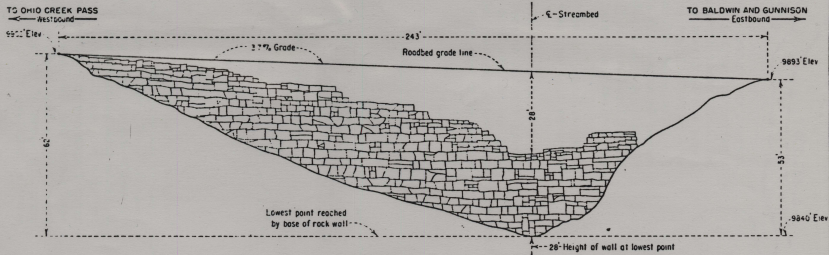


GUNNISON RAILROADS , MINING
TOWNS AND MINES

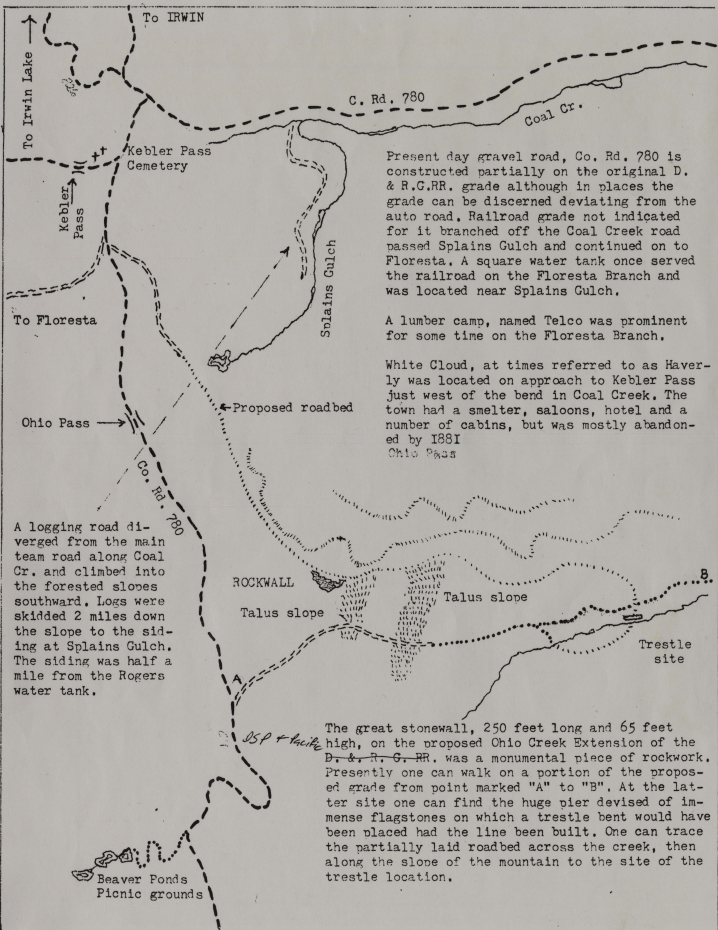
Herb Ringer
O'Fallon, Nevada

Unpublished Manuscript
by above author

W. H.
385
RIn



A
 DIMENSIONED DIAGRAM
 of the
 GREAT ROCK WALL AT THE OHIO CREEK PALISADES
 on the
 DENVER SOUTH PARK & PACIFIC RAILROAD
 COMPILED BY M. C. POOR AND D. K. PETERSON
 DRAWN BY E. J. HALEY



Present day gravel road, Co. Rd. 780 is constructed partially on the original D. & R.G.RR. grade although in places the grade can be discerned deviating from the auto road. Railroad grade not indicated for it branched off the Coal Creek road passed Splains Gulch and continued on to Floresta. A square water tank once served the railroad on the Floresta Branch and was located near Splains Gulch.

A lumber camp, named Telco was prominent for some time on the Floresta Branch.

White Cloud, at times referred to as Haverly was located on approach to Keblers Pass just west of the bend in Coal Creek. The town had a smelter, saloons, hotel and a number of cabins, but was mostly abandoned by 1881
Ohio Pass

A logging road diverged from the main team road along Coal Cr. and climbed into the forested slopes southward. Logs were skidded 2 miles down the slope to the siding at Splains Gulch. The siding was half a mile from the Rogers water tank.

The great stonewall, 250 feet long and 65 feet high, on the proposed Ohio Creek Extension of the D. & R. G. RR. was a monumental piece of rockwork. Presently one can walk on a portion of the proposed grade from point marked "A" to "B". At the latter site one can find the huge pier devised of immense flagstones on which a trestle bent would have been placed had the line been built. One can trace the partially laid roadbed across the creek, then along the slope of the mountain to the site of the trestle location.



In 1969 when first visited there existed considerable brick debris of the original 2 story building that once stood opposite the turntable atop the pass. In addition, a stoutly built brick privy still stood although deteriorated. There are no remains of these buildings at present although concrete forms as foundation sites can be found.

At a later date, a bunkhouse, coal shed and a Post Office occupied the sites here as well as a depot just off the snowshed. There are no remains seen at present. The Post Office foundation is plainly seen.

Storage Sheds

16 X 26

16 X 51

Bunk House

Section House

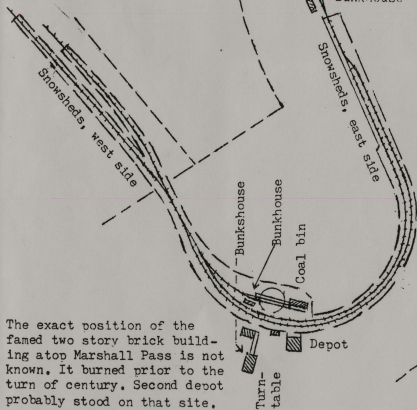
Springhouse

Tool house

Bunkhouse

In 1969 thousands of dry cell batteries used in the telegraph office were scattered down the slope below the depot site. Twelve years later I could not find the remains of a single battery.

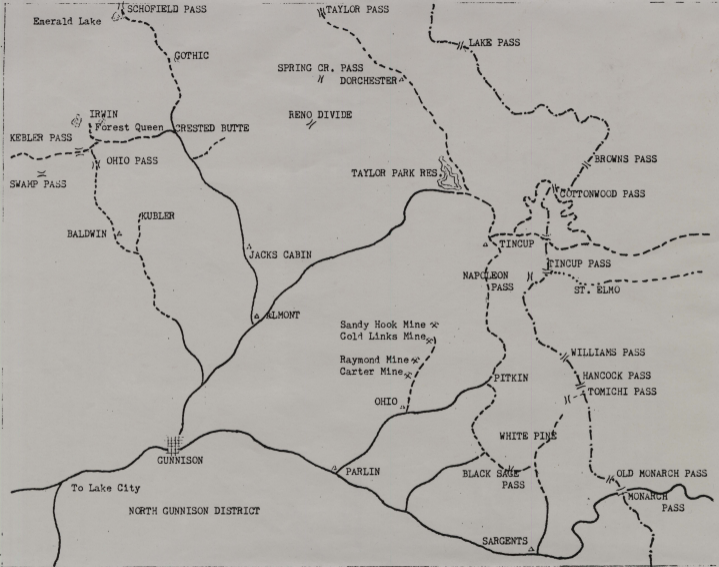
MARSHALL PASS
COLORADO

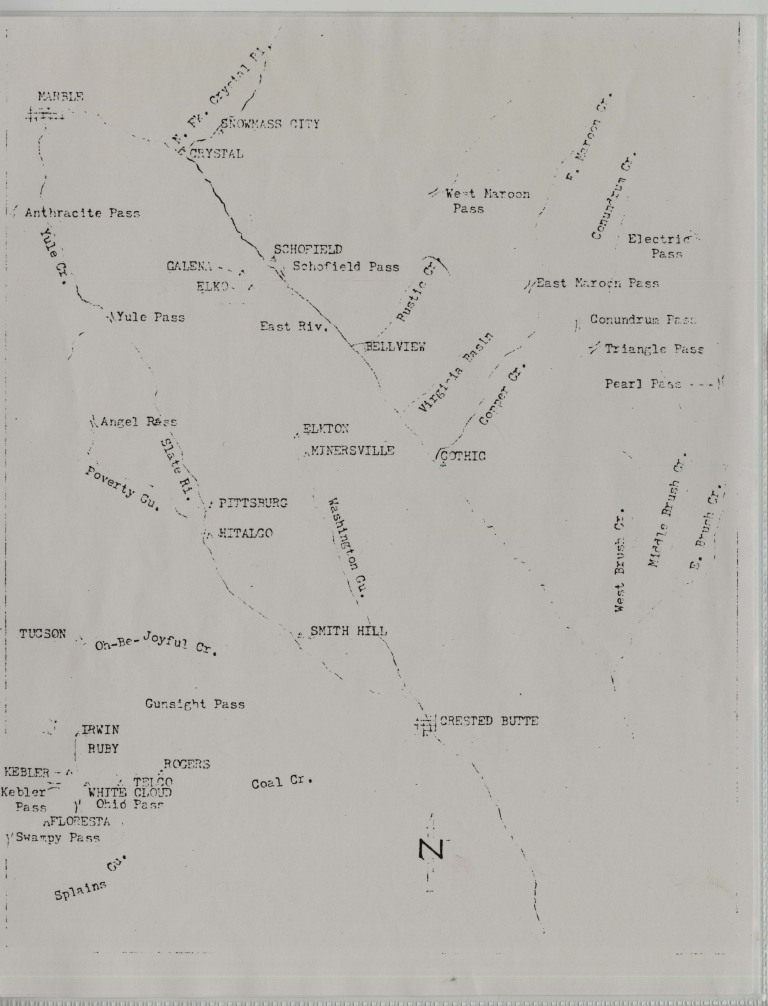


The famed 50 ft. deep cut
It was located directly on
the Continental Divide.

Mears Toll Road

The exact position of the famed two story brick building atop Marshall Pass is not known. It burned prior to the turn of century. Second depot probably stood on that site.





MARBLE

SNOWMASS CITY

CRYSTAL

Anthracite Pass

West Maroon Pass

F. Maroon Cr.

Conundrum Cr.

Electric Pass

SCHOFIELD
Schofield Pass

GALENA
ELKO

East Maroon Pass

Conundrum Pass

Yule Pass

East Riv.

BELLVIEW

Triangle Pass

Angel Pass

ELTON

Virgin Basin

Pearl Pass

MINERSVILLE

GOTHIC

Poverty Cu.

PITTSBURG

HITALGO

Washington Cr.

West Brush Cr.

Middle Brush Cr.

E. Brush Cr.

TUCSON

Oh-be-Joyful Cr.

SMITH HILL

Gunsight Pass

CRESTED BUTTE

IRWIN
RUBY

ROGERS

Coal Cr.

KEBLER
Kebler Pass

WHITE CLOUD
Ohio Pass

FLORESTA
Swampy Pass

Splains Cr.



TAYLOR RIVER DISTRICT

Only a few cabin frames and depressions in the earth indicate the remains of Bowman.

A single cabin, presently used by the National Forest Service marks the site of this town

Red Mountain Road. A mining town, Red Mountain formerly occupied this site. A few old cabins and a cluster of newer buildings housing summer guests mark the site.

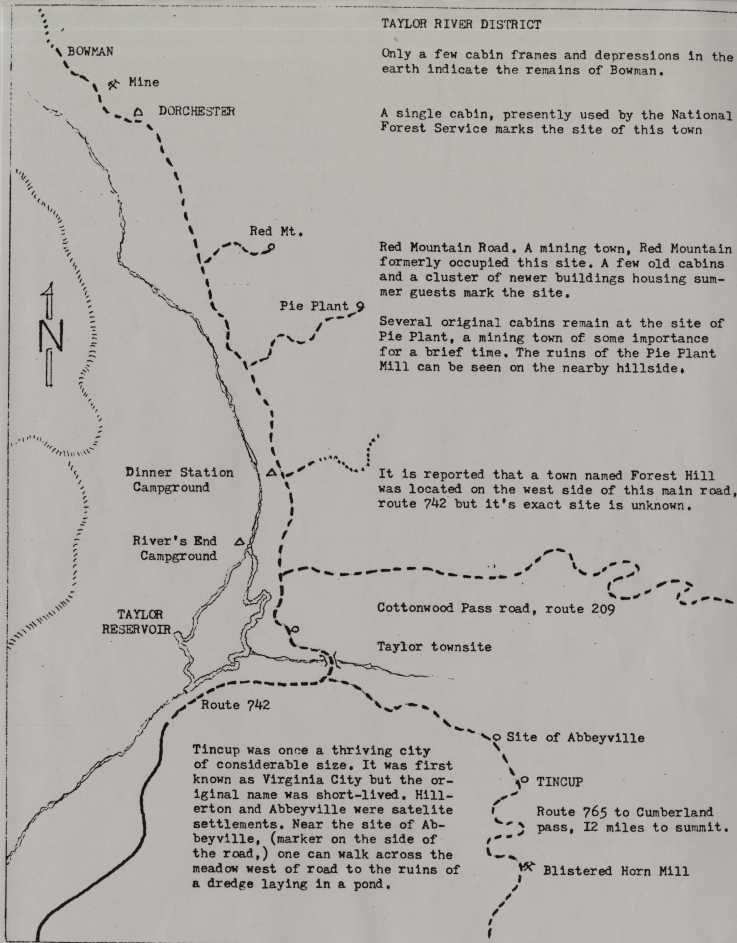
Several original cabins remain at the site of Pie Plant, a mining town of some importance for a brief time. The ruins of the Pie Plant Mill can be seen on the nearby hillside.

It is reported that a town named Forest Hill was located on the west side of this main road, route 742 but it's exact site is unknown.

Tincup was once a thriving city of considerable size. It was first known as Virginia City but the original name was short-lived. Hillerton and Abbeyville were satellite settlements. Near the site of Abbeyville, (marker on the side of the road,) one can walk across the meadow west of road to the ruins of a dredge laying in a pond.

Route 765 to Cumberland pass, 12 miles to summit.

Blistered Horn Mill



To west portal of
Alpine Tunnel

Debris laying here
is of the primitive
construction camp
located in 1881

A granite marker erected near the tunnel mouth is a colorful tribute to the hardy men who drilled the Alpine Tunnel. An erroneous sign nearby affirms that three construction camps were located on this, the western side of the Divide housing the workers. Only one camp was located here as indicated. The other settlements, Ragtop, Millers and Streeters were on the eastern slope.

A turntable was built near the entrance of the west portal to replace the initial device which was located inside the mammoth enginehouse. This structure was destroyed with all of its facilities including a stone boardinghouse in 1906 in a massive conflagration. A circle of hand laid stones inside the ruins attest to the site of the original turntable.

Site of
Sherrod II, 200 ft.

Road to Cumber-
land Pass

In 1978 the road from the site of Quartz, to a point south of the West portal of the Alpine Tunnel was in only fair condition. A snowslide just above Woodstock's site closed the road for while but in the late summer vehicles could drive around the avalanche site.

Site of
Quartz

Trail

Tomichi
Cemetery

The road from U. S. 50 to a point near Snowblind Camp is paved. It is route 888

Loop

Eire
Mine

Morning Star
Mine

Pitkin Camp

White Pine

Snowblind Campground

PITKIN

Waunita Pass

Site of Bowerman

Site of Lorraine.

Waunita
Hot Springs

Black Sage
Pass



Ohio City

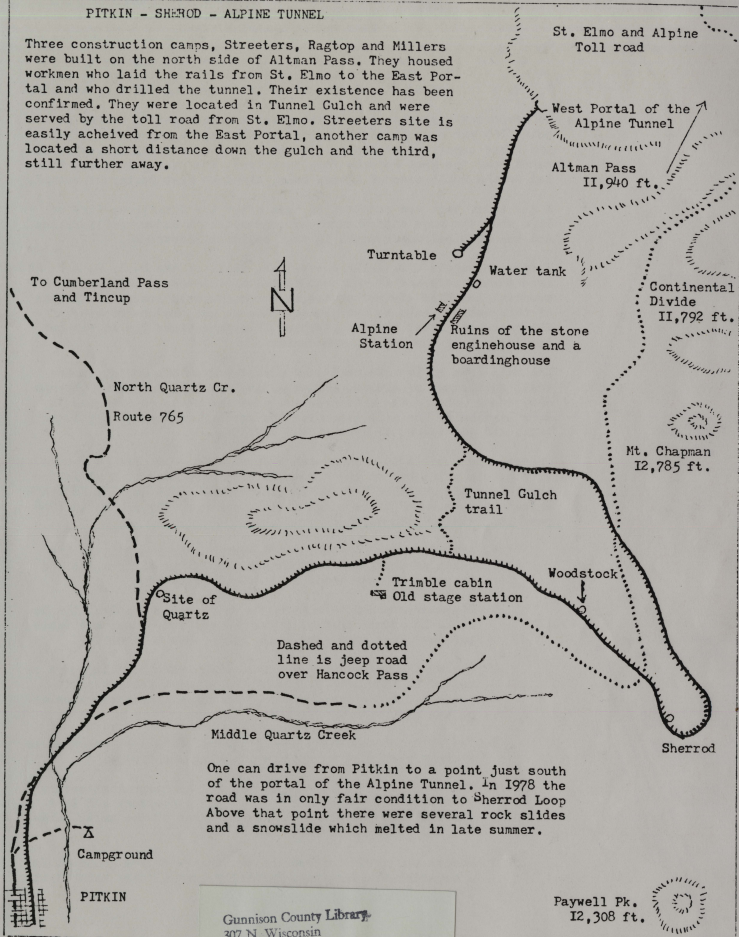
From White Pine to Tomichi's site on route 888 the road is poor. It can be travelled by car but often the road is deteriorated. A jeep road leads beyond to Tomichi Pass.

PARLIN

U. S. 50

PITKIN - SHERROD - ALPINE TUNNEL

Three construction camps, Streeters, Ragtop and Millers were built on the north side of Altman Pass. They housed workmen who laid the rails from St. Elmo to the East Portal and who drilled the tunnel. Their existence has been confirmed. They were located in Tunnel Gulch and were served by the toll road from St. Elmo. Streeters site is easily achieved from the East Portal, another camp was located a short distance down the gulch and the third, still further away.



To Cumberland Pass
and Tincup



North Quartz Cr.

Route 765

Site of
quartz

Trimble cabin
Old stage station

Woodstock

Dashed and dotted
line is jeep road
over Hancock Pass

Middle Quartz Creek

Mt. Chapman
12,785 ft.

Continental
Divide
11,792 ft.

St. Elmo and Alpine
Toll road

West Portal of the
Alpine Tunnel

Altman Pass
11,940 ft.

Turntable

Water tank

Alpine
Station

Ruins of the stone
enginehouse and a
boardinghouse

Tunnel Gulch
trail

Sherrod

Campground

PITKIN

One can drive from Pitkin to a point just south of the portal of the Alpine Tunnel. In 1978 the road was in only fair condition to Sherrod Loop. Above that point there were several rock slides and a snowslide which melted in late summer.

Gunnison County Library
307 N. Wisconsin
Gunnison, CO 81230

Paywell Pk.
12,308 ft.



REMAINS OF THE STRUCTURES
WEST PORTAL - ALPINE TUNNEL

Location of the construction camp just southeast of the West Portal of the Alpine Tunnel. A partial roof, beams and scattered boards lay in a clearing south of the site.

An erroneous sign placed near the granite commemorative marker at a point 100 yards south of the portal proclaims, by impression, that the three construction camps, Streeters, Ragtop and Millers, were located near the West Portal. This is untrue. They were, instead, located on the north side of Altman Pass, close to East Portal of tunnel.

A new water tank was constructed here after the disastrous fire of 1906 when the huge enginehouse was consumed in a major conflagration and the original water tank, in that building, destroyed.

Wooden snowsheds originally covered the rails of the D. S. P. & P. RR from their emergence at the West Portal a distance of 600 feet to the eventual location of the turntable. A considerable amount of timbers of this table remain to the present time as well as the remains of the snowshed. Great timbers, tumbled like jackstraws lay in the cut leading out of the tunnel, southward.

The main iron of the railroad lead directly from the portal to the small settlement of Alpine. A long siding was built, running through Alpine and joining the main iron south of the stone enginehouse. A spur lead in to the structure from the north, ran through the turntable and out the south side of the building.

To-day, the roadbed is uncluttered through Alpine and can be driven by car to a point beyond the turntable site. The lead to that device is plainly discernable. Rail which was observed here as well as track beneath the snowshed timbers immediately south of the portal in 1966 have long since disappeared.

- A. A boxcar, sans wheels, stood here on the ground near the ruins of the great enginehouse. It was probably a section house or storage shed. No longer in evidence.
- B Dispatcher's and telegrapher's shack was probably built in 1881. It stands to-day, fairly intact and houses artifacts gathered from along the South Park route in vicinity.
- C The wooden wreckage of the two-story frame boardinghouse erected in the first decade of the present century to replace the stone structure next to the enginehouse which also was destroyed in the 1906 fire.
- D The ruins of the stone boardinghouse. It's rock wreckage is plainly seen just north of the enginehouse ruins.
- E The 55' X 153' stone enginehouse ruins. Largest structure at Alpine its ruins mark an era long since gone and is a memorial to the monumental achievement of the hardy workmen who built it in 1880-1881
- F Wooden snowsheds covered the two tracks of the railroad for a considerable distance. Partially burned, they were finally torn down. There are no remains.

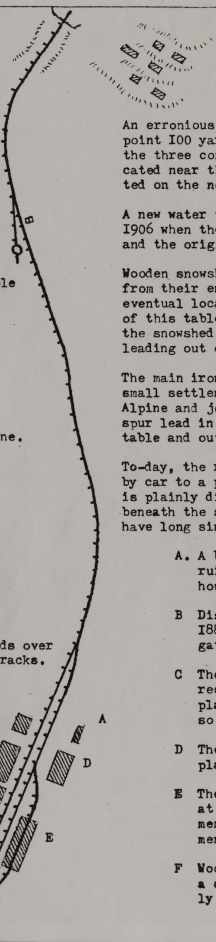
Turntable

Main line.

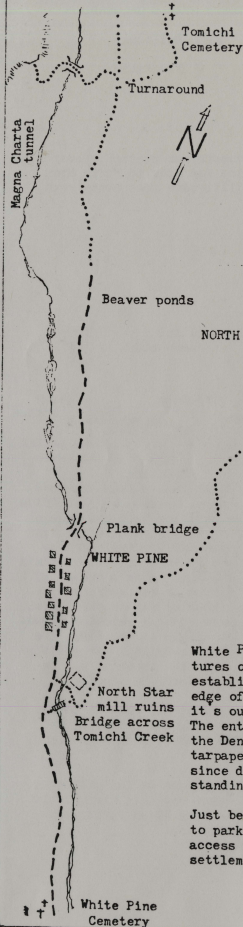
Snowsheds over both tracks.

Coal bunker

F



WHITE PINE - NORTH STAR - TOMICHI



The road from White Pine to the site of Tomichi can be negotiated by car but caution should be exercised. Only four-wheeled drive vehicles can travel beyond Tomichi toward the pass of the same name. One can hike up this jeep road to the greatly weathered Tomichi cemetery where several of the original citizens lay beneath the spruce. A short way from the turnaround, a path leads down to the creek which can be crossed on logs. Climbing up the slope one soon achieves the Magna Charta Tunnel and mine, once an important property in this area. The portal of the tunnel boasts fine cut stones around the entrance which is part of an elaborate rock wall laid against the slope. Some remains are found here including debris scattered up the mountainside. There are only minute remains of Tomichi itself, a few cabin and small building sites can dumps and broken timbers to mark this isolated mining camp.


The ruins of the Northern Star Mine are found a half mile up a jeep road from the townsite of North Star. An assay office a large structure which once housed the steam machinery for operating the mine and ore bins constitute the remains at this site. The main tunnel of the mine is nearby with a small mine track leading into the old caved in portal. Up the slope, leading to the mine are evidences of additional mining ventures as the observer will find sites of several buildings and much brick debris. It is possible that a brick enclosed boiler once stood here or, a brick stack but there is little evidence to support this theory. Tunnels are also found in this area leading back into the steep hillside. It is possible that they connected with the main shaft of the Morning Star.


White Pine is composed of a collection of neat frame and log structures occupied mainly by summer residents. There are no commercial establishments in the town. A structure, greatly deteriorated at the edge of the gulch road was once the town's seat of learning. From it's outer walls in 1966 was retrieved a section of a 1914 newspaper. The entire building had been covered on it's exterior with copies of the Denver Post, Colorado's staple "insulation" and then covered with tarpaper. The Opera House, for long the pride of White Pine, has long since disappeared but a small two-story former boardinghouse is still standing as well as several original cabins.

Just below White Pine where a wide space in the road provides space to park a vehicle, a small bridge spans the creek and affords one the access to the ruins of the North Star Mill. The hike to the latter settlement's site is a mile in length.

2 terraces on which rock foundations are found

Jeep road to Erie Mine

 Buildings

 Foundations

Smokehouse built of logs. Chinked with burlap sacks, mortar and underwear.

Water tank on hillside is intact.

Post Office

Log house

Transformer station. Power line ran down to North Star mill beside the county road

Boardinghouse

Privy

Building

Two-story log boardinghouse. Upper floor has collapsed.

Jeep road

25 X 60 ft. Steam plant

Ore dump

Assay office

Mine portal and track

MORNING STAR MINE

Jeep road

Ore bins

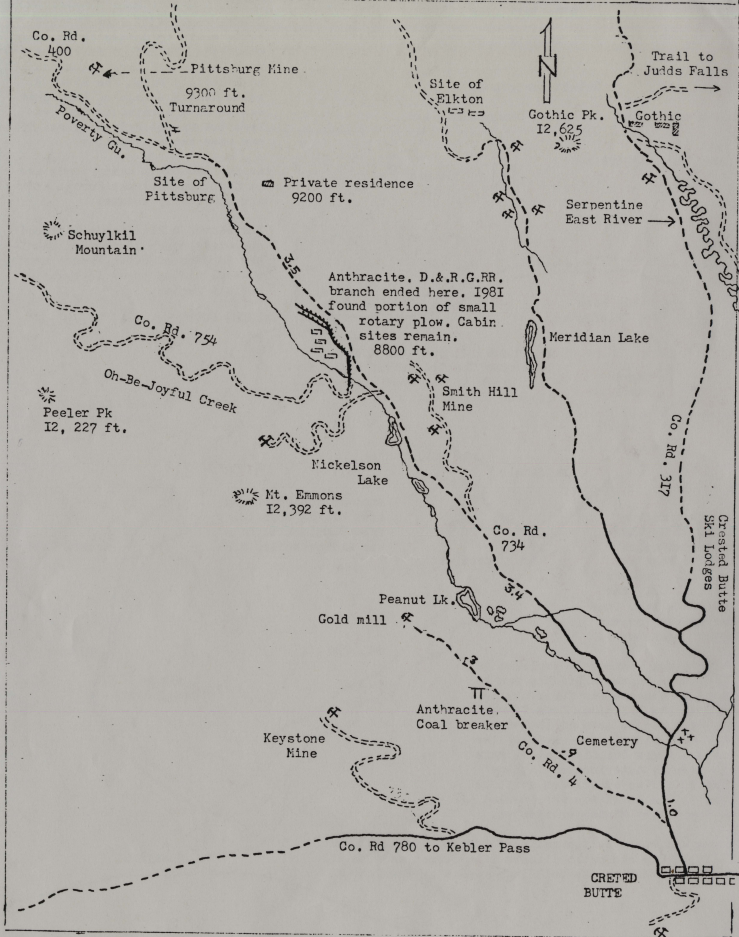
The Morning Star Mine was at some slight remove from the townsite which once contained boardinghouses, hotels, a Post Office mine offices, stores and cabins. The mine location has several remains including a large steam plant. This structure had been empty for years but in 1977 steel doors and windows had been installed and it appeared the mine was to be activated. A claim notice posted nearby was noted in 1978 indicating a number of nearby claims were to be explored. Cylinders and a frame on which the stationary engine had been mounted can be seen here. The mine tunnel is nearby with trackage running into the caved-in portal while the other end of track leads to the dump. The assay office is in fair repair but the ore building is greatly deteriorated. In 1978 the jeep road from the townsite was in good condition but a steel gate forbids entry by vehicle.

Mill structures located beside County road 888 are in severe deterioration with only partial walls of small buildings and only concrete foundations of the mill itself. This mill worked the ores of the Morning Star Mine.

A small bridge across the creek affords access to the mill site and the road which leads up to North Star, one mile distant. It is possible to drive a jeep to the Erie mine above North Star and to other mining properties in that region.

Mill

Footbridge



Co. Rd. 400

Pittsburg Mine

9300 ft. Turnaround

Site of Elkton

Gothic Pk. 12,625

Trail to Juds Falls

Gothic 12,625

Site of Pittsburg

Private residence 9200 ft.

Serpentine East River

Schuylkill Mountain

Anthracite, D.&R.G.R.R. branch ended here. 1981 found portion of small rotary plow. Cabin sites remain. 8800 ft.

Meridian Lake

Co. Rd. 754

Oh-Be-Joyful Creek

Peeler Pk 12,227 ft.

Smith Hill Mine

Nickelson Lake

Mt. Emmons 12,392 ft.

Co. Rd. 734

Co. Rd. 317

Crested Butte Ski Lodges

Peanut Lk.

Gold mill

Anthracite Coal breaker

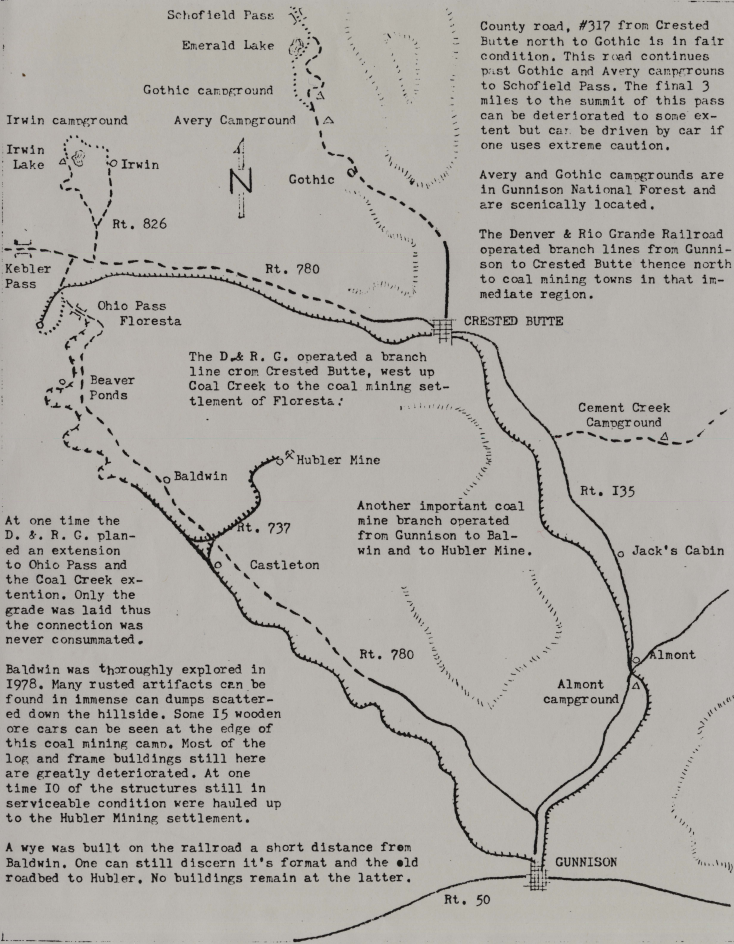
Keystone Mine

Cemetery

Co. Rd. 4

Co. Rd 780 to Kebler Pass

CREPED BUTTE



County road, #317 from Crested Butte north to Gothic is in fair condition. This road continues past Gothic and Avery campgrounds to Schofield Pass. The final 3 miles to the summit of this pass can be deteriorated to some extent but can be driven by car if one uses extreme caution.

Avery and Gothic campgrounds are in Gunnison National Forest and are scenically located.

The Denver & Rio Grande Railroad operated branch lines from Gunnison to Crested Butte thence north to coal mining towns in that immediate region.

The D. & R. G. operated a branch line from Crested Butte, west up Coal Creek to the coal mining settlement of Floresta.

Another important coal mine branch operated from Gunnison to Baldwin and to Hubler Mine.

At one time the D. & R. G. planned an extension to Ohio Pass and the Coal Creek extension. Only the grade was laid thus the connection was never consummated.

Baldwin was thoroughly explored in 1978. Many rusted artifacts can be found in immense dumps scattered down the hillside. Some 15 wooden ore cars can be seen at the edge of this coal mining camp. Most of the log and frame buildings still here are greatly deteriorated. At one time 10 of the structures still in serviceable condition were hauled up to the Hubler Mining settlement.

A wye was built on the railroad a short distance from Baldwin. One can still discern it's format and the old roadbed to Hubler. No buildings remain at the latter.

DENVER & RIO GRANDE
RAILROAD YARDS AT

CRESTED BUTTE

Branchline leading to Anthracite, Pittsburg and other coal-loading sites in this region.

The Crested Butte area boasted, and not without inordinate pride in having some of the finest locomotive coal on the west slope. Baldwin, Kubler and a few small mines in their immediate vicinity produced handsomely over many decades their products being used not only by the steam locomotives of the D.&R.G. RR. and other carriers, but in addition was shipped to Denver and other distant points.

Crested Butte and its satellite camps also produced enormous quantities of coal, likewise, over a period of many decades. The concrete ruins, tippie site and foundations just north of the town attest to the location of the Anthracite coal breaker. Beyond, the Smith Hill Mine, the coal seams in the region of Pittsburg and in several locations in that district all yielded great tonnages of coal.

Some evidence remains of these coal mining settlements and the evidence of their locations can be viewed from County Rd. 734 northwestward out of Crested Butte and also from the 4-wheel drive road, route 754 which branches off from the former route.

Depot

At present it is possible to locate the housetrack and sidings in the depot area. Only small portions of the railroad grade can be found at Crested Butte

Branchline to Gunnison

Baldwin Branch of D. & R. G. RR.

Crested Butte Branch
D. & R. G. RR.

The several leads on
left edge of paper ex-
tent to the main line
leading west to Montrose.

GUNNISON YARDS

Mainline of the D. & R. G. RR.
to Sargents

Turntable

Roundhouse

The Baldwin Branch lead almost due northward out of Gunnison but later turned in a northwesterly direction following up the Ohio Creek valley to attain, a distance of 19.36 miles. Date of construction unknown at this writing. From the coal mining town of Baldwin, an extension was begun on a line proposed to follow up that valley, circle and switchback to attain Ohio Pass. A short way beyond this summit, the line would have met the existing D. & R. G. grade at the sawmill site, commonly known as Floresta Jct. This Floresta Branch traversed the Coal Creek drainage from Crested Butte, touching several small settlements enroute before attaining a point near Kebler Pass.

The Ohio Creek Extension was surveyed and some grading accomplished but no rail was ever laid on this route.

The Crested Butte Branch was built from Gunnison northward a distance of 29.4 miles in 1881. Short spurs was extended from Crested Butte to the several coal mining settlements near that town as well as the Floresta Branch.

The main line of the D. & R. G. RR. drove west from Gunnison through a shallow canyon and thence across ranch and range country for a considerable distance. Westward, the line extended across three summits before it made its final descent into the valley at Montrose.

The Gunnison turntable was later moved to Romley on the Denver, Wouth Park & Pacific Railroad.

Two small mining settlements once occupied sites of importance a short distance west of the Carbon Creek Road, #737. Just a short way north of that roads junction with the main Ohio Creek Road #780 a pair of wheel tracks diverges from the road and climbs off into the sagebrush to the left. A cattle guard is soon crossed and another road branches off to the right. Following this road which is barely more than wheel tracks along a fence, one will swing slightly westward and soon approach the remains of the Smith Mine.

see next page

- A. A wooden coal-ore car in the sagebrush is identical to those found at Baldwin's site.
- B. Two log cabins in fair state of preservation.
- C. Ruins of an air circulator. It was housed in structure marked "F" beside a pithead and supplied fresh air circulating into the slanting tunnels of this coal mine.
- D. Building wreckage.
- E. Primitive type generator, mostly dismantled.
- F. Concrete floor and partial walls of "shafthouse" where air circulator was located.
- G. Metal-sheathed powderhouse.

Just beyond the cattle guard mentioned above, a side trail of two wheel tracks leads westward. One drives through sagebrush where, in places, the tracks become almost indistinct, but from observing the contour of the hillside, a faint impression of an old road can be seen. Follow this, winding along the slope and climbing steadily into a cove of aspens the traveller will arrive in a cul-de-sac where, it appears, passage cannot be further accomplished. Parking here, one can walk up the gentle slope and within a hundred yards attain what appears to be another faint roadway leading across one's continued progress upslope.

Turn left here at almost immediately one finds ruins of old cabins, sheds and of small mine structures.

- H. Ruins of a mine structure.
- I. Powderhouse. Many rusted DuPont powder cans lay scattered in a tiny draw near the above building. A small frame building, not larger than a good-sized dog house is nearby.
- J. Metal-sheathed building, possibly a blacksmith shed.
- K. Cabin ruins.
- L. Ruins of a building.
- M. Another cabin ruins.
- N. Large tow-story frame building with a wooden front porch. A basement may have been in the structure also. Presently, the roof and second floor have collapsed partly into the main floor. This building has been lived in prior to collapse of roof and a large can dump lays downslope a short distance away. A stout coal bin building is at close confines. Mr. Chi. Porter, of Almont, who visited the site over a decade ago assures me the building was the residence of a Mr. Love, owner of the coal mine around which this tiny settlement was to evolve. Since the building is by far the largest in the "town" this supposition appears correct.
- O. A collection of small cabins across the road and slightly north of the owners residence.

Since the settlement had no official name as far as can be determined, Mr. Porter and I decided to refer to the town in the future as "Love".

No doubt there are a substantial number of other ruins of long-abandoned cabins in the immediate vicinity and only further exploration will reveal if any remains can be uncovered. Above the metal-sheathed structure marked "J" there are remains of a "shute" of wood and frame timbering. Mr. Porter revealed that upon his initial visit to the camp a ramp of sorts, or shute, clung to the steep slope. Coal, from the pithead, located further up this slope was shovelled to the upper end of the ramp and by gravity dropped to a level area in the center of the town. From that point it was no doubt transported to the railroad a short distance downgrade where it was stockpiled in ore bins awaiting shipment.

In 1907, the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company had purchased the Baldwin Mine and up to the time of the 1937 application had shipped an estimated one million plus tons of coal. Some 42,000 carloadings of coal wound down Ohio creek to Gunnison and thence eastward. The mine, however, at this time was nearing depletion and the owners anticipated reopening the closed Kubler Mine. A number of trucks transported material and equipment from Baldwin to Cooper Siding which, at that season, was the extent of operable track extending up Carbon Creek. Still in place was long abandoned trackage at the Kubler site. The mine at Baldwin, called the Alpine mine was located 2.5 miles up Ohio Creek from Castleton, about half of this grade being what remained of the unfinished Ohio Creek Extension of the 1880's.

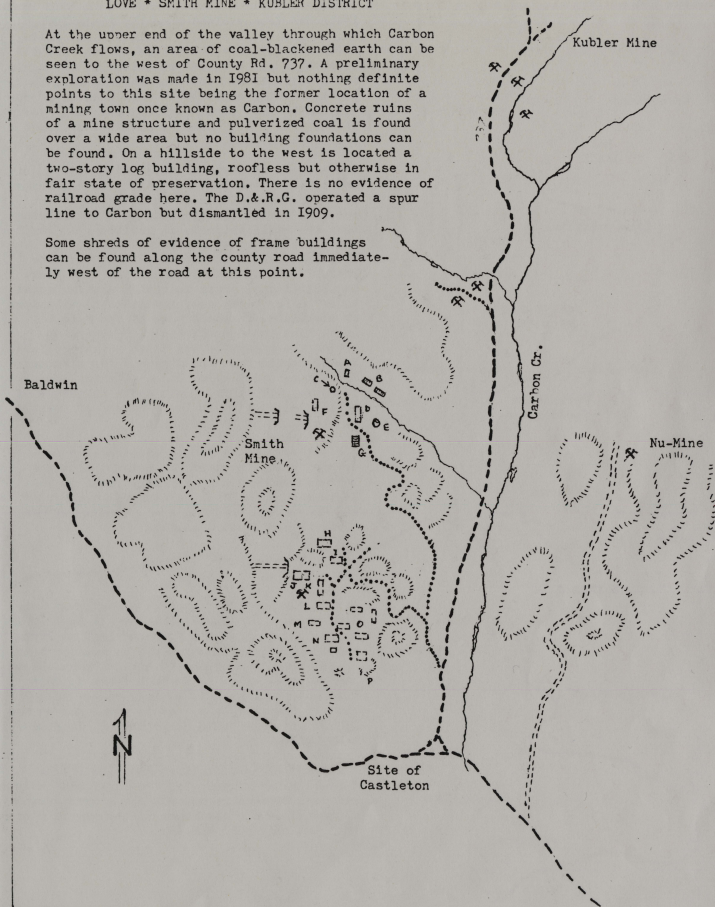
Confusingly, the name "Baldwin" has been applied variously to three railroad points. When the original DSP&P issued its primary passenger timetables extending to the then unfinished Alpine Tunnel, its map of proposed rail lines north of Gunnison showed only "Richardson" before the dotted line achieved Iw-win. Sylvester Richardson, founder of Gunnison, had discovered and opened coal seams at Mt. Carbon and a town was platted. When the DSP&P achieved the point known later as Castleton, M.P. 216.5 at the confluence of Ohio and Carbon Creeks, the name of "Baldwin" was applied. Later, when the track was extended to the new large mine up Carbon Creek, 2.8 miles further, that place was general named "Baldwin". The former Richardson Mine then became known as the Alpine Mine with new operators in 1895 and was designated as the terminus of the "Mt. Carbon Branch" which extended 2.5 miles to "Mt. Carbon" (ex-Richardson - ex-Alpine) Exploration by the studious searcher will reveal the slight trace of the site of the switch with the never-finished main line of railroad heading toward Ohio Pass.

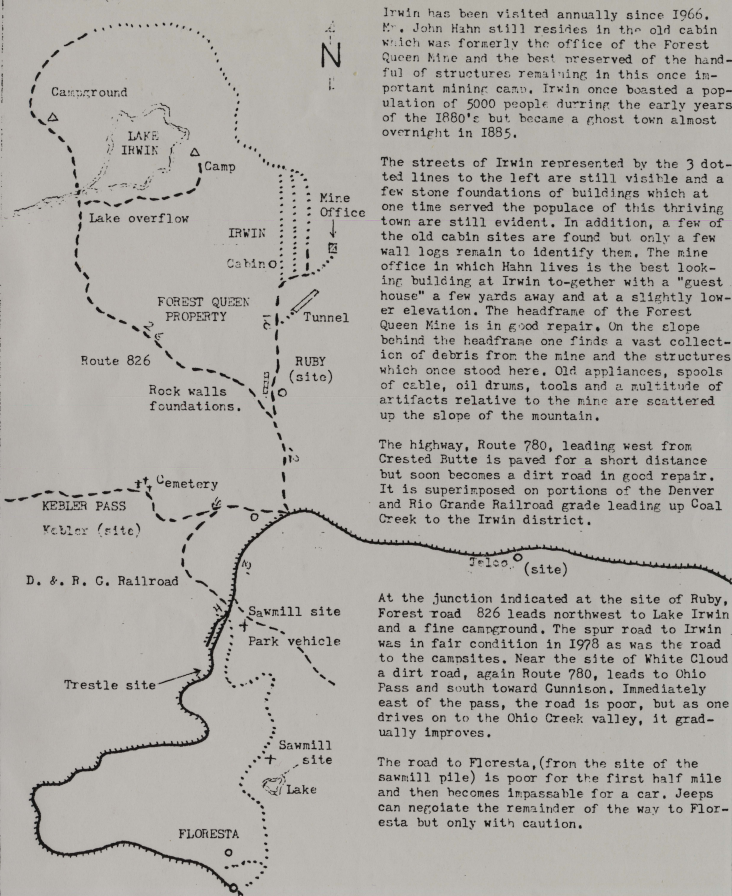
The Old Baldwin Mine having discontinued operations and the track to it was removed on the Carbon Creek line in 1909. The then prevalent timetable at that season designated the main line "Como to Mt. Carbon". This was officially its designation in January of that year. But, by June, a further name change was to appear and the line was referred to now as "Como to Baldwin". Thus, note that Mt. Carbon had been renamed "Baldwin". In 1911, the Kubler Mine Branch was added to the timetable, this mine having achieved some importance as a coal shipper of the first order. Kubler was 3.2 miles beyond Castleton or approximately 1.5 miles past the original "Old Baldwin" Mine.

LOVE * SMITH MINE * KUBLER DISTRICT

At the upper end of the valley through which Carbon Creek flows, an area of coal-blackened earth can be seen to the west of County Rd. 737. A preliminary exploration was made in 1981 but nothing definite points to this site being the former location of a mining town once known as Carbon. Concrete ruins of a mine structure and pulverized coal is found over a wide area but no building foundations can be found. On a hillside to the west is located a two-story log building, roofless but otherwise in fair state of preservation. There is no evidence of railroad grade here. The D.&R.G. operated a spur line to Carbon but dismantled in 1909.

Some shreds of evidence of frame buildings can be found along the county road immediately west of the road at this point.





Irwin has been visited annually since 1966. Mr. John Hahn still resides in the old cabin which was formerly the office of the Forest Queen Mine and the best preserved of the handful of structures remaining in this once important mining camp. Irwin once boasted a population of 5000 people during the early years of the 1880's but became a ghost town almost overnight in 1885.

The streets of Irwin represented by the 3 dotted lines to the left are still visible and a few stone foundations of buildings which at one time served the populace of this thriving town are still evident. In addition, a few of the old cabin sites are found but only a few wall logs remain to identify them. The mine office in which Hahn lives is the best looking building at Irwin together with a "guest house" a few yards away and at a slightly lower elevation. The headframe of the Forest Queen Mine is in good repair. On the slope behind the headframe one finds a vast collection of debris from the mine and the structures which once stood here. Old appliances, spools of cable, oil drums, tools and a multitude of artifacts relative to the mine are scattered up the slope of the mountain.

The highway, Route 780, leading west from Crested Butte is paved for a short distance but soon becomes a dirt road in good repair. It is superimposed on portions of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad grade leading up Coal Creek to the Irwin district.

At the junction indicated at the site of Ruby, Forest road 826 leads northwest to Lake Irwin and a fine campground. The spur road to Irwin was in fair condition in 1978 as was the road to the campsites. Near the site of White Cloud a dirt road, again Route 780, leads to Ohio Pass and south toward Gunnison. Immediately east of the pass, the road is poor, but as one drives on to the Ohio Creek valley, it gradually improves.

The road to Floresta, (from the site of the sawmill pile) is poor for the first half mile and then becomes impassable for a car. Jeeps can negotiate the remainder of the way to Floresta but only with caution.

FLORESTA - COLORADO

A large sawdust pile remains at this site from the days when Irwin was booming in the early 1880's. A sawmill occupied this site turning out boards and beams for the mines of the region and the houses of this once thriving community.

Original grade of the branch line of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad It climbed up Coal Creek from Crested Butte, to the meadows near Irwin and continued in a wide loop around the hills to Floresta.

The Ohio Pass road, furthest to the right edge of paper, within a short distance crossed that summit and dropped down grade to several coal mining settlements, of which two, Baldwin and Hubler, were prominent.

The railroad grade crossed a deep gulch here on a sizeable trestle. The trackage then swung around the mountain and entered Floresta from the west.

The present jeep road makes a swing around the mountain near the trestle site, crosses the creek and climbs back up to the trestle level again.

A metal structure stands here, once a part of a mining operation.

Old road leading to timbered out area.

Another sawmill stood here. It was west of the forest road to Floresta.

Small lake. Two deteriorated cabins stand in the timber nearby.

The jeep road crosses a partially level area at this point before making it's descent to Floresta.

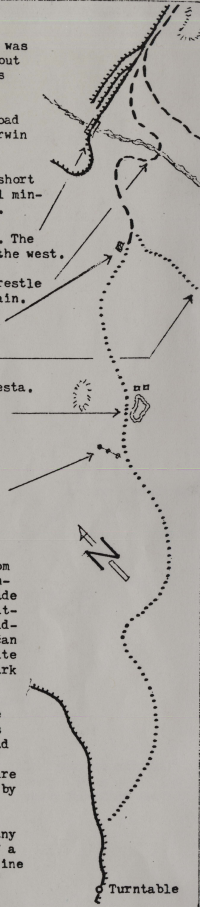
Pole and Rider fence. There is a sawmill site a short distance off the jeep road and much evidence of slabs and debris.

The jeep road drops sharply now to Floresta.

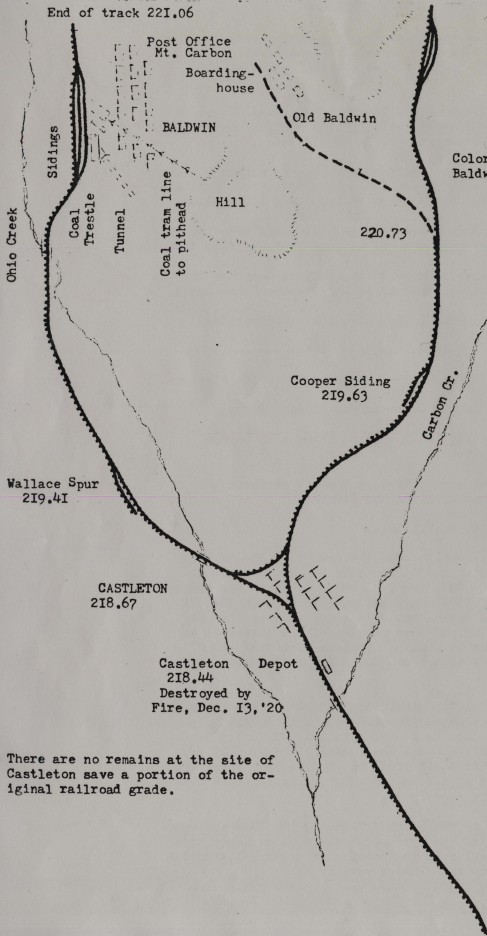
The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad entered the town of Floresta from the west after having negotiated some three miles of rough mountain-side to gain this region. From the jeep road above the town the grade is easily discernable, making it's entry and passing through the little town. At the far end of Floresta there is some evidence that sidings were located at that point and some remains of the turntable can still be seen. The pivot stone is missing. Hunters have used the site for campfires, but portions of ties, long bolts and a few stones mark the site.

An imposing structure of stone with steel beams stands on the slope overlooking Floresta. It housed huge iron boilers. Much debris lays all around and many artifacts can be found. A tunnel originally lead into the mountain slope where deep coal seams were located. Only 3 buildings remain with walls but their roofs have collapsed. There are in addition at least 40 sites of cabins and other buildings marked by foundations or tumbled timbers and boards.

Steep cliffs on the far side of the gulch forbade the building of any cabins on the southeast side of the stream but there is evidence of a tunnel portal and one can still find the remains of a partial tramline which lead from that portal to the town proper.



o Turntable



Kubler Mine

End of track
221.79



Colorado & Southern grade to Old Baldwin abandoned in 1909

Baldwin has been thoroughly explored on several occasions. Upon recent search in 1980 several partially intact cabins still remained while the flattened wreckage of at least a dozen other log and frame houses were to be seen. The blacksmith shop, the final vestige of the coal mining facilities had collapsed. Some fifteen wooden four-wheeled coal cars, "dinkeys" remain in greatly deteriorated condition at the foot of the low hill near the building remains. A mammoth can dump is noted up this slope and several artifacts have been discovered at this point.

A ranch line shack stands a few hundred yards down the long abandoned railroad grade below the site of Kubler. A search was made of this town site but there are no remains to be found.

There are no remains at the site of Castleton save a portion of the original railroad grade.

BALDWIN

Old Baldwin. A small coal mining settlement. Tracks are removed in 1909

Kubler Explored in 1978, no remains here.

A least a dozen of the old red cabins which housed coal miners at the Baldwin mine were moved to nearby Kubler for use by the men employed at that coal mining camp.

Baldwin was explored several times in recent years. Approximately 15 cabins are still standing in various degrees of deterioration. The crumpled remains of a score of other cabins can also be found here. A few of the privys are standing and at the entrance of the town, 2 old buildings are seen.

At least 15 wooden ore cars remain at the edge of town near the base of the hill. A stone powder house is nearby.

The road from Gunnison to Baldwin is in good repair. One can drive on paved and then dirt road the remainder of the way to the ruins of the coal mining town. The route, 780, follows Ohio Creek through fertile ranching country with high mountains bordering in the distance. The road continues past Baldwin to the Beaver Picnic Ground where the nearby beaver ponds attract many visitors.

From that point, the road becomes increasingly worse as it ascends steeply to Ohio Pass. A one time branch line of the railroad was surveyed to cross the pass. Several miles of the route was graded but no rails were ever laid on this extension.

It is reported that 40,000 car loads of coal were shipped out of Baldwin during it's many years of existence as a major coal producing district. Baldwin coal was known as being the finest locomotive coal available and the product was shipped as far away as the the capitol, Denver.

Line shack

Ore bins

Site of Castleton

