus the Baldwin branch was operated by the D&RG for many years, still hauling the coal traffic from the mines near Baldwin. By 1929, the line was very worn and some thought was given to abandonment; however, at the time, the Baldwin mine increased its output. The rail was nothing but scrap and the average train speed was 8 mph.

In 1937, the C&S officially gave the Baldwin branch to the Denver & Rio Grande and enough 70 pound rail to relay the line. This rebuilding was completed by 1939 and trains continued to operate on this line until 1954.

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"Colorado Rail Annual No. 12 -- The South Park Line, a Concise History" by Chappell, Richardson & Hauck, 1974, Colorado Railroad Museum

"Pictorial Supplement to Denver South Park & Pacific" by R. H. Kindig, E. J. Haley, & M. C. Poor, 1979, Rocky Mountain Railroad Club

ITINERARY -- Friday, July 1, 1988

We will meet at 8:30 am at the city park on US 50 in Gunnison. After a brief orientation meeting, we will proceed north from Gunnison on state highway 135 toward Crested Butte. After a few miles, we will turn left onto the Ohio Creek road and proceed toward the old town of Baldwin and on toward Ohio Pass.

At this time we will be paralleling the old Denver, South Park & Pacific grade. The grade will be off in the field to the left of the road. Sometimes the grade is between the road and the creek and sometimes just on the other side of the creek.

We have permission to stop at the town of Baldwin, which is on private property.

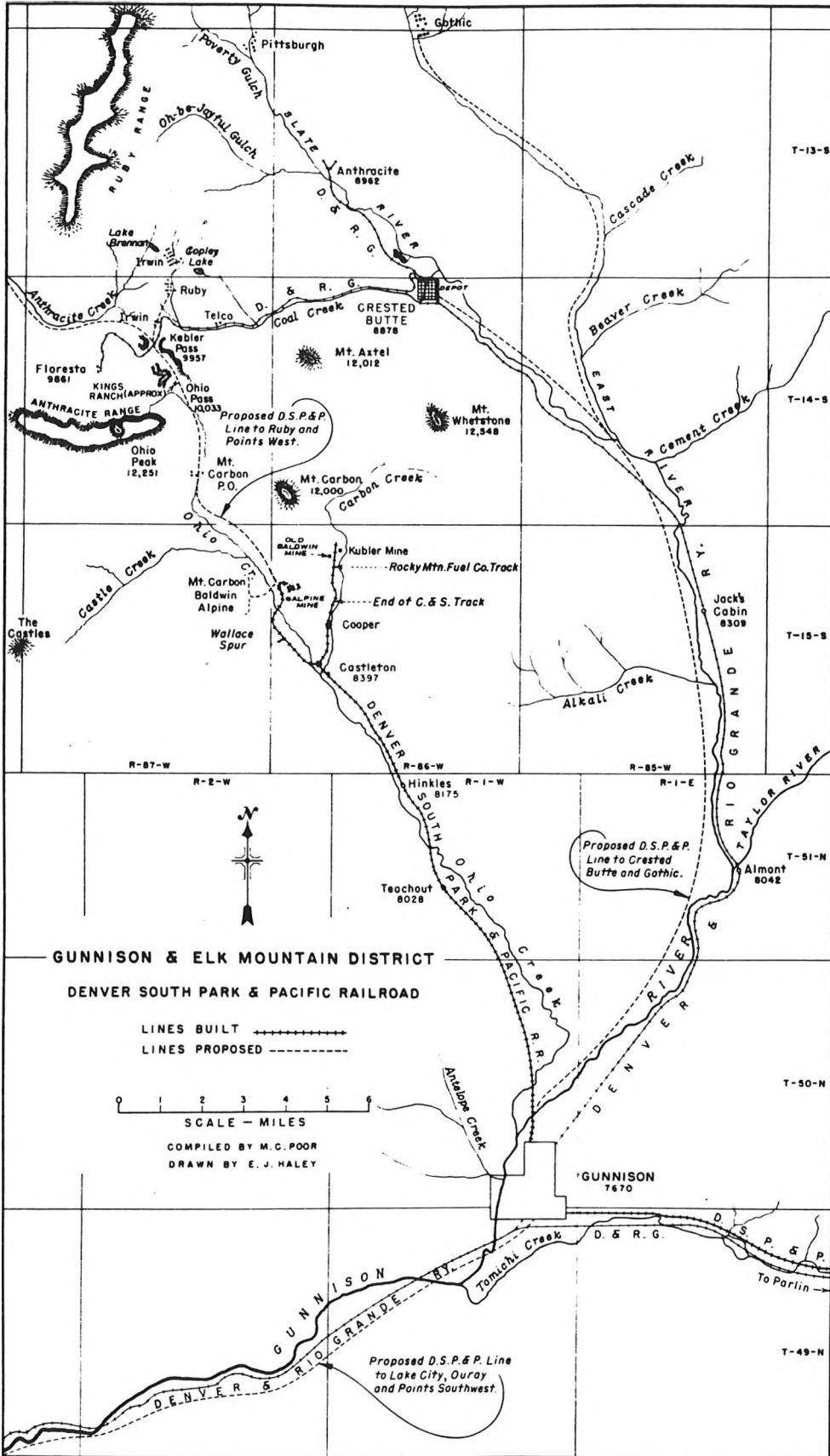
From here we will proceed north following generally the route of the railroad grade. From Baldwin north tracks were only laid for a short distance. Beyond that the grade was mostly finished, graded but no track was ever laid. The grade continues to be off to our left, finally heading up another valley and out of sight. Just before our next stop, we will join the grade and be driving on it for about a mile.

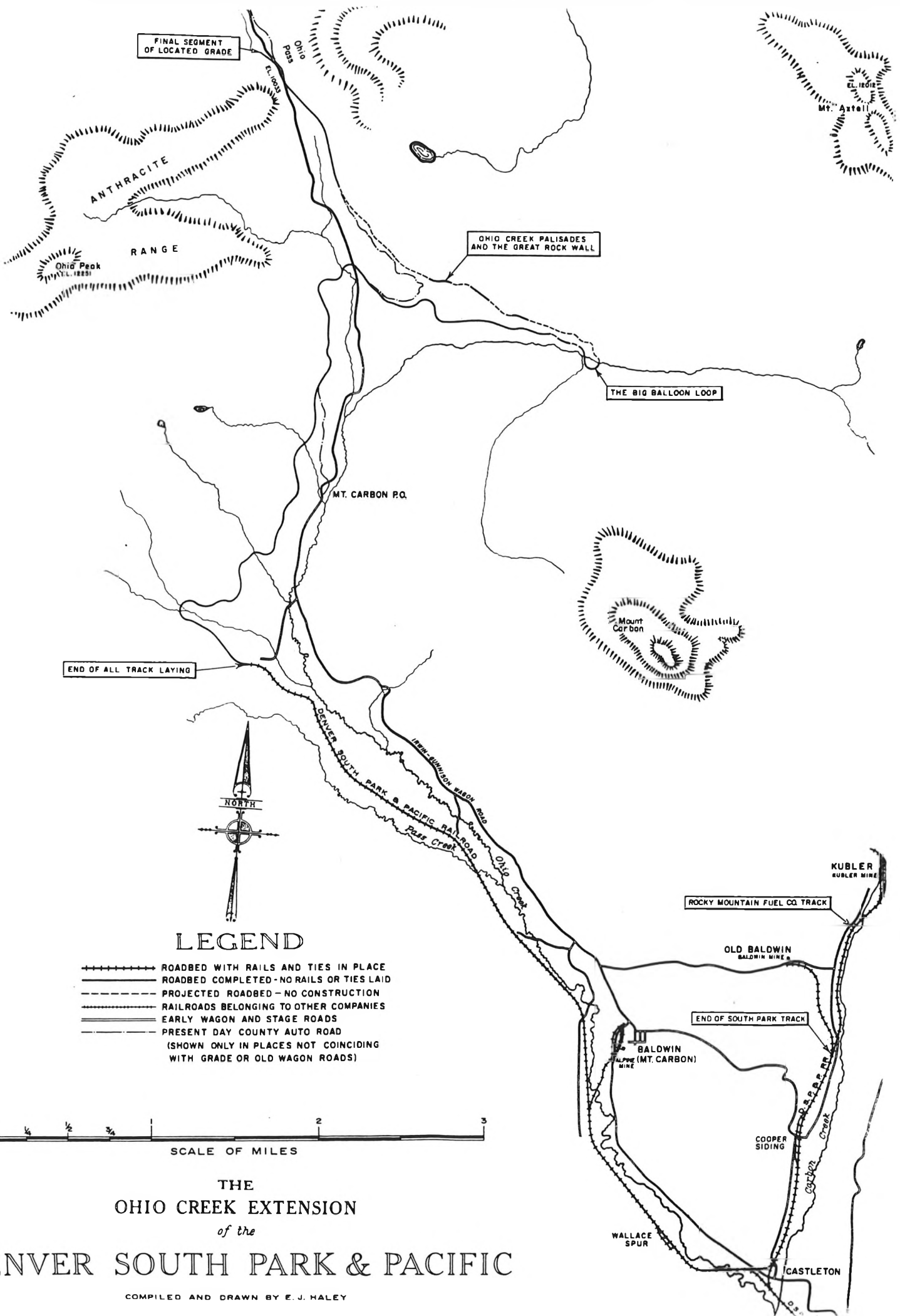
Our next stop will be at the site of the Palisades, the beautiful rock fill that was being built to fill a large gully. Continuing on foot, we will proceed up the grade to the big balloon loop that was completed, except for the actual trestles. This is an easy walk, but, at times, we will be walking on rock scree, which is hard on the ankles. Therefore, hiking boots are advised.

Next we will be continuing north over Ohio Pass and Kebler Pass, joining the Rio Grande line built from Crested Butte to the coal mine at Floresta. We will travel down this route to Crested Butte. In Crested Butte, we can see the old Rio Grande water tank and depot (painted in Rio Grande purple?!).

Today's trip ends here and you are free to look around Crested Butte or head back for Gunnison. As you head back toward Gunnison notice the old Rio Grande grade which parallels the road, crossing it a couple of times.

Tonight, we will meet at the new Aspinall-Wilson Center on the Western State College campus for a farewell dinner and a talk and slide show by Dr. Duane Vandebusch, Professor of History at Western State College and expert on local history. The title of his talk will be NARROW GAUGES OF THE GUNNISON COUNTRY 100 YEARS AGO, and will cover the South Park & Pacific and the Denver & Rio Grande and "some of the exploits of both as they entered the Gunnison country."





FINAL SEGMENT OF LOCATED GRADE

ANTHRACITE RANGE

OHIO CREEK PALISADES AND THE GREAT ROCK WALL

THE BIG BALLOON LOOP

MT. CARBON P.O.

END OF ALL TRACK LAYING



LEGEND

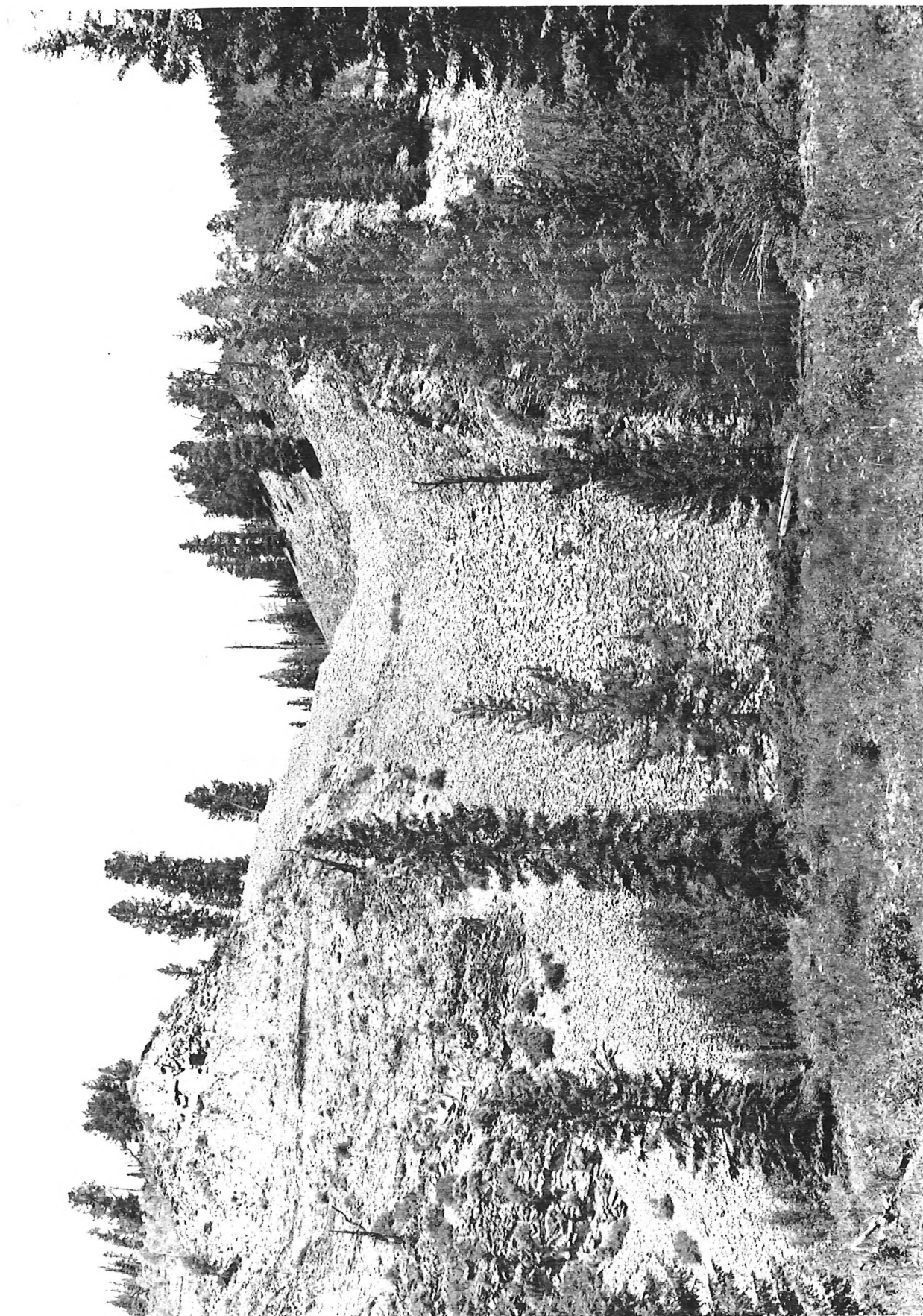
- +———— ROADBED WITH RAILS AND TIES IN PLACE
- ROADBED COMPLETED - NO RAILS OR TIES LAID
- - - - - PROJECTED ROADBED - NO CONSTRUCTION
- +———— RAILROADS BELONGING TO OTHER COMPANIES
- +———— EARLY WAGON AND STAGE ROADS
- PRESENT DAY COUNTY AUTO ROAD (SHOWN ONLY IN PLACES NOT COINCIDING WITH GRADE OR OLD WAGON ROADS)



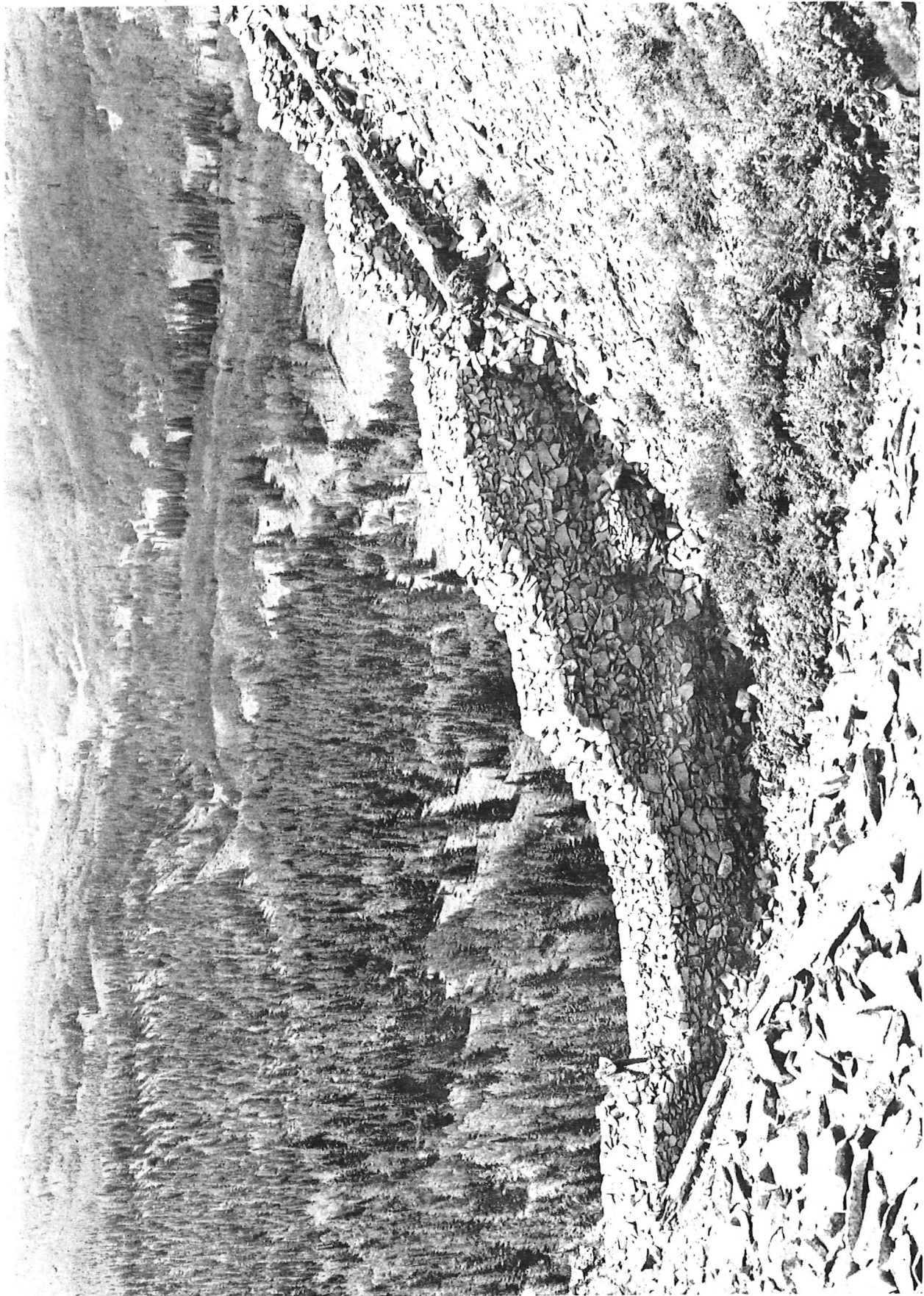
THE OHIO CREEK EXTENSION
of the

DENVER SOUTH PARK & PACIFIC

COMPILED AND DRAWN BY E. J. HALEY



This August, 1957 photograph was taken at the location where the great rock wall at the Ohio Creek Palisades first comes into view while proceeding along the lower grade.
Dan Peterson.



Dan Peterson.

Photographed from the stream bed above the great rock wall, this view looks southward down Ohio Creek Valley in the direction of Baldwin. The step-like process used in construction is clearly evident.

MARSHALL PASS

Marshall Pass owes its discovery, and its name, to a toothache. In the fall of 1873, Lieutenant William Marshall, commander of a survey party for the Wheeler Survey, was finishing up the summer's work in the San Juan Mountains near present-day Silverton when he came down with "one of the worst toothaches that ever befell a mortal". After declining an offer by a local blacksmith to remove the tooth, Marshall decided to leave the main party at the foot of Cochetopa Pass and seek a faster route back to a dentist in Denver, some 300 miles away.

Accompanied by packer Dave Mears (no relation to Otto), Marshall set off on muleback toward the break in the Continental Divide which would later bear his name. After six days, Marshall and Mears reached the summit, and with the thrill of discovery temporarily easing the pain of his infected tooth, Marshall decided to spend an extra day and night at the summit and prepare a survey of the area. Eight years later the Denver & Rio Grande would use the same measurements, with minor modifications, to build their line over the pass.

Marshall arrived in Denver four days ahead of the main party, having saved some 125 miles. After his much-needed visit to the dentist, he became somewhat of a local celebrity as the news spread of his exciting discovery of a new crossing of the Divide. Marshall was the first to suggest that the gentle slopes of the pass would be ideal for a railroad.

When word of the discovery reached the San Luis Valley town of Saguache, one of the local merchants was especially interested in the new pass. Otto Mears, a Russian immigrant, had already built his first toll road over Poncha Pass in 1867, the first of some twelve major toll roads he would build in the next 19 years.

On August 3, 1877, Mears chartered the Marshall Pass and Gunnison Toll Road, which would run from the Poncha Pass Toll Road to the building supply center of Gunnison. After many delays, the road was finally completed in June of 1880, and the Barlow and Sanderson Stage Company began service on the route that same month. The stage left South Arkansas (soon to be renamed Salida) at 7 A. M. daily, one hour after the arrival of the D&RG's overnight train from Denver, and reached Gunnison at 7 P. M. that same evening. A through ticket from Denver to Gunnison cost \$22.50.

After the Denver & Rio Grande tracks had reached Leadville in July of 1880, the company's president, General William Jackson Palmer, turned his attention toward the Gunnison country, which was already dotted with booming silver camps such as Ruby, Irwin, Tin Cup, Gothic, Lake City, and Ouray. That summer the D&RG began surveying both Marshall and Monarch Passes as possible railroad routes. Meanwhile, the Rio Grande's rival, the Denver, South Park, and Pacific was building a competing line into the Gunnison country via Chalk Creek and the Alpine Tunnel.

The threat of competition prompted the Rio Grande to choose Marshall Pass over Monarch Pass, since they could utilize the wagon road for part of the railroad grade. In the fall of 1880, the D&RG purchased the Marshall Pass Toll Road from Otto Mears for \$13,000, and began building toward the pass from Salida.

By mid-February of 1881, 1100 men and 150 teams were at work on the line. On March 26, 1881, the rails reached the site of Mears, which would later become Mears Junction when the Poncha Pass branch line was built. By the middle of April, the booming end-of-track town of Shirley had sprung up some two miles above Mears. Of the 14 large business tents in the camp, eight were saloons and dance halls. The next months there were 75 tents and buildings in the town.

Labor was hard to get, and keep, due to the bad weather, dangerous work, and the siren call of the mining camps, but work progressed steadily, and on June 21, 1881, the first passenger train reached the summit of Marshall Pass. On July 16, the first train reached Sargents, which soon enjoyed the same boom that Shirley had. On Saturday, August 6, the townspeople of Gunnison celebrated the arrival of

the townspeople of Gunnison celebrated the arrival of the first train into town, and two days later the line was hauling paying passengers into the district.

Meanwhile, the South Park was bogged down at the site of the 1772-foot long Alpine Tunnel, which was finally holed through on December 21, 1881, after 699 days of drilling. In September of 1882, the DSP&P reached Gunnison, losing the race for the district by more than a year.

Once the tracks reached Gunnison, the railroad began building westward through Sapinero and the Black Canyon of the Gunnison. In March of 1883, the rails reached Green River, Utah, joining the Rio Grande Western's tracks to Salt Lake City, fulfilling General Palmer's dream of a transcontinental route through the Rockies. From 1881 until 1890, when a standard-gauge line was completed over Tennessee Pass, Marshall Pass was an important link in the Rio Grande's "Main Line Through the Rockies".

The Silver Panic of 1893 sounded the death knell for the silver camps the line had been built to serve, and traffic decreased on Marshall Pass in the following years, punctuated occasionally by some excitement, such as a train robbery on July 15, 1902, and a visit from President Howard Taft on September 23, 1909, on his way to dedicate the Gunnison Tunnel near Montrose.

Off and on from 1912 to 1919, there was talk of standard-gauging the line from Salida to Montrose, but the company's shaky financial condition and failing mining industry prevented any further action. In 1920, a proposal was made to build a railroad tunnel under either Monarch or Marshall Pass, along with tunnels under James Park and Cumbres Pass, to be owned and operated by the State, but the proposal was voted down that November by some 10,000 votes.

In May of 1936, at the urging of local residents, the State Highway Commission approved Marshall Pass as the new route for U. S. Highway 50, appropriating \$1,250,000 for 26 miles of construction from Mears to Sargents. However, the route's supporters had not reckoned with Chief Engineer Charles D. Vail, who wanted to spend less money and improve the old auto road over Monarch Pass. Despite protests, rallies, and irate letters to the editor, Marshall Pass was snubbed, and the Monarch Pass road was opened to the public on November 19, 1939.

Meanwhile, the railroad had been steadily losing money on the line, and on November 24, 1940, the passenger train "Shawano" made its last run from Gunnison east over Marshall Pass. Although freight business picked up during World War II, after the war, trucks began getting a greater share of the business, travelling over Vail's Monarch Pass highway.

Passenger service returned to the line, however briefly, on September 18, 1948, when 300 railroad enthusiasts from the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club rode a double-headed excursion train from Salida to Gunnison. The following day, the group paid its last respects to the line through the Black Canyon of the Gunnison to Cimarron, returning over Marshall Pass that evening.

On December 9, 1953, the Interstate Commerce Commission authorized the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad to abandon the line from Salida to Gunnison and branch lines from Gunnison. Dismantling began in the summer of 1955 by Brinkerhoff Brothers Construction Company of Rico, the same company which had wrecked most of the Rio Grande Southern, and by October 1, the rails over Marshall Pass were gone.

The following July, the railbed was converted into a car road to serve the uranium mines on the west side of the pass. Until recently, one of these mines was still being operated by the Homestake Mining Company. In 1962 and 1963, the Western Slope Gas Company built a pipeline from the oil fields near Ignacio, Colorado, to Climax, utilizing much of the old railroad grade. Now logging trucks share the road with ranchers, fisherman, and campers.

As the years pass, more and more remnants of the railroad era are disappearing. The last of the water tanks still standing is at Sargents, and its days are numbered. Fortunately, the Pioneer Museum at Gunnison has preserved the Mears water tank and the Sargents depot, as well as Engine #268, a C-16 class 2-8-0 built in 1882 by Baldwin Locomotive Works, which had served the Rio Grande long and well on the Marshall Pass line until her retirement in 1955.

REFERENCES

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Historic Alpine Tunnel by Dow Helmers

Otto Mears: His Life and Times by Ervan F Kushner

The Great Gates by Marshall Sprague

ITINERARY -- Saturday, July 2, 1988

For our final day together, we will meet at the Gunnison Pioneer Museum on the east edge of town on US 50 (right across the street from Mc Donald's). We will tour the museum, which includes the Mears water tank and the Sargent's depot from the Marshall Pass line and the D&RGW's locomotive No. 268 and several other pieces of rolling stock. The little schoolhouse on the grounds is quite unique.

After our tour of the museum, we will drive east on US 50 to the former railroad town of Sargents, where we will have a short stop to view the water tank. As we start up the Marshall pass road, the grade will be below us. Soon we will be driving on the grade to the summit of Marshall Pass.

After lunch near the summit, we will continue on down the east side of the pass to Mears Junction and highway 285, where our week of ghost railroading will come to an end.

Although the trip officially ends here at Mears Junction, those of you driving back to Denver today are not finished with old railroad grades. First, we might suggest a visit at the museum at Buena Vista. It is in the old Chaffee County Courthouse (built in 1882) on East Main Street. The museum houses the Buena Vista Model Railroad. The layout includes the three lines that came into Buena Vista in the 1880's, the Denver, South Park & Pacific, the Colorado Midland, and the Denver & Rio Grande. The museum is opened until 4:30 pm.

Travelling up route 285, the grades of both the Colorado Midland (standard gauge) and South Park & Pacific (narrow gauge) can be seen at various places along the road. At times, the 2 lines parallel each other and at one point cross over each other. At Como the old stone roundhouse is being restored and a visit would be well worthwhile. If you are ready for dinner by the time you reach Como, we would recommend the old Como railroad hotel (called the Como Depot). From Como, DSP&P grade is on your left until it crosses over the road right where you start to climb up Kenosha Pass. At the top of the pass, the grade is on your right in the field.

