THE GUNNISON BRANCH OF THE DENVER SOUTH PARK AND PACIFIC RAILROAD

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A thesis submitted in partial
fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree

of

Master of Arts

by

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May 7, 1951

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to express her grateful appreciation for the valuable assistance rendered by many persons cooperating in this study. She is particularly indebted to Dr. D. H. Cummins, whose constant guidance and generous help conveyed the entire work to its completion. To Kirk Miller, Ross Griffin, Wallace Foster, Anne Flick, John R. Elliott, E. R. Williams, Norma Duree, Charles Duree, Victor Benson, State Historical Society, Denver Public Library, State Law Library, and the Gunnison Pioneer Society, the author is deeply indebted for helpful assistance in obtaining data for this work study, and to Dr. R. W. McCulloch and John Svenson for reading the manuscript.

J. R. B. E.

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CHAPTER I

THE ORGANIZATION AND EARLY CONSTRUCTION OF THE DENVER, SOUTH PARK AND PACIFIC RAILROAD

During the final years that Colorado was a territory, the minds of some of the greatest men of the time were contemplating the building of one of the most colorful narrow gauge railroad lines ever to be constructed. This railroad was the Denver, South Park and Pacific. The line was typified by the times in which it was built; these were the days of exploration, of fabulous mineral discoveries, and the days of the hardy individuals who were first to venture into unexplored territories and bring back word of the great fortunes to be had by those who had the courage to go forth and look for them. Contemporaries of the age were the fortune seekers of a different sort, the gamblers, dance-hall girls, and saloon keepers who were often more successful in keeping their fortunes than the others.

This was the boom period, the era in frontier history in which fortunes were made and lost almost over night. This was the period in which the Denver and South Park became more than just a dream of such far-sighted men as John Evans and the others of this railroad company. The history of this railroad follows the course of the boom, rising like a meteor and falling almost as rapidly into near oblivion. The story of this line is now a tale of the past, for all the narrow gauge sections of the road have either been abandoned or

converted to the broad gauge under different management.

The promise of the territory in which the Denver and South Park was to originally extend caused the railroad to be constructed. For many years prior to construction, reports coming from South Park and from the mining districts in nearby mountains, promised rich agricultural returns as well as a good traffic in the shipment of ore from the area. This area also had the attraction of large stands of virgin timber stretching as far as the eye could see.

Another reason, and probably this is one of the most important, for the construction of the Denver and South Park was the rivalry which existed between the towns of Denver, Golden, and Colorado Springs for the main center of commerce on the eastern slope of the Rockies in Colorado. It was a matter of survival for Denver to become the center of traffic. The Denver and Rio Grande of William J. Palmer[1] was to have Colorado Springs as its central point and William Loveland, backed by the Colorado Central-Union Pacific combine, hoped to make Golden the center of Colorado traffic. Both of these railroads planned to tap the traffic from the South Park region.

The first articles of association of the Denver and South Park

1. William J. Palmer controlled the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad which was the chief narrow gauge rival of the Denver, South Park and Pacific.

were filed in 1872,[2] these proved to be awkward and inadequate and the railroad was reorganized and expanded the following year. By this reorganization it was proposed to build a branch line from Denver to Morrison; the main line was to follow the Platte as the most plausible route to South Park. From this point the railroad intended to extend its road to the Arkansas Valley, follow this valley, and then pass over Poncha Pass to the San Luis Valley and Del Norte. From this town it was planned to connect with the San Juan Mining District and eventually to extend the line to the Pacific Coast by the most "plausible" route.[3]

The Denver and South Park was organized as a corporation under the laws of the Territory of Colorado and was authorized to locate, construct, operate, and maintain a narrow gauge railroad from Denver, Colorado, with a branch into Morrison. In 1874, the railroad had a capital stock of $3,500,000.[4] The trustees of the line were John Evans, Walter S. Cheesman, Charles B. Kountz, Henry Crow, D. H. Moffat Jr., John Hughes, and Leonard H. Eicholtz. The officers as chosen were: President, John Evans; Vice President, Walter Cheesman; Secretary, G. W. Kassler; Treasurer, Charles B. Kountz; Attorney, B. M. Hughes. Leonard Eicholtz was the chief

2. Frank Hall, History of the State of Colorado, Vol. IV, p. 53. Chicago: Blakely Printing Company, 1895.
3. H. C. Poor, Denver, South Park and Pacific, p. 117. (Denver: 1949), World Press. To be known hereafter as Poor, Denver South Park.
4. First Annual Report for 1874 of the Trustees of the Denver, South Park and Pacific Railroad Company to Its Stockholders (Made January 1st, 1875.). p. 6. New York: Ashton & Adams Publishers. [illegible] Report for 1874.

engineer for the railroad.[5] The men who backed the Denver and South Park were prominent business men of Denver. It was the reputation of these men which was to carry the road through many of its trying days of organization and finance.

The Denver and South Park hoped to partially finance their line by the backing of Denver. The bond issue was voted for the railroad by the citizens of Denver in July, 1873, and included the $200,000 that had previously been voted for such a line and an additional $100,000 asked for by John Evans. During these times the Denver and Rio Grande and the Colorado Central, by use of propaganda and pressure, tried to prevent the Denver and South Park from obtaining the needed money.[6] The prestige of John Evans saved the day when he gave the project his personal guarantee.

The vote authorizing the bonds acted as a go-ahead signal for the Denver and South Park. In August 1873, the first grading was started and the Morrison line was pushed forward as rapidly as construction material could be obtained. The main objective of the railroad was to build the line to South Park, but as a result of pressure from factions in Denver the line to Morrison was constructed first. In addition to the hauling of freight over this branch line, the Denver and South Park increased its revenue by excursions to Morrison.[7]

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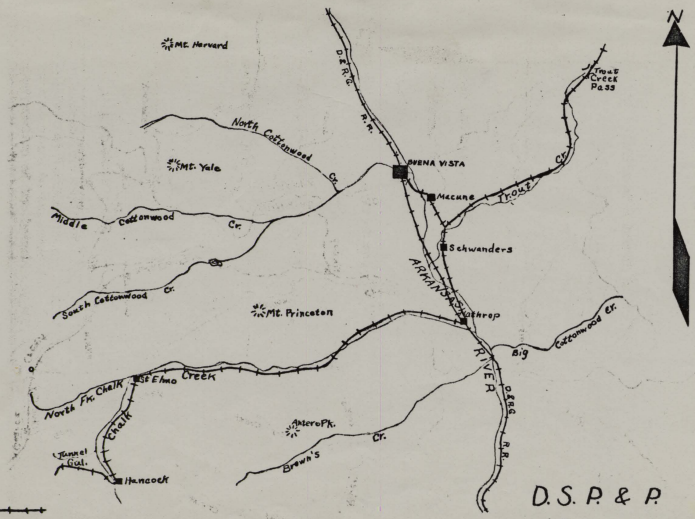
5. First Annual Report for 1874, p. 6.
6. Rocky Mountain News, July 23, 1873, p. 2.
7. [illegible], p. 7.


Mt. Harvard
North Cottonwood Cr.
Mt. Yale
Middle Cottonwood Cr.
South Cottonwood Cr.
Mt. Princeton
D.&R.G.
R.R.
BUENA VISTA
Nathrop
Trout Creek Pass
Trout Cr.
Mecha
Schwanders
ARKANSAS RIVER
Big Cottonwood Cr.
D.&R.G. R.R.
St Elmo
Creek
North Fk. Chalk
Chalk
Tunnel Col.
Hancock
Mere Pk.
Brown's Cr.
N
GUNNISON AREA
LEGEND:
D.S.P.&P. R.R.
TOWN
1/4 0 1 2 3 4 5
SCALE IN MILES
D.S.P.&P. R.R.,
ARKANSAS VALLEY

The Denver and South Park proposed to construct its main line from Denver to the Platte canyon. The route was to follow this canyon to Kenosha Pass and over the pass to South Park; thence through the park to the head of Trout Creek. From this point the line was to be extended to the Arkansas Valley.

Construction up the canyon of the South Platte was extremely difficult; the line had to be cut through cliffs of solid granite, places previously deemed impossible for any type of construction. When the line reached Kenosha its engineers were further tested by being forced to build grades that had previously been considered too steep for railway construction. It wasn't until the Denver and South Park had reached the valley of South Park that the construction problem eased. The building of the roadbed from this point on down the park was over almost level ground.[8]

Near the southern end of South Park the railroad left the park and followed Trout Creek to the Arkansas River and arrived at that point in 1880.[9] The sources of revenue for the railroad were from the hauling of ore, timber, and passengers from the Leadville and Fairplay districts. Instead of following the plan of construction to the San Juan area, the extension of the main line to Gunnison was begun.[10]

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8. Poor, Denver South Park, p. 143.
9. Rocky Mountain News, February 11, 1880, p. 2.
10. A line was constructed via Breckenridge to Leadville and was completed in 1884, over Boreas Pass.

CHAPTER II

THE BUILDING OF THE GUNNISON BRANCH OF THE DENVER, SOUTH PARK AND PACIFIC RAILROAD

The building of a branch route to Gunnison by the Denver, South Park and Pacific Railroad was considered as early as 1874. In the first annual report of the Denver and South Park in 1874, John Evans[1] anticipated the boom coming to the Gunnison country. The Denver and South Park had already sent surveyors to Gunnison to seek the easiest and shortest route over the Continental Divide to Gunnison. The route chosen by the Denver and South Park started from the terminus at Pacuma and followed Chalk Creek from Nathrop to Alpine Pass at an elevation of 11,606 feet. After passing over the divide, the route dropped down to Quartz, Pitkin, Ohio City, Parlin's Ranch and down the Tomichi to "Gunnison City".

The terminal point of the Denver and South Park in 1875 was located only a few miles from Chalk Creek in the Arkansas Valley. It wasn't until early spring, 1880, that actual construction of the proposed line to Gunnison was begun.

The promise of the Gunnison Bonanza was attracting gamblers,

1. John Evans was the first president of the Denver, South Park and Pacific Railroad, also the first governor of Colorado. Evans' report to the Trustees of the railroad strongly urged construction of the branch line to Gunnison. He believed that Gunnison would be of great importance in the coming growth of Colorado.

girls, financiers, and prospectors who made the money for the others to take. The basis for the bonanza was the reports coming from the Gunnison country of new discoveries of gold, lead, and silver. There were also reports of new mineral discoveries in the vicinity of Chalk Creek. Added to the promise of precious metals was the report of an excellent quality of anthracite coal.[2] Large amounts of jack pine were easily accessible for timbering the mines, for railroad ties, and for shipping. The coal fields of Gunnison were extensive and it was believed that this interest alone should be sufficient to support a large population. From reports from this region, the anthracite, bituminous, and connel coal discovered here by tests was found to be of the very best quality, and was proved to be of excellent coking quality.[3] "The Railroad company is, no doubt, striking boldly for Gunnison, not so much for the purpose of opening up the mining interest as to secure the valuable coal deposits which are known to exist there."[4] The Denver and South Park gained control of the coal deposits on Anthracite Creek.

The gold, silver, and lead mines were located on the headwaters of the Gunnison River, in what was known as the Elk

2. "The Unclaimed Bonanza of Gunnison Valley", Rocky Mountain News, February 24, 1880, p. 5.
3. First Annual Report for 1874 of the Trustees of the Denver, South Park and Pacific Railroad Company to Its Stockholders (Made January 1st, 1875), p. 21. New York: Asher and Adams Publisher. This publication will be known hereafter as the First Annual Report for 1874.
4. Rocky Mountain News, February 5, 1880, p. 2.

Mountain District. In the vicinity of the silver mines were Union Gulch, Ohio Gulch and Washington Gulch, placer gold mines which previously had been worked for a number of years.[5]

At the terminal point of the Denver and South Park were the large Hot Mineral Springs of Chalk Creek which were celebrated already for their curative properties. Twenty miles below these springs were the Poncha Creek Hot Mineral Springs where another health resort could be established. Also twenty miles above this point were the "celebrated Twin Lakes" with trout fishing, near the falls of Lake Creek. "Here will doubtless grow upon the isthmus between these beautiful lakes, in 'the Switzerland of America,' the Interlaken of Colorado."[6]

Fifteen miles from these lakes, near an excellent trout stream, adjacent to the Arkansas River, at Colorado Gulch, were extensive soda springs of excellent quality, "bubbling up on a beautiful grassy slope, extending far away to the south into the open valley below." This area was described as "surrounded above by groves of evergreens, with snow capped mountains, rising in full view on either side of the valley to the east and the west, this is one of nature's enchanted spots, and will doubtless become a great resort for pleasure seekers, when made easily accessible by the construction of your railroad."[7]

5. First Annual Report for 1874, p. 21.
6. Ibid., p. 22.
7. First Annual Report for 1874, p. 23.

The Denver and South Park proposed to construct a wagon road by way of the Chalk Creek mines to Gunnison which would provide the most direct route to the Los Pinos Indian Agency and to the great San Juan mining region in the south western part of Colorado. From the terminal point of the Denver and South Park an excellent road led over Poncha Pass. There was already extensive travel over this road to Saguache,[8] the county seat of Saguache County, and to Del Norte and other points in the "San Luis Park". This was often used as the route to the San Juan mining country.[9] The Poncha Pass road was used by a line of stagecoaches from Canon City. This route carried nearly all of the trade and travel from Northern Colorado and the east, via Canon City, Colorado Springs, and Denver to the San Juan mines. It was the hope of the Denver and South Park to connect with this traffic and perhaps to act as a carrier by diverting this traffic to their line.[10]

The great dream of the first officers of the Denver and South Park was to eventually establish a railroad that would connect with the trade from the Pacific Coast. The farthest west the route ever came was to Gunnison. The inability of the Denver and South Park to achieve this dream was probably caused by the decline of mining, from this the decline of transportation and of passenger service, the source of most of their revenue. An important factor not to be forgotten was the eventual

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7. [illegible] was spelled Saguach or Sawatch.
8. [illegible] Annual Report for 1874, pp. 22-23.
9. Ibid., p. 22.

control by the Union Pacific, as Jay Gould attempted to and finally gained control of the Denver and South Park by buying the stock of the little railroad.

The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad was the chief rival of the Denver and South Park. In an attempt at cooperation between the two rival narrow gauge lines, a compromise was signed on October 1, 1879, forming a traffic contract by which the Denver and South Park would run into Leadville on the Denver and Rio Grande track, and the possibility of the extension to Gunnison was considered.[11]

Agreement between The Denver South Park and Pacific R. R. Company
and
The Denver and Rio Grande R. R. Company
dated October 1st, 1879

Article I: That for the purpose of harmony and mutual profit it is agreed that the party of second part shall build from the point of junction of the lines of their respective roads at Buena Vista in the Arkansas valley, to Leadville or Malta, on which the party of the first part shall have equal rights and privileges in perpetuity, for which it is to pay eight per cent per annum, payable monthly, on one-half of the cash cost thereof, and pay one-half of the expense of maintenance and repairs. In case of further extension of main line or branches of the main line between Buena Vista and Leadville the party of the second part shall build the same, and the party of the first part have like rights thereon on the like terms as above set forth.

Art. II: The party of the first part shall build its line by way of Chalk Creek and Alpine Pass to and through the country drained by the Gunni- [illegible] junction, and the party of the

11. [illegible] News, February 11, 1880, p. 8.

second part shall have like rights on like terms with the Leadville line and with any branches and extensions that may be built from the main line thereof.
3rd: Should the party of the first part wish to go south of its line to Buena Vista to start its Chalk Creek line, it shall have the right to occupy the track of the road of the party of the second part on joint trackage as aforesaid to the most eligible point of departure from the same, or should it desire to extend its line to the valley of the Gunnison from any point further south, the party of the second part shall build so much of its line promptly to such point, and give trackage to the party of the first part with like rights and on like conditions as provided for in the line to Leadville. PROVIDED: the point of divergence and pass over the mountains to be used shall be mutually agreed upon.
—The earnings of the Gunnison extension to be pooled to Denver as provided for above from time a point of business is opened.[12]

In the fall of 1880, the Denver and Rio Grande began construction of an extension of its road over Marshall Pass.[13] The Denver and South Park considered that this construction was a violation of the agreement signed in 1879. The lawyers of the Denver and Rio Grande could find nothing in this agreement that prohibited the construction of a line to Gunnison by the Denver and Rio Grande. The Denver and Rio Grande took the attitude that the South Park was infringing upon territory considered to

12. From the Denver and Rio Grande Archives in the custody of the State Archivist, Division of State Archives, State Historical Society of Colorado. The witnesses to this document were Jay Gould (Denver & Rio Grande Railroad Company) and John Evans (President of Denver, South Park & Pacific) and William J. Palmer (President of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad Company).
13. Arthur Ridgway, Denver & Rio Grande Development of Physical Property in Chronological Narrative, p. 22. January 1st, 1921 (Unpublished) Archives, State Museum. This work will hereafter be known as Ridgway, Denver & Rio Grande Development.

be that of the Denver and Rio Grande.[14]

"The presence of the South Park in such close proximity to what had always been considered Denver & Rio Grande territory aroused great anxiety on the part of the pioneer railroad."[15] The Denver and Rio Grande felt great "apprehension" when they realized that the Denver and South Park was contemplating building a road into the Gunnison area.[16] The Denver and Rio Grande puts forth the idea that the Denver and South Park "were prepared to expend large sums for construction purposes because of their strong financial backing."[17] The Denver and Rio Grande feared the backing it believed the Denver and South Park to have.

The contention of the Denver and South Park that the Denver and Rio Grande was violating the agreement of 1879 was based on the proviso that allowed the Denver and Rio Grande to use any line the South Park might build into the Gunnison country. This would have included like terms for the Denver and Rio Grande on the South Park road that the South Park held on the Leadville line of the Denver and Rio Grande.

From 1880, the race was on. The question became, who would reach Gunnison first? The route chosen by the Denver and South

14. Ibid., p. 14.
15. Ridgway, Denver & Rio Grande Development, p. 14.
16. This stand of Ridgway is not consistant with the agreement signed in 1879, for that agreement had taken into consideration the possibility of the Denver and South Park's construction of a line into the Gunnison country.
17. Ridgway, Denver & Rio Grande Development, p. 25.

Park proved to be the more difficult.

One of the main points of rivalry between the South Park and Pacific and the Denver and Rio Grande was the question of the coal banks of the Elk Mountain District. Another point of rivalry was the search for the easiest route to the Western Slope, and both companies had their surveying parties in the Gunnison area searching for a suitable route. The surveying party for the Denver and Rio Grande reported that the Denver and South Park had sent an engineering party into the canyon on Anthracite Creek between Mount Gunnison and Mount Marcellina.[18] This point was about ten or twelve miles from where the surveying party for the Denver and Rio Grande was working, on the south side of Mount Gunnison near Coal Creek. The Denver and Rio Grande hoped to cut out the Denver and South Park by cutting down Coal Creek, then to Anthracite Creek.[19]

The final choice for the route of the Denver and South Park was decided. The South Park line was to be extended to Nathrop, from here the line was to follow the course of Chalk Creek to the Collegiate Range. The plans of the railroad were to either tunnel through Alpine Pass or to cross by means of a switchback.

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18. This point is about thirty-five miles northeast of Gunnison.
19. Reports of Surveys, p. 254, (unpublished) sent from near Irwin on Anthracite Creek, by Edward Braddock, head of the surveying party for the Denver and Rio Grande. From the Denver and Rio Grande Archives in the custody of the State Archivist, Division of State Archives, State Historical Society of Colorado.

After crossing the range the route was to follow Quarts Creek to its junction with Twinkl Creek,[20] and follow this creek to Gunnison. Before beginning the branch to Gunnison, the South Park and Pacific was 133 miles from Denver.

As early as 1874, the Denver and South Park had determined that the best possible construction for its proposed line should be that of the narrow gauge. This, they determined by the reports received from the Denver and Rio Grande. These reports showed economy both in construction and efficiency of the three feet gauge railroad. The narrow gauge had proved particularly advantageous on routes passing through close canyons and for following steep mountain sides.[21]

The average expense of the narrow gauge traveling through mountainous districts was equal to that of the broad gauge in flat open country. The broad gauge would have required such extensive rock excavation and tunnels that the expense of construction would have been prohibitive. The narrow gauge could avoid most tunnels and heavy cuts in passing through the mountains. It could also avoid impracticable curves or grades. "The adaption of the narrow gauge to mountain roads; and the great reduction in proportion of dead weight to the tonage of the road, enable it to profitably operate steeper grades."[22]

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20. This point was then known as Parlin's Ranch, today it is Parlin.
21. First Annual Report for 1874, p. 26.
22. Ibid., p. 26.

By the middle of February, 1880, the Denver and South Park had reached the Arkansas River. The railroad people were determined to immediately push their line over the divide into Gunnison.[23]

The people of Gunnison waited anxiously in 1880 to find out if the intentions of the Denver and South Park were serious. They were gratified to learn on May 15, 1880, that Governor Evans had telegraphed word to Howard Evans, secretary of the West Gunnison Town and Land Company, that orders were being sent by mail instructing him to prepare for the construction at once of the passenger depot, and to grade the track for the main line. The contracts for this proposed construction had already been let. The construction of the railroad was of particular importance to the people because of the extremely high cost of goods brought in by wagon train.[24]

The Denver and South Park was working to put its line into Gunnison as rapidly as possible.[25] By August 24, 1880, the line had been extended to Heywood Springs, thirteen miles beyond Buena Vista. Passenger and freight trains were running to the end of the line at Heywood Springs. These trains carried passengers

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23. Rocky Mountain News, February 11, 1880, p. 8.
24. "They Mean Business", Gunnison Review, May 15, 1880, p. 2. The railroad was expected in Gunnison by the first of November, 1880.
25. Rocky Mountain News, July 2, 1880, p. 5.

and freight for Alpine, Hillerton, and Virginia City.[26]

Construction of the Denver and South Park proceeded up its course on Chalk Creek with little difficulty. Construction from this point on proved much more difficult. It was here that Chief Engineer Evans decided that the easiest and the most practical construction for the railroad would be to tunnel under Alpine Pass rather than to cross the range by switchback. Construction of a tunnel through Alpine Pass would require a bore that was 1,820 feet in length. By November of 1880, 220 feet of the tunnel on the Pacific side of the watershed was completed and 170 feet on the Alpine side of the range. Evans expected the tunnel to be completed by the following May.[27] He had not taken into consideration either the severe weather conditions that the Denver and South Park were to contend with that winter or the shortage of labor.

During the winter of 1880 the laborers had to sink a shaft thirty feet in depth through packed and frozen snow to reach their excavation. During the violent storms on the Pass, the workman in going to and from their cabins to work had to move in gangs to avoid being lost in the snow. Frequently the clothes of the workmen were frozen to their skins. The supplies for building the tunnel and for feeding the workmen had to be brought in over snow

26. Rocky Mountain News, August 24, 1880, p. 5. The name of Virginia City was later changed to Tin Cup.
27. Rocky Mountain News, November 2, 1880, p. 3.

seven feet in depth, and because of the severe wind this snow was often piled in drifts from fifty to sixty feet in depth.[28]

Even though the wages for the workers were considered high for the times, men did not care to undertake the hazardous jobs of the construction. The Denver and South Park continued all during the years of construction to advertise in the Denver papers and those further east for workers for the job.[29]

The prices of provisions for the workers were extremely high. Flour was selling for thirty dollars a sack, bacon was thirty-three cents per pound, powder was ten dollars per keg, and butter was ninety cents per pound. Everything else was in proportion. Provisions taken into the area were taken on snow shoes and sleds and the cost of hauling was seventeen cents per pound. As a result all commodities were scarce.[30]

The Denver and South Park was unable to complete the Alpine Tunnel until January, 1882. The bore of the Alpine Tunnel cut through the main range of the Rocky Mountains at an elevation of 11,525 feet. The bore, upon completion, was 1,776 feet in length, and was 16 1/2 feet high and 13 feet wide. The bore was cut through a formation of slide rock, boulder, and decomposed granite, and was timbered with 500,000 feet of California redwood, besides being lined with 1,500,000 feet of false timbering

28. Rocky Mountain News, January 9, 1882, p. 8.
29. Rocky Mountain News, November 23, 1880, p. 2.
30. Rocky Mountain News, February 25, 1880, p. 5.

of the California redwood. The cost of the wood including the freight charges on the Central Pacific was about $80 to $110 per thousand feet. The contract cost of the tunnel was $275,000.[31]

The Alpine Tunnel was considered one of the engineering marvels of the time.[32] When the workmen came together in the tunnel, the two bores were less than an inch off. Eloquence was used to describe the tunnel:

> Southwest of Denver 150 miles, where the mountains of the Continental Divide are on the grandest and most colossal scale, where the silvery peaks are daily bathed in clouds, and the valleys at their feet sink to depths the sun but briefly lingers in, and where winter blends with summer while the lower world is sweltering, a new trail has been blazed. It has been hewn from the eternal granite to heights so dizzy that naught remained but to pierce their pedestal. This done, a wonderland,—the new silverland of Gunnison—lay 3,000 feet beneath, and from the effort to descend came some of the most marvelous engineering feats the world has ever seen. Up this trail and through this tunnel and down to the depths beyond glides the iron horse and the accompanying Pullman Palace with a progress as steady and safe as a pathway of solid rock and heaviest steel can suggest.[33]

The Alpine Tunnel when built was the first to pierce the main range of the Rockies and was the highest railway tunnel in either Europe or America.[34]

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31. Rocky Mountain News, January 9, 1882, p. 8.
32. One of the proposed marvels to be built in this Age of Railroads was contemplated in the possible construction of a tunnel under Niagara Falls. Rocky Mountain News, February 23, 1881, p. 6.
33. [illegible] Rocky Mountain News, September 2, 1882, p. 6.
34. [illegible], p. 6.

The railroad grade for the Denver and South Park had been completed by the late fall of 1880 on the approach to Alpine Pass. The South Park had to do extensive rock cribbing at the Palisades on the western slope of the range and also at Sherrod. These two trouble spots held up the Denver and South Park, however, the real trouble spot was the tunnel under Alpine Pass. After completion of the tunnel the Denver and South Park was ready to push its line as rapidly as possible into Gunnison.

The Denver and South Park employed a force of 150 men to push the line into Gunnison. The rails were 30 feet in length, and were laid at the rate of one each minute and a half, or 1,200 feet an hour, making progress over two miles a day.[35] By September 2, 1882, the Denver and South Park had reached the outskirts of Gunnison. The Denver and South Park was reported to have had trouble with the Denver and Rio Grande, though the rapidity with which it finished its line from San Juan Avenue in Gunnison to the depot discredits this rumor.[36] The Denver and Rio Grande's

35. Gunnison Daily Review Press, September 1, 1882, p. 6.
36. From the Daily News-Democrat, September 2, 1882, p. 3, comes the story purporting to show a conflict between the two rival lines. The events and celebrations as well as a report of the Gunnison Daily Review tends to disprove this story. It read as follows: "Trouble is brewing between the Rio Grande and South Park roads about the crossing of the two tracks on San Juan avenue. In order to get to its depot on the West Side, the South Park must cross the line of Denver and Rio Grande's Crested Butte branch, and that is just where the trouble comes, for the Denver and Rio Grand don't seem to want to let them do it.

Yesterday Mayor Moses sent the Marshall down to notify the agent of the Denver and Rio Grande that the crossing must be opened, and the Marshall came back with a flea in his ear,

only requirement for crossing its line was the cross-frogs required by law for such a crossing.[37]

After crossing the divide the Denver and South Park was greeted by beer, cigars, and the townspeople. The local dignitaries and townspeople of Gunnison staged a celebration to welcome the South Park on its arrival in Gunnison. "Gunnison Day and the completion of the new railroad observed in one grand out-pouring of people fully demonstrates that there is no spirit of retrogression in this favored region." The South Park celebrated the occasion by a special excursion train to Denver.[38]

The new problem for the Denver and South Park was to connect with the coal fields of the Elk Mountains and Anthracite Creek. The Denver and Rio Grande had reached the coal fields at Crested Butte in 1881. The Alpine Tunnel and the steep curvatures on the west side of the slope had placed the Denver and South Park about a year behind the Denver and Rio Grande in the

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having been told that San Juan avenue had been vacated for railroad purposes, and was not, therefore, a public thoroughfare, and that therefore, the City Fathers had no authority in the matter. Mr. Gullett, the Denver and Rio Grande Attorney, it is also said, has notified His Honor to keep his hands off. The City Attorney has been instructed to look the matter up, and the Mayor swears by seven different kinds of blue lightning that, if the city had the authority to open the crossing, it will be opened or he will know the reason why.

There were rumors flying around town last night that the Denver and Rio Grande were bringing men here to 'hold the fort', but so far as could be learned there was no truth in them. To-day may develop something, however." The Review reported this story as being "made of whole cloth".

37. Gunnison Daily Review Press, September 2, 1882, p. 4.
38. Daily News Democrat, September 2, 1882, p. 8. Rates for the special excursion were $11.50 for the round trip.

race for the Gunnison trade. The Denver and South Park had secured the right-of-way for a line up Ohio Creek to the Elk Mountains from Captain Louden Mullin, Sylvester Richardson, and others of the Carbon, Gunnison, and Lake City Railroad. These men had secured the right of way before any lands had been filed upon along its route. The stocks, rights, and franchises of this company were transferred to the South Park Company. It was at this time that it was resolved to locate the depot of the Denver and South Park in West Gunnison, the section of the town which had been laid off and was owned by Richardson and Mullin and by the Denver and South Park Company.[39] It is interesting to note here that for many years, West Gunnison was the business center of the area.[40]

The Denver and South Park met little difficulty in the construction of the line to the Elk Mountains.[41] The construction of this line lay over relatively flat country and so it did not present the obstacles presented by the rest of the line. At the time, the Denver and South Park did not propose to end its line at the Elk Mountains; it proposed to follow Anthracite Creek to the North Fork of the Gunnison River, follow

39. Rocky Mountain News, March 25, 1880, p. 8.
40. The location of the depot in West Gunnison probably enhanced the value of this town site. Louden Mullin had frequent large advertisements in the Rocky Mountain News advertising [illegible].
41. Many of the finest ranches in Gunnison had been cut up by the railroads, though the Review reported that the matters were settled satisfactorily.

this river to the Grand River, and push the line to Utah. The Denver and South Park, however, never pushed its line beyond what is today known as Baldwin. One of its main objectives for coming into the Gunnison country had been achieved when it reached the coal fields of Anthracite and the Elk Mountains.

The Denver and South Park was to operate successfully until about 1934. After this time except for a four year period of receivership under Frank Trumbell, the line was usually in financial difficulty. Even at the time of abandonment it was mortgaged.

CHAPTER III

THE TOWNS ALONG THE ROUTE OF THE GUNNISON BRANCH OF THE DENVER, SOUTH PARK AND PACIFIC

The towns that grew up along the route of the Denver, South Park and Pacific on its Gunnison Branch most frequently grew from the discovery of precious metals found in their vicinity. Others along the line were junction points for areas of trade and travel. Gunnison particularly acted as a hub for the surrounding mining areas, as a trading center. Most of these locations saw their rise and fall with the boom and decline of mining. After the "slacking off" of mining few of these towns survived, and those that died have left faint reminder of the boom days as ghost towns. Those that survived had to change the basis of their economy to agriculture.

MACUNE

Macune was the terminal point of the Denver and South Park in 1880 when the railroad reached the Arkansas River. It was located on the east bank of the Arkansas. Macune lost its identity after the line was extended to Buena Vista, when the railroad no longer needed a stopping point at the former place. Even at the time of its use, Macune never amounted to more than a few buildings,[1] its only value being that of a point of terminus.

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1. H. H. C. Poor, Denver, South Park & Pacific, p. 436. Denver: World Press, 1949. To be known hereafter as Poor, Denver South Park.

SCHWANDERS

Schwanders was the junction point of the new line built from Trout Creek to Nathrop to connect directly with the line to Gunnison in 1884. The location was named after Benjamin Schwanders who had first settled in the area. Schwanders served as a refueling station for the Denver and South Park, also several families of section crews lived nearby. The small settlement had to contend with the floods of Trout Creek after the turn of the century, and because of this fact was completely abandoned by the Denver and South Park.[2]

NATHROP

Nathrop is located at the confluence of the Arkansas River and Chalk Creek. The population of the town reached two hundred in its heyday. The little community, started by Charles Nachtrieb, at one time boasted of a hotel,[3] and was a railroad station for both the Denver South Park and Pacific and the Denver and Rio Grande. Nachtrieb constructed a flour and grist mill and a sawmill near Nathrop; the power for running the mills was received from a dam built on Chalk Creek.[4] Today Nathrop consists of only a few buildings.

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2. Poor, Denver South Park, p. 426.
3. The name of this hotel at Nathrop was the Nachtrieb Hotel.
4. Poor, Denver South Park, p. 427.

ST. ELMO[5]

St. Elmo was located at the foot of Mount Princeton at the junction of the north and south forks of Chalk Creek. St. Elmo was situated in the heart of the Chalk Creek mining district and it was connected by toll roads with the Aspen, Tin Cup, Gunnison, and Monarch mining districts. These toll roads served as a large source of revenue for St. Elmo. At one time, a proposal was made to build a branch road from the Denver and South Park to Tin Cup in Taylor Park. The road was to be through a tunnel under the divide, but was never completed. St. Elmo rose and fell with the different mining booms near the little town. Today the town is a mere ghost of its former self, a tourist resort for fishing is the only business. A few dilapidated shacks remain from the boom days.

HANCOCK

Hancock grew from the mining boom, the result of a shift in mining population from Alpine. This small community located about three miles from the eastern portal of the Alpine tunnel was also the main residence of the workers building the east side of the tunnel; Hancock also possessed a sawmill to process the large amount of jack pine that was on the surrounding slopes.[7]

5. The original name of St. Elmo was Forest City.
6. Poor, Denver South Park, pp. 429-30.
7. Poor, [illegible] pp. [illegible]

The small town had a bitter enemy in the slides that continually thundered down the mountain side and often destroyed large sections of the town.

WOODSTOCK

Woodstock was a station stop for the Denver and South Park after cutting through the divide. There were some mines which gave a boost to this town which was built almost 10,000 feet above sea level. Woodstock, at its peak, had a population of almost 200. The terrible weather conditions of the divide worked havoc on this small community, too.[8] Today, Woodstock is a deserted pile of rubble.

QUARTZ

Quartz boomed with the discovery of silver in the mountains nearby. It was only nine miles from the bonanza area of Tin Cup,[9] and about three miles above Pitkin at the junction of north and middle Quartz Creeks. Besides mining, Quartz also produced large quantities of timber from the great stands of jack pine growing nearby. After the mining discoveries gave out, Quartz served as a mere passing point for the railroad, and is now only a ghost of the past.

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8. The little community was destroyed by a snowslide in 1934. Further reference to this slide will be made in Chapter IV.
9. Gunnison City, The Future Metropolis of the Western Slope, p. 16, published by the Board of Trade of Gunnison City, August 1st, 1882.

PITKIN[10]

Pitkin was located in the "beautiful" valley of Quartz Creek on a plain one and one-half miles long and one-half mile wide. It was surrounded by high mountains covered with heavy timber to the summits.[11] In 1879, Pitkin had only three cabins, but by the following year there were more than 120 cabins. This area was boosted by the discovery of over fifty new ore deposits during 1880. The land surrounding the town was covered by grass growing to the depth of three feet.[12]

The Quartz Creek district of which Pitkin was the center was one of the richest mining districts in the state in gold and silver.[13] The population of this boom town reached 3,000 and could boast of a newspaper, a bank, and numerous saloons and stores. Pitkin's boom was like that of the other towns, it was to decline as soon as the mining did. Pitkin is now a partially deserted town, it still has lumbering, some trade from nearby ranches, and during the summer, tourist trade brings some new life to the little community.

OHIO CITY

Ohio City was located in the district known as the Gold

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10. Pitkin was originally named Quartzville, but after incorporation the name was changed to Pitkin after Governor Pitkin.
11. Rocky Mountain News, February 5, 1880, p. 2.
12. Ibid., February 5, 1880, p. 2.
13. Gunnison City, p. 14.

Belt which contained many veins of free milling gold ore. During 1882 it was having one of the most unprecedented booms in the Gunnison country.[14] Its main source of revenue in later years was silver and the early 90's declined as did the price of silver. The Carter Mine[15] for many years after the turn of the century gave another boost to Ohio City, until it was closed in 1942. More recently the purchase of the Carter Mine, as well as other mining properties, has consolidated the gold producing properties in this area and promises a return of activity to Ohio City.[16]

PARLIN'S RANCH

Parlin's Ranch was begun as a dairy ranch by John Parlin. It was located at the confluence of Quartz Creek and Tomichi Creek. During 1880 a post office was established, three stores were erected, and a "substantial" hotel was built and put into operation.[17] It was here that the Denver and South Park and the Rio Grande met and ran on parallel tracks to Gunnison. An interesting story says that John Parlin gave the Denver and South Park the right of way through his property on the condition that their trains would stop next to his dairy so that the passengers and trainmen could have time for drinking a

14. Gunnison City, p. 15.
15. The Carter Mine is a gold mine which before closure produced five thousand dollars worth of ore every two days.
16. Gunnison News-Champion, March 22, 1951, p. 1.
17. Rocky Mountain News, November 23, 1880, p. 2.

glass of milk.[18] It was hoped at one time to erect a large town here and it was proposed to survey a townsite, though it was never done.[19] The main source of revenue then, as now, was the business brought from surrounding ranches. Parlin, as it is known today, is no larger than it was in 1880: a general store, some tourist cabins, and a school.

GUNNISON

Gunnison acted as the hub for the many mining districts in the surrounding hills. It had been incorporated as a city in 1880, and had a reported population of about 5,500 people in 1882.[20] Gunnison in 1882 could boast of two daily newspapers, the Daily News-Democrat and the Gunnison Daily Review-Press; two railroads, the Denver South Park and Pacific and the Denver and Rio Grande;[21] a gas and water works; a telephone system; a hack system that they hoped to displace by a street car system;[22] as well as many new places of business.[23] Gunnison

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18. Poor, Denver South Park, p. 441.
19. Rocky Mountain News, November 23, 1880, p. 2.
20. Gunnison City, p. 4.
21. The following item of interest was taken from the Rocky Mountain News, November 23, 1880, p. 2. "Not a little excitement has arrison at this point over the rumor that the Rio Grande people were to make this (Jack's Cabin) and not Gunnison City the metropolis of the Gunnison country. It has been a diverging point and headquarters for freightors and prospectors ever since the Gunnison excitement broke out. The location for a city is certainly a good one."
22. The first line for Gunnison's street car system was to start at the Denver and South Park depot and followed New York Avenue east and then cut over to the Court House. According to several residents the line was laid, but never used.
23. Gunnison City, pp. 4-6.

was claimed by many to be second only to Denver in Colorado as to importance.[24]

Gunnison was situated on a sloping plain near the junction of Tomichi Creek and the Gunnison River. It was from here that Gunnison drained the rich mining fields of Tin Cup, Irwin, Ruby, Same town Taylor River, Poverty Gulch, Gothic, Crested Butte, Spring Creek, O-Be Joyful, Slate River, Elko, Scofield, Sheep Mountain, Silver Basin, Dark Canon, Washington Gulch, Rock Creek, Brush Creek, and many other camps lying north of Gunnison and in other outlying areas in the vicinity. Among Gunnison's other natural advantages were anthracite and bituminous coal beds stretching from Crested Butte to Mount Carbon. It was proposed many times to make Gunnison the Pittsburgh of the West because of the accessibility of coal, lime, and iron ore running sixty to eighty per cent of metallic iron.[25]

Another of Gunnison's attributes was the fact that building stone could be obtained from the quarries not far from the town.[26] The Denver and Rio Grande built a spur line to the Aberdeen Quarry south of Gunnison. Material from this quarry was used for the construction of the State Capitol in Denver. Within a few miles of Gunnison were large bodies of clay suitable for making building bricks. By 1882 four brick yards were

24. Rocky Mountain News, November 23, 1880, p. 2.
25. Gunnison City, p. 27.
26. Ibid., p. 7. These quarries produce a fine quality of limestone; the Aberdeen quarry produced granite.

in operation putting out 400,000 bricks per week.[27]

Gunnison was very highly advertised as a health resort, offering a climate with dry air, clear and bracing: "The winter climate is simply delightful. The thermometer often goes below zero, but the air is so dry and still, that the cold is not felt, and people there suffer less at twenty degrees below zero than they would in the east at ten to twenty above."[28]

Gunnison began its career as a boom town with the usual gamblers, girls, prospectors, and fortune seekers, after the end of the bonanza in 1885, it looked for its prosperity from small mines, cattle ranches, fishing and tourist trade, and later Western State College. It now became a town of "substantial citizens" and assumed an air of permanence.

BALDWIN[29]

Baldwin was located at the junction of the Denver and South Park's spur lines to the Baldwin and Kubler mines. The country around Baldwin was covered with pine and aspen trees, at the nearby Elk Mountains large amounts of big game were

27. Gunnison City, p. 30.
28. Ibid., p. 7.
29. Baldwin was originally called Castleton, the name was changed in 1883, and was called Baldwin after the late private secretary of A. A. Egbert, Superintendent of the Colorado Division of the Union Pacific Railroad. It was hoped that the deceased man's father, Judge Baldwin, of Omaha would make large investments at Baldwin. Gunnison Daily Review-Telegram, July 9 and 16, 1883, pp. 3 and 1. At different times this place was called Mt. Carbon and Alpine.

found and fresh mountain trout was taken from Anthracite Creek. The coal mines in the area were owned by the Denver and South Park and were operated by the railroad for a short time. Later these mines were operated by the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company.[30] At one time there were extensive coke ovens here and the mines at the time were producing 600 tons of coal a day. At the present time these coal mines at Baldwin have been closed and have not been in operation for several years.

The Elk Mountains marked the end of the westward construction of the Denver South Park and Pacific Railroad. As the towns along this narrow gauge line failed, the railroad also declined. Eventual abandonment of the road was inevitable with the decline of business and the shift of population to other areas. This phase will be discussed in Chapter V.

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30. Poor, Denver South Park, p. 445.

CHAPTER IV

THE OPERATION OF THE GUNNISON BRANCH OF THE DENVER SOUTH PARK AND PACIFIC

The operations of the Gunnison Branch of the Denver South Park and Pacific were closely allied with the operations of the other lines of the railroad. There are several factors to be considered with the operations of the line: the controlling interest of the Union Pacific purchased from Jay Gould, the types of freight haul by the railroad as its main source of revenue, the weather hazards encountered by the line on the Divide, and the "family type" of excursions the railroad offered to the people of Gunnison and the surrounding area.

Jay Gould and his associate Russell Sage began a scheme to consolidate the Union Pacific, the Kansas Pacific, and the Colorado ~~Pacific~~ Central in 1873. They made overtures to the South Park in the hope of gaining a connecting link with Leadville. Gould gained his foothold in the company by the purchase of a one-fourth interest in the South Park Construction Company which was associated and owned by the men of the South Park. Gould also offered his backing in building the line to Leadville, but the business of the railroad had become so good by this time that

the offer was refused.[1]

Gould succeeded in consolidating the Union Pacific, the Kansas Pacific, the Denver Pacific and Colorado Central lines, and since he owned a large part of the Denver and South Park he decided to obtain the absolute control of the system. Evans refused every offer of Gould's except a "hundred cents on the dollar". Gould assumed control of the Denver and South Park during January, 1880. The South Park used the lines of the Denver and Rio Grande until the Joint Operations Agreement was revoked by the latter.[2]

Shortly afterward the railroad was purchased by the Union Pacific from Gould and operated by them for a number of years. The reasons for the purchase of the line are made clear by a statement of Jay Gould's:

> A railroad manager protects his property from invasion by other roads by throwing out feeder lines, or purchasing same. This will keep a competitive road out. This feeder system protects and holds their territory...The amount of business that the South Park was bringing out to give some Eastern road was very great. It also furnished a market for a very large amount of Kansas products. In the mineral country, they have to bring in every thing they use.[3]

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1. Frank Hall, History of the State of Colorado, Vol. IV, p.55, Chicago: Blakely Printing Company, 1895. To be known hereafter as Hall, Colorado.
2. Hall, Colorado, p. 55.
3. Poor, Denver South Park, p. 198. Jay Gould was first and always a financier, speculating in railroads. He held large interest in the Union Pacific, the Kansas Pacific, the Missouri Pacific, and many other railroads, using them for an ever-more and more money for himself regardless of the good of the road.

Gould realized a profit of $629,120.26 by the resale of the South Park to the Union Pacific,[4] who could profit by the control of this line as a feeder to its system. The purchase of the line appeared to have been to control competition rather than to improve and expand the South Park. The policy of the Union Pacific was to discriminate against the short haul in favor of the long haul.[5]

The mines in the Gunnison area were at peak production during the years from 1880 to 1885. They produced huge amounts of ore of silver, gold, lead, and zinc, the latter two usually being found in veins with the precious metals.[6] The business of the South Park was so good that it was forced to increase the number of men working at the machine shops in Gunnison. "There is no question but that the increase of business will compel the Union Pacific to make a great number of other improvements here."[7] The Baldwin mines in 1883 were shipping seven car loads of coal a week to the smelters in Golden, and equally as much for private use in Leadville, besides the amount that was shipped to other points.[8] Despite the good business that the Gunnison area provided, the Union Pacific failed to give much

4. Poor, Denver South Park, p. 199.
5. Poor, Op. Cit., p. 274.
6. The Gunnison Daily Review-Press tells repeatedly through these years of the large quantity of ore being taken from these mines in the Gunnison area.
7. Gunnison Daily Review-Press, September 13, 1883, p. 3.
8. Ibid., September 11, 1883, p. 2.

consideration to the traffic from Gunnison and followed a policy of "do nothing" as far as it was concerned for many years.[9]

Gunnison had heralded the arrival of the Denver and South Park as an event which would promise a great future for the mountain community:

> . . .this newly completed line brings to memory in vivid contrast the days of stage coaches and circuitous and indirect railway routes and connections, and well prefaces other substantial benefits as a result of the completion of the magnificent Union Pacific railway system to this rich Gunnison valley.[10]

The many proposals of the South Park to extend its line beyond the Gunnison country were never brought to reality. The Union Pacific system of railways had been welcomed as a connecting link with all the important centers of traffic which would furnish to the people of Colorado the shortest and quickest route to such points.[11] The line became instead a pawn of big business interests. The South Park after 1887 was constantly in the hands of a receiver.

Rather than extending the Denver and South Park to Irwin and Ruby, the company negotiated for a stage line to connect with the road at Baldwin.[12] The contemplated stage line was formally established August 6, 1883, and was to take passengers

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9. Gunnison Review-Press, July 20, 1889, p. 1.
10. Daily News Democrat, September 2, 1882, p. 8.
11. [illegible] August 24, 1883, p. 2.
12. [illegible] Review-Press, August 4, 1883, p. 3.

once a day from Baldwin to Irwin and Ruby.[13] The introduction of this line made the quickest trip for travelers from Gunnison to those mining camps.[14]

By the end of 1883, there was more demand for Baldwin coal than the miners could produce. The payroll of the mine had doubled in a month's time and still the amount produced was insufficient to meet the demand. A great deal of the coal being produced was used by the railroad, and much of the coal was being taken to the smelters at Leadville and Golden.[15] The Baldwin mines continued to produce large quantities of coal and by 1888 were shipping 500 tons per day.[16]

The line from Baldwin also carried loads of lumber. The first of these loads of lumber was taken out in August, 1883, and provided another source of traffic for the railroad.[17]

The Denver and South Park again fostered the hope that its line would be extended to Irwin.[18] Several of the officers of

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13. Gunnison Daily Review-Press, August 6, 1883, p. 4.
14. Ibid., August 11, 1883, p. 8. The fare on the line was $2.70 to Baldwin and return, $4.00 round trip to Irwin.
15. Ibid., September 11, 1883, p. 2.
16. Ibid., August 9, 1888, p. 1.
17. Ibid., August 23, 1883, p. 1.
18. In a reprint from the Silver World (Lake City, Colorado) the Gunnison Daily Review-Press, July 20, 1883, p. 1, it was reported that the Denver and South Park was making preliminary surveys to Cebolla and Lake City. "Courage, citizens. San Juaners! Our day is dawning. Hang on, abide with us, laborers, miners, business men, old-timers and new comers. Lake City will be the best town in the

the line came to Gunnison in 1883 to look for a prospective route to the region. It was hoped that the business from Baldwin would give impetus to the proposed project, but again the idea fell through.[19] The railroad in 1883 was concentrating its effort on the construction of its highline route over Boreas Pass to Leadville,[20] because of its loss of the use of the Rio Grande tracks. The Denver and Rio Grande had given the necessary six months notice for discontinuance of the Joint Operations Agreement shortly after the South Park had been taken over by the Union Pacific. They later entered suit against the Union Pacific in the District Court of Colorado for occupying their line from Nathrop to Leadville for one year and nine months. Afterward they asked damages of $350,000 from the Union Pacific for its use of the line in the intervening time.[21] The great burst of mining excitement that had struck Gunnison passed away after 1883 and had died out almost entirely by 1885.

> While it is true that many superior mines of gold and silver were discovered and many extensively opened, distance from markets, high transportation charges, the collapse of local reduction works, disappointment in not finding vast beds of carbonate ores worth millions, the severity of the winters

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country, and the day is not far distant." Later the Review-Press, August 13, 1883, p. 2, ran this item, "Recent movements of the Union Pacific folks, both in Leadville and other points, would seem to indicate that the South Park road has its weather eye on the great and glorious San Juan. If so, Gunnison will prove a dangerous rival for Pueblo and Denver, both in smelting and Commerce, mind!" As far as the South Park was concerned this project never materialized.

19. Gunnison Daily Review-Press, August 17, 1883, p. 2.
20. [illegible]
21. Ibid., September 23, 1882, p. 1.

> in the high altitudes and the lack of capital for investment, together with the general decline of interest after the blow which struck Leadville in 1881-82, all combined to bring about depression in Gunnison.[22]

The great influx of people during the boom period consisted largely of those without money or provisions. They refused to work in the operated mines and followed the boom towns in the hope of finding wealth with little or no effort. "They were neither builders, laborers nor producers, simply drift."[23] The country lost heavily in population after the craze and left only a handful of "sturdy workers".

This shift in population and the decline of mining would naturally have affected the traffic of the Denver and South Park; there would be less demand for products in Gunnison, and still less to be hauled from the territory. In addition to this difficulty, the railroad had the ever present problem of bad weather on the Continental Divide.

During the period of construction of the line over the Divide and through Alpine Pass, the weather had been a source of difficulty for the railroad. After the road began operation the trouble continued. The first winter that the line operated brought enormous difficulties, for by January, 1883, the snow had begun to fall in great amounts.[24] The Denver and South Park

22. Hall, Colorado, p. 149.
23. Hall, Op. cit., p. 149.
24. [illegible], January 3, 1883, p. 3.

was forced to build snow sheds on the east side of the range between Hancock and the tunnel. They had to rush the construction of a mile of new snow sheds in order to continue operation.[25]

By the middle of January, 1883, the trains were running hours behind schedule and as the Daily Review-Press summed up the situation: "It is evident that a terrible storm is raging on the range".[26] When these bad storms struck the divide, it required the use of three engines to cross the range. By the twentieth of January, freight trains were abandoned because of the storms.[27]

Every year brought the same difficulties for the South Park, and the line had to be abondoned or partially abandoned during the winter months.[28] It was rumored several times that the Denver and Rio Grande would operate the Denver and South Park lines between Baldwin and Pitkin "while the S. P. enters its hole (Alpine Tunnel) and pulls the hole in after itself for the winter."[29]

The inability of the Denver and South Park to keep the line open over the Divide meant that during four to six months a year, the railroad was restricted in its business to local trade. One

25. Gunnison Daily Review-Press, January 3, 1883, p. 4.
26. Ibid., January 17, 1883, p. 4.
27. Ibid., January 18, 1883, p. 1.
28. Ibid., January 20, 1883, p. 2.
29. Ibid., September 10, 1887, p. 1.

of the worst accidents to befall the line occurred the following winter on March 10, 1884, as a result of the tremendous snow-fall that season.[30]

On the evening of March 10, 1884, at about six o'clock, an avalanche of snow and ice destroyed the little town of Woodstock. All the buildings of the settlement were swept away with the slide. Woodstock was about three miles from the western portal of the Alpine Tunnel near the two large curves just below the mountains as tracks wound to the summit of the range. The slopes of the mountains had previously been covered with a heavy growth of pine, but this stand had been cut by the railroad for use in construction, and left the mountainside bare and especially susceptible to the slides.[31]

At the time of the accident, there were no engines available in Gunnison, as they had all been "snowed in" at Baldwin,[32] and not until four days after the accident were the trains able to make their way to Woodstock. By that time thirteen bodies had been recovered from the slide; they were J. D. Brown, George Alexander, Mike Shea, Joseph Cassvell, James Tracy, one unidentified man, Andrew Doyle, Christopher Doyle, Martin Doyle, Katie Doyle, Marcellia Doyle, and Maggie Doyle. The last six of the dead were the children of a Mrs. Doyle, a widow, who

30. Gunnison Daily Review-Press, March 11, 1884, p. 1.
31. Ibid., March 11, 1884, p. 1.
32. Ibid., March 14, 1884, p. 1.

ran a boarding house for the railroad at Woodstock. The disaster wiped out her entire family. Five people were taken alive from the snow, Mrs. Doyle, Miss Dillon, neice of Mrs. Doyle, and three railroad workers, Peter Wallpoole, Walt Hale, and Hugh Alexander. Miss Dillon had been found standing among the timber that had been carried down by the slide and covered by the snow. She had been under the snow about fifteen hours when she was discovered, and had become quite weak from exposure.[33]

The work of digging out the slide went on for forty-eight hours without stopping. The injured were taken to Pitkin by sled and cared for by the people there.[34] The town of Woodstock was almost completely abandoned after the slide. Drifts and snowslides continued to harass the railroad in this section during the following years and winter was equally severe in the other areas of the Gunnison region.[35]

The following winter the Alpine Tunnel was closed because of the snow. In many subsequent seasons the tunnel could not be reopened until June or later.[36] It wasn't until September, 1885, that the South Park line into Gunnison was opened again for traffic.[37]

33. Gunnison Daily Review-Press, March 13, 1884, p. 1.
34. Ibid., March 13, 1884, p. 1.
35. Ibid., March 14, 1884, p. 1.
36. Rocky Mountain News, April 3, 1887, p. 7.
37. [illegible], September [illegible], 1885, p. 8.

During the years that the Denver and South Park operated under its original name, or until it went into the hands of a receiver, it acted as an integral part of the community. Frequently during these years the railroad sponsored excursion trains for the citizens of Gunnison, and while such trips were a source of revenue they made the line more a part of the community life. There were special church excursions and those organized solely from local interest, or perhaps the holiday type of excursion.

One such excursion was held on the fourth of July, 1883, for the celebration of that holiday, and in order that the citizens of Gunnison could become better acquainted with the new Baldwin line.[38] The people of Castleton prepared a banquet of fresh venison, fresh trout, and other game from the region for excursionists from Gunnison.[39] They were also taken on a tour of the Baldwin coal mines. Large groups of people went on these tours offered by the railroad.[40] The South Park usually offered special rates for G. A. R. Conventions, for the "Jocky Club Races" in Denver, and for special expositions or any other type of convention in any town along its line.[41] The railroad continued through its years of operation to offer special rates for conventions or other special occasions.

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38. Gunnison Daily Review-Press, July 3, 1883, p. 1
39. Ibid., July 3, 1883, p. 4.
40. Ibid., July 3, 1883, p. 1.
41. Ibid., October 13, 1883, p. 5.

Immediately after the Union Pacific had taken over the Denver and South Park, it had instituted a policy in favor of the long haul to utilize the line as a feeder to the Union Pacific. In applying their new policy, they paid little attention to "the roads' peculiarities and the difficulties which the owners had encountered in obtaining and holding business."[42] One of their policies which was to bring ruin to the Gunnison branch was the suspension of the construction beyond the Elk Mountains[43] although a great deal of expense had already been incurred on the project. The initial survey had been taken,[44] the grading had been done,[45] and the ties had been purchased.[46]

Another policy or scheme directly affecting the Gunnison branch was the cheap hauling of fuel from the Missouri River to Leadville. There was a dollar per ton hauling charge on the fuel to Denver, and no charge from there to Leadville. From 1880 to 1884, the Denver and South Park showed great profit, $6,644 per mile, but from 1884 until 1889 the line showed great loss.[47]

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42. Poor, Denver South Park, p. 274.
43. These plans had been suspended with the completion of the line to Baldwin in 1882.
44. Ridgway, Denver and Rio Grande Development, p. 22.
45. The old grading of the Denver and South Park still exists on what is today known as Swampy Pass above Baldwin.
46. Poor, Denver South Park, p. 277.
47. Poor, Op. cit., pp. 278-279.

In May, 1887, the Farmers Loan & Trust Company of New York went before the District Court of the United States in Denver and asked that a receiver be appointed for the Denver and South Park.[48] The following October, the holders of the consolidated bonds of the Kansas Pacific instituted suits against Jay Gould and Russell Sage as trustees and asked for their removal and for their "accounting receiver". These suits came as a result of the railroad commission's investigation in the other connecting branches of the line.[49] In November, the receivership of the Denver and South Park was applied for.[50] At the sale in Denver on July 17, 1889, the Denver, South Park and Pacific, under foreclosure of mortgage, was sold to Fred D. Tappan, W. H. Hollister, and Francis L. Leland, representing the bondholders of the property.[51] Immediately after the sale, the Union Pacific asserted its authority in the matter and filed papers of incorporation for the Denver, Leadville and Gunnison Railway Company.[52] From that time on the Denver, South Park and Pacific as such, no longer existed.

The articles of incorporation of the Denver, Leadville and Gunnison stated that the company's object was to purchase the Denver, South Park and Pacific. The capital stock of the new

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48. Poor, Denver South Park, p. 230.
49. Gunnison Review-Press, October 20, 1887, p. 2.
50. Ibid., November 27, 1887, p. 1.
51. Ibid., July 20, 1889, p. 1.
52. Ibid., July 20, 1889, p. 1.

company was set at $3,000,000.[53] The incorporators of the new line were officers and associates of the Union Pacific.

It was hoped in Gunnison that the sale would result in better management which would improve the road, and that competition would again bring down the freight prices. "The Rio Grande Express Company has been 'cinching' our people most unmercifully in its charges for express."[54] What the people of Gunnison failed to realize was the fact that the Denver and South Park was under the same management although it didn't have the same name.

The year after its sale and renaming, the South Park was under the control of a new corporation, the Union Pacific Denver & Gulf Railway Company.[55] This company was "associated" with the Union Pacific and its subsidiaries. By this time the Union Pacific controlled all the local lines in Colorado that they could reach. The management of the South Park continued the policy that had previously been pursued by discriminating against the short haul. The repeal of the silver purchasing section of the Sherman Act in 1893 wrought havoc with many of the mines which shipped over the South Park. The repeal of this act would most certainly have a strong effect on a railroad whose principle haul was ore, which was particularly true of both the Gunnison

53. Gunnison Review-Press, July 20, 1889, p. 1.
54. [illegible]
55. Poor, Manual [illegible], p. 280.

and Leadville branches of the road. The railroad lost heavily after this period and again went into the hands of a receiver, Frank Trumball, in 1894.[56]

The Gunnison branch of the South Park had maintained mostly local business in the years from 1888 to 1894, for during this time the Alpine Tunnel had been closed by a cave-in. Any traffic that the line might have controlled had to be rerouted over Marshall Pass and carried by the Denver and Rio Grande.[57]

No attempt was made to open the Alpine Tunnel until Receiver Trumball[58] took over the management of the railroad. When he came on a tour of inspection to Gunnison in October, 1894, he announced that the question of opening the Alpine Tunnel had been breached at a board meeting held in New York. The board had been in favor of reopening the tunnel, and proposed to begin the work of clearing away the debris as soon as possible the following summer. Trumball also announced that, "My principle instructions were to cut down expenses as much as possible in order to bring the road on a paying basis."[59] "The policy of Receiver Trumball is that the entire line shall pay expenses or close down."[60] One of the first acts of the new

56. Gunnison Tribune, September 8, 1894, p. 1.
57. Poor, Denver South Park, p. 235.
58. Trumball's interest in opening the line may have been affected by the fact that he held part interest in the Baldwin mines.
59. Gunnison Tribune, October 20, 1894, p. 1.
60. Ibid., September 8, 1894, p. 1.

management was to dismiss the agent at Pitkin as an economy measure.[61] Trudball returned in November to check on the conditions of the road and announced in that short time that the line was operating at a profit.[62]

It was determined at that time that the Alpine Tunnel could be reopened for several thousand dollars,[63] while before it was thought that the minimum cost would be at least $100,000.[64] The job of reopening the tunnel was to begin the following spring as soon as weather conditions should permit.

→ The Alpine Tunnel had been abandoned several years previously because of a cave-in about 250 feet from the eastern entrance. In the intervening years more debris had fallen and filled a larger section. The construction of the tunnel was designed so that each approach to the summit in the tunnel was considerably up grade, the highest point being about the center of the tunnel. It was constructed in this manner to enable the large amount of water to drain from the interior. Since the cave-in occurred near the eastern entrance of the tunnel, there was no avenue of escape for the water and it backed up for quite a distance inside the tunnel, and prevented workers on either side from removing the debris.[65]

61. Gunnison Tribune, September 8, 1894, p. 1.
62. Ibid., November 23, 1894, p. 1.
63. Ibid., November 23, 1894, p. 1.
64. Ibid., October 20, 1894, p. 1.
65. Ibid., June 14, 1895, p. 1.

In June, 1895, the work of opening the tunnel was begun. Mike Flavin and Nathan Martenis were selected to supervise the work because they knew better than any one else the exact conditions in the tunnel and what would be needed for the job. These men were in a large measure responsible for the decision to open the tunnel, "for leading the receiver of the road to become satisfied that it was an excellent stroke of wisdom to again open the Alpine Tunnel route." It was through their efforts that the line had stayed in operation during the years while the railroad had been severed from the rest of the line.[66]

Mike Flavin planned to aid the work by sending an engine into the tunnel to syphon the water out so that operations could begin at both ends. Flavin failed to realize the danger of such a move; the engine had a very hard time keeping up steam because it lacked oxygen. The fireman had to put on the blower to correct the difficulty. Mike Flavin, Nathan Martenis, Michael Byrnes, and Elmer England had entered the tunnel on the engine. The gas from the engine in the 1,800 foot tunnel was too much for the men. Nathan Martenis was found dead with his hand still on the throttle while the engine had gone out of control and run into the nearby debris. Mike Byrnes was found dead in about two feet of water and Mike Flavin was dead at his post. Elmer England was the only one who escaped the deadly gas. He was rescued by Andy Lejune who had brought his miners to aid in

66. Gunnison Tribune, June 14, 1895, p. 1.

the work.[67]

Despite this tragedy, the work on the tunnel continued. Trains were running through the tunnel by the middle of July, and the management advertised the Alpine Tunnel as the most scenic attraction on its route. The opening was celebrated by a special tour coming from Denver for fishing and scenic sights.[68]

During the receivership of Frank Trumbell, the South Park operated at a profit, however, the bondholders of the road worked to form a new corporation and to remove the line from receivership. Their aim was accomplished in November, 1898, when both the South Park and the Colorado and Gulf roads were sold at auction. The two lines were merged under the name of Colorado and Southern. Frank Trumbell, who had managed the road so successfully during the receivership, was retained as the president of the new railroad. "The new line has excellent financial backing and proposes to become one of the most progressive of western roads."[69]

The Colorado and Southern from this time controlled the "old South Park" until its abandonment beginning in 1910. Even at this time, the South Park had its troubles; the ever present weather problem still had to be met and proved to be the final undoing of the railroad.

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68. [illegible], [illegible], p. 2.
69. [illegible], [illegible], p. 2.

The South Park's survival was only a matter of time. It received a "transfusion" about the turn of the century when some deep, goldbearing quartz veins, previously overlooked, brought a brief boom in traffic.[70] After this increase in trade died out, it took only a small cave-in in the Alpine Tunnel in 1910 to bring a decision from the management to abandon that section of the line.

The South Park during its period of operations carried as its main source of revenue the ore from the booming mining districts; coal from the Baldwin mines, timber from various saw-mills in Gunnison County, and some cattle from the ranches. The haul into the district was made up mainly of food supplies, mining supplies, general merchandise, and also passenger traffic. But as the mining declined so did the revenue of the railroad. The South Park was known as an "ore road", and it depended on this traffic for its livelihood.

The Denver and South Park could boast of the latest in railroad equipment; Pullman sleeper, Horton chair cars, observation coaches, steel rails, rock ballast, air brakes, besides eating houses and "everything obtainable for the comfort and safety of passengers". The line was over eighty miles the shortest route between Denver and Gunnison.[71]

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70. Poor, [illegible] Pp. [illegible].
71. [illegible], August 24, [illegible], p. 4.

> The South Park was reputed to maintain the most luxurious service out of Denver, and the miners of the period favored it particularly because of the convenient racks for poker chips in the smokers and the presence of a massive safe for the accommodation of their surplus currency.[72]

Despite all the dreams of the founders of the Denver and South Park, its period of activity was short lived. All the enterprises that they had hoped would give life to the railroad either failed to materialize or were short lived after they came into existence. The "get rich quick" idea had been foremost in the minds of the majority of the people who came to Gunnison, and when wealth did not materialize they left as suddenly as they had come.

It has often been said that the men of the South Park road were tough, for if they had not been their chance of lasting on such a line as the South Park would have been slight. The hazards from the weather and the rugged country were enough to have made this true.

The Denver, South Park and Pacific faded into oblivion as rapidly as it had appeared.

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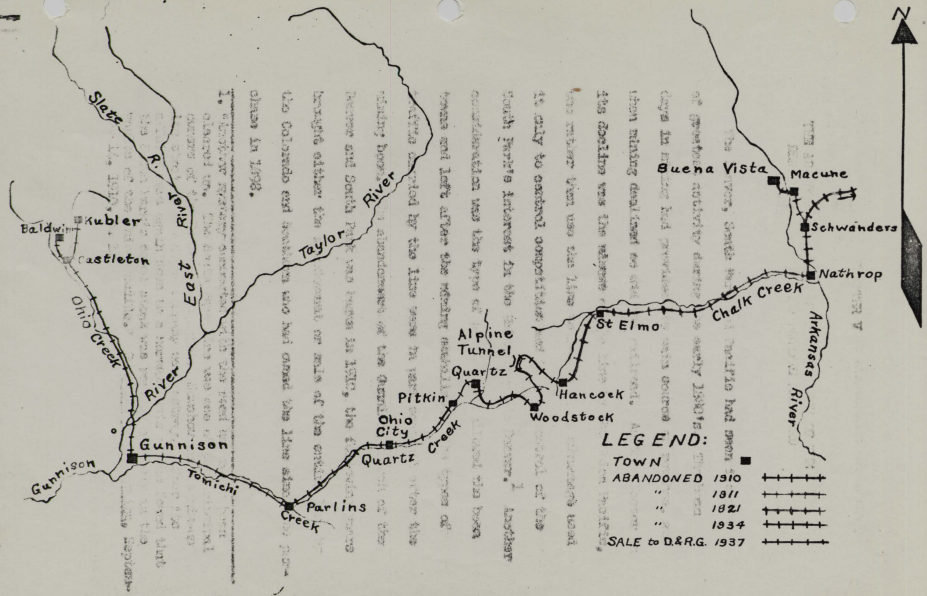
72. Richard Lee Logan, The Economic Reasons for the Abandonment of Railroads and Portions of Railroads in Colorado, p. 47, (Masters Thesis), 1949, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado.



ABANDONMENT of GUNNISON BRANCH
D.S.P.&P.

CHAPTER V

THE ABANDONMENT OF THE GUNNISON BRANCH OF THE DENVER, SOUTH PARK AND PACIFIC RAILROAD

The Denver, South Park and Pacific had seen its days of greatest activity during the early 1880's. The boom days in mining had provided its main source of revenue, and when mining declined so did the railroad. Another factor in its decline was the misuse of the line by the Union Pacific, who rather than use the line to its greatest advantage used it only to control competition and to gain control of the South Park's interest in the Union Depot in Denver.[1] Another consideration was the type of people who followed the boom towns and left after the mining stabilized. The types of traffic carried by the line were in part seasonal after the mining boom. The abandonment of the Gunnison branch of the Denver and South Park was begun in 1910, the following years brought either the abandonment or sale of the entire line by the Colorado and Southern who had owned the line since the purchase in 1898.

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1. "Another mystery connected with the road has never been cleared up. The South Park line was one of the principal owners of the Denver union depot. Somehow in the mix-up its stock in the depot company went astray. After its affairs were again down to a normal basis it was found that the South Park's depot stock was resting securely in the vaults of the Union Pacific." Gunnison News Champion, September 14, 1910, p. 1.

The final blow which caused the abandonment was a small cave-in in the Alpine Tunnel October 10, 1910. The cave-in was of a minor nature,[2] but the Colorado and Southern decided at the time to close the tunnel for the winter. What this actually meant was the permanent closing of the tunnel, a move which cut the Quartz, Gunnison and Baldwin sections from the rest of the line. Arrangements were made to haul the ore from Pitkin and Ohio City and the coal from Baldwin sections out over the Rio Grande lines.[3] It was provided that mixed trains would run daily between Gunnison and Pitkin and also between Buena Vista, St. Elmo, Fairplay, and Denver on the eastern end of the line. The Leadville branch of the South Park was also to be closed. The tracks of the railroad could not be torn up because both the Alpine and Boreas sections of the tracks were covered by mortgages.[4] They were not removed until 1923.

Prior to 1920, railroads did not have to secure the permission of the Interstate Commerce Commission to abandon sections of their lines, therefore these sections of the line were abandoned at the discretion of the Colorado and Southern.[5]

The abandonment of the Denver and South Park was a particularly

2. Poor, Denver South Park, p. 336.
3. The rapidity with which the railroad officials made this move would lead one to believe that it had been contemplated for some time.
4. Gunnison News-Champion, September 14, 1910, p. 1.
5. Poor, Denver South Park, p. 336.

hard blow to the cattlemen of Gunnison for the line provided the shortest route by almost a hundred miles to Denver.[6] This meant pounds lost on their cattle. All traffic going in and coming out had to be taken over the Rio Grande.[7] If the Denver and South Park had desired to keep the road open, there was the possibility of through traffic from the Western Slope. This would have required a seventy-five mile extension of the line, a change to the broad gauge, and a new two and one-half mile tunnel under Alpine. According to the News-Champion, the line was missing the greatest industrial opportunity of the time by not connecting with the rapidly developing agricultural country west of Gunnison. The certainty of the coal, cattle, hay, fruit, mail, and passenger traffic would have made the outlay slight in comparison with ultimate return.[8]

> News-Champion has labored long and hard to arouse the Western Slope to the need of this extension, and the railroad management to the opening before them. We admit it has been like a voice in the wilderness, but the necessity is here and the opening is before the railroad.[9]

Despite the opposition to the closing of the line, the section from Quartz to Hancock was abandoned in 1910. The following year the section of the road from Gunnison to Parlin was abandoned. This left the section of the line from Pitkin to Quartz entirely disconnected from the rest of the line.[10] This segment

6. Gunnison News-Champion, September 14, 1910, p. 1.
7. Ibid., September 14, 1910, p. 1.
8. Ibid., September 14, 1910, p. 1.
9. Ibid., September 14, 1910, p. 1.
10. Lovett, Economic Reasons for Abandonment of Railroad, p. 125.

of the line was taken over and operated by the Denver and Rio Grande. The Denver and Rio Grande paid their own operating expenses, but the Colorado and Southern paid the taxes on the line, and did not receive any rent for the use of the line.[11] The rails on the section from Gunnison to Parlin were taken up in 1923.[12]

The rails on the section from Quartz to Hancock were also taken up in 1923.[13] These sections of the railroad had been abandoned prior to Interstate Commerce Commission requirements, so no cause had to be given for their abandonment. In 1921, the Colorado and Southern applied to the Interstate Commerce Commission for permission to abandon the section from Macune to Hancock which also included the section to Buena Vista. Permission to abandon this line was granted in 1923,[14] and the tracks were removed in 1926.

The section from Parlin to Quartz was operated by the Denver and Rio Grande until 1934. That year the Colorado and Southern and the Denver and Rio Grande filed a joint petition to abandon that section of the line.[15] Permission was granted, leaving Baldwin as the only section of the South Park still in operation. This portion of track which had been operated by the Denver and

11. Interstate Commerce Commission Reports, vol. 193, p. 441. To be known hereafter as I. C. C. Reports.
12. Poor, Denver South Park, p. 389.
13. Poor, Op. cit., p. 389.
14. I. C. C. Reports, vol. 82, p. 311.
15. Ibid., vol. [illegible], p. 337.

Rio Grande since 1911, was purchased from the Colorado and Southern in 1937.[16]

The first section that had been abandoned was the part over Alpine, between Quartz and Hancock. This was only a distance of 13.5 miles[17] but it was important as a connecting link with the rest of the line. The reasons given for the abandonment were the adverse weather conditions on the Divide.[18] Bad weather operated to the detriment of the railroad because it interrupted traffic for long periods of time during the winter months and often lasted into the summer. "While operating expenses on normal narrow gauge lines are roundly three times as much as on standard gauge, the operating expenses over Alpine Pass were probably five times as great."[19]

The next section to go was that portion from Parlin into Gunnison which ran parallel with the Rio Grande tracks. Since the traffic in the Gunnison area was at a low ebb, the Colorado and Southern gave as their reason for the abandonment, insufficient business to maintain the road. The lack of business and the competition was said to have caused the Colorado and Southern to "capitulate".[20]

That portion of the track from Macune to Hancock was next

16. I. C. C. Reports, vol. 221, p. 337.
17. Logan, Economic Reasons for Abandonment of Railroads, p. 125.
18. Logan, [illegible]
19. Poor, Denver South Park, p. 371.
20. Logan, Economic Reasons for Abandonment of Railroad, p. 126.

on the list for abandonment. According to the Colorado and Southern report on this section, it had been kept in operation for the benefit of several mines near Hancock. These mines provided the only traffic for the railroad from that area. The mining had suffered a severe depression during World War I, and had never recovered sufficiently from this blow to give the railroad enough traffic to maintain the road.[21]

The total population served by the railroad in this area amounted to only 993, of which all but 90 lived in Buena Vista. The Colorado and Southern reported that the people in the area did little to patronize the line. Another argument offered by the railroad was that this portion of line was entirely isolated from the rest of the railroad since the section east of Nazune had already been abandoned.[22]

The Colorado and Southern stated that operating revenues, in 1922, had amounted to $5,813, while operating costs and taxes were $59,482. During that year only 1,865 tons of ore had been carried, even though the railroad had offered a fifty cents per ton reduction on any ore being shipped to Leadville.[23]

The Colorado and Southern contended that the railroad bed could be easily converted to a road and that the ore taken from

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21. [illegible], vol. 82, p. 311.
22. Ibid., vol. 82, p. 311.
23. Ibid., vol. 82, p. 311.

this area could readily be hauled by wagon or truck to Nathrop where it could be loaded on the Denver and Rio Grande.[24] The Interstate Commerce Commission granted permission on the evidence provided for the abandonment of this section.

Application for the abandonment of the Parlin to Quartz line was made by the Denver and Rio Grande and the Colorado and Southern in 1933. This was the section of line which extended through the valley of Quartz Creek. The principal stations in this area were Ohio City and Pitkin, neither of which were agency stations. Ohio City had a population of 72, and Pitkin had a population of 228. The total population served by the railroad in this area was 465.[25]

There were several gold and silver mines in the area, however, with the exception of one, none of these mines shipped on the railroad. This one mine shipped two to five car loads of concentrates a week. It was noted by the Interstate Commerce Commission that there were very good possibilities for lumber in the area, though these had not been developed sufficiently.[26]

The arguments of the two railroads were that the line was laid with 35 and 40 pound rails which were about 50 years old. The rails were so worn and bent that they would require

24. I. C. C. Reports, vol. [illegible], p. [illegible].
25. Ibid., vol. [illegible], p. [illegible].
26. Ibid., vol. 199, p. 338.

replacement, added to the fact that the banks of the roadbed were badly eroded. The cost of repair and replacement would be at least $162,158. Prior to 1931, tri-weekly train service had been offered to the area, but this had been extremely difficult to maintain because of weather conditions during the winter months. The railroad also contended that though there was some lumber business in the area and some metal ores were being taken out, this business had steadily been declining.[27]

The figures as presented by the Colorado and Southern and the Denver and Rio Grande showed that the line had a net deficit of $32,649 for the previous year, and similar deficits for the preceding years. The operating expenses for the line were $17,774 and the taxes on this section amounted to $19,365. Revenue for that year amounted to $4,490 for this section of the road.[28]

The line of the railroad was parellaled by a road, so it was argued that trucks could successfully handle any of the transportation needs of the area. The railroad also contended the annual deficits were reason enough for the abandonment of the line, and that in future years if it continued to operate, the deficit would be even larger because of the need for repairs on the line. Permission was granted for the abandonment and the

27. I. C. C. Reports, Vol. 193, p. 331.
28. Ibid., Vol. 193, p. 338.

rails were removed in 1934.[29]

In July, 1937, the Rio Grande petitioned the Interstate Commerce Commission for the right to acquire the Baldwin branch of the Colorado and Southern which they had been operating since 1911. By the proposed agreement, the Colorado and Southern was to furnish the Rio Grande with sufficient 70 pound rails to re-lay the entire line, and the Colorado and Southern was to receive the scrap material taken up during the re-laying of the line.[30] This move of the Colorado and Southern was to sever for all time any connection it had with the Gunnison branch of the Denver, South Park and Pacific. During those years and the years that followed other sections of the old Denver and South Park line had been abandoned by the Colorado and Southern. A few of these sections were converted to the broad gauge, while others were torn up. The only reminder of this narrow gauge line can be found in what remains of the old road beds, and the memories that remain with some of the people who were associated with the South Park. For them, it was an important part of the development of Colorado.

There has always been a question in the minds of many of the people associated with the railroad as to whether abandonment of the line was really necessary. Was it a question of mismanagement? Did the railroad fail to take advantage of the

29. I. C. C. Reports, vol. 193, p. 338.
30. Ibid., p. [illegible]

opportunities that it might have had to run at a profit? Or was it, as some of them say, just a chess game for the financiers in New York?

It can be noted that the Denver and South Park was not in debt at the time its management was taken over by the Union Pacific but as the years passed, it fell deeper and deeper into debt. To answer this question, one would have had to know what was in the minds of the railroad owners. Was this debt incurred because business was insufficient, or because the railroad did nothing to promote its line? The railroad was in debt when it was abandoned by the Colorado and Southern and had been so ever since it had been purchased by that company.

The abandonment of the Denver, South Park and Pacific brought to a close one of the most colorful eras in the history of the State of Colorado and in the settlement of the frontier.

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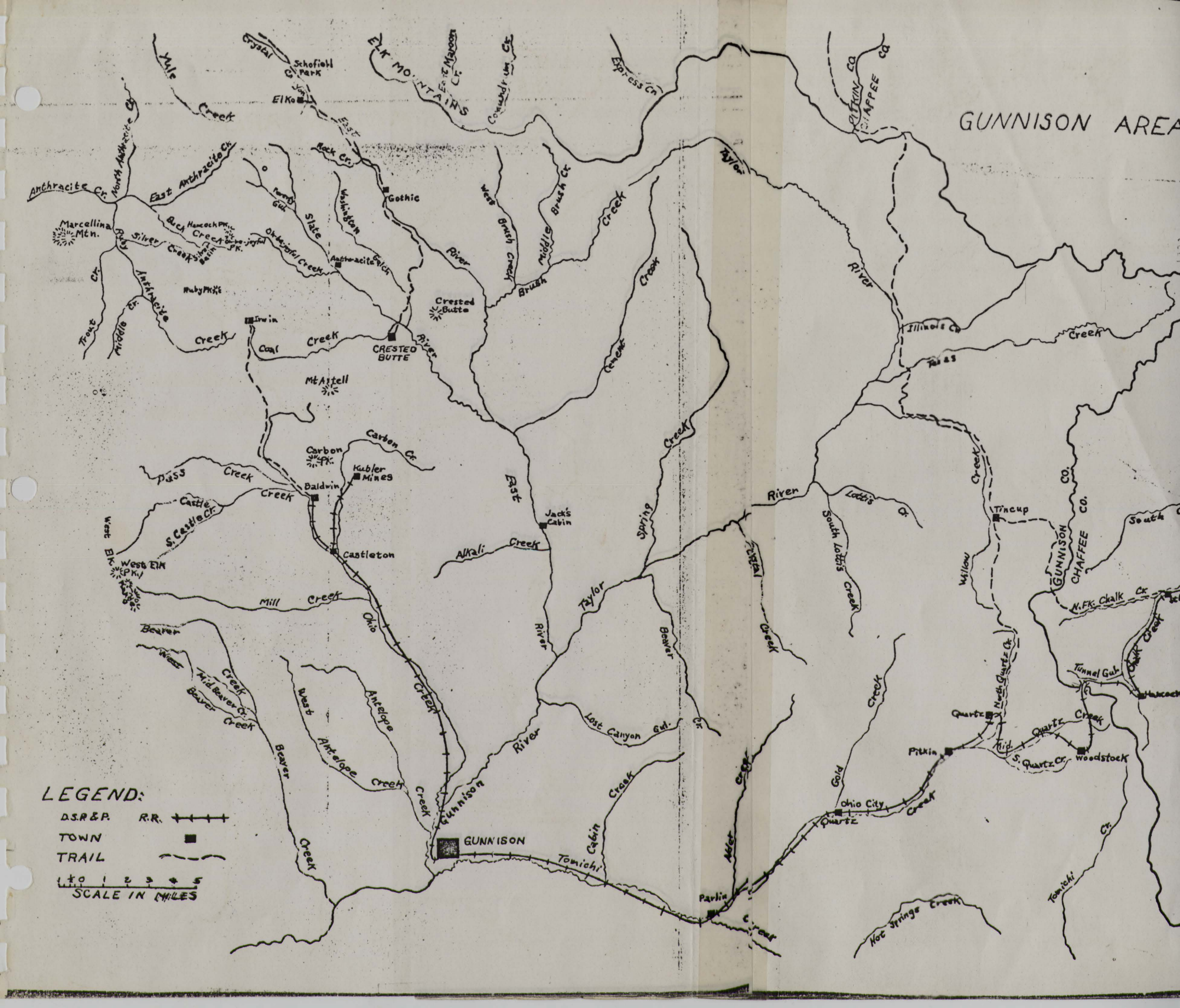
GUNNISON AREA
LEGEND:
D.S.R.&P. R.R.
TOWN
TRAIL
1 to 1 2 3 4 5
SCALE IN MILES
ELK MOUNTAINS
Crystal
Schofield Park
Elko
East
Rock Cr.
Gothic
Washington
Slate
Anthracite Gulch
Anthracite Cr.
North Anthracite Cr.
East Anthracite Cr.
Marcellina Mtn.
Silver Creek
Hancock Pk.
Ruby Pk.
Trout Cr.
Middle Cr.
Anthracite Creek
Irwin
Coal Creek
CRESTED BUTTE
Crested Butte
Mt Axtell
Carbon Pk.
Carbon Cr.
Kubler Mines
Baldwin
Pass Creek
Castle Cr.
S. Castle Cr.
West Elk Pk.
West Elk
Castleton
Mill Creek
Beaver Creek
Mid Beaver Cr.
West Beaver Creek
Antelope Creek
West Antelope Creek
Ohio Creek
Gunnison River
GUNNISON
Tomichi Creek
Lost Canyon Gul.
Cabin Creek
Alkali Creek
Jack's Cabin
East River
Taylor River
Spring Creek
Cement Creek
Brush Creek
West Brush Creek
Middle Brush Ck.
Beaver Cr.
Parlin
Alder Cr.
Crystal Creek
Lotis Cr.
South Lotis Creek
Willow Creek
Tincup
Illinois Cr.
Express Cr.
Coxcomb Cr.
East Maroon Cr.
Quartz
North Quartz Cr.
Pitkin
Ohio City
Gold Creek
Quartz Creek
S. Quartz Cr.
Woodstock
Tunnel Gul.
N. Fk. Chalk Cr.
Chalk Creek
Hot Springs Creek
Tomichi Cr.
GUNNISON CO.
CHAFFEE CO.
South

D. S. P. & P. R. R.
1874 to 1880