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GRANDE GOLD

A LEVIN DIVISION PUBLICATION

FROM THE YARD MASTER

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THE UNION RAILROAD OF OREGON – A PROTOTYPE FOR A SHELF LAYOUT.

THE RAILROAD SCENE

IF I were able to travel overseas again and view the remains of the ***Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad***, one of my prime objectives would be to record the railroad structures or what is left of them. The black and gold locomotives of the *Grande* are nearly all gone but the trains they hauled still roll along much of the former *DRGW* right of way. Two exceptions that come to mind are the Tennessee Pass route and Monte Vista to South Fork in the San Luis Valley. No doubt there are others but these were of interest to me.

There are several sites on the Internet where details of various Rio Grande sidings are recorded in detail. For the ordinary model railroader, details such as water tanks, switch stands, loco facilities, depots and track layouts are to be found in the model press and many railroad magazines.

Nature's Grande Gold.

Since building my version of the line from Alamosa to South Fork I have become very much aware that a photographic record of the surrounding countryside and industries is vital to being

Below; The South Fork local passes Hanna on its way to the end of the branch at South Fork.

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able to create a convincing model. This is particularly important if you do not live in the United States and you are modeling railroads of that country.

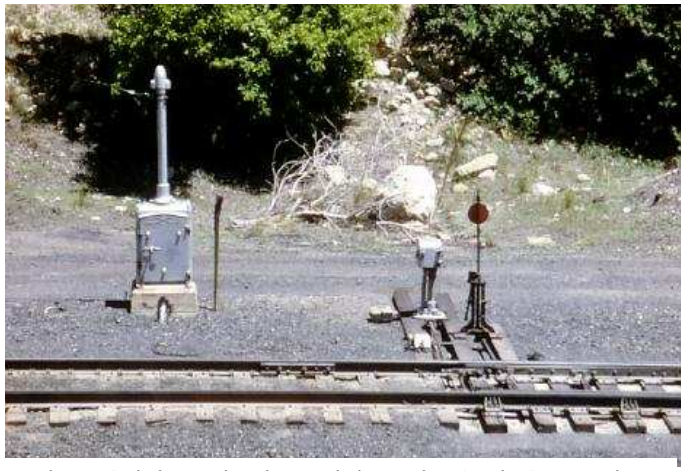
It was my good fortune to have a contact with Roland Levin in Sweden who took the opportunity to record many of the structures along the old DRGW right of way in the San Luis Valley. Views of various industries served by a railroad, the type of country that the line passes through to reach these industries, and the structure of the local communities should all be recorded in some way. It is only then one will have the necessary information which can used to create a credible prototype model.

I was fortunate enough to record on video much of the landscape on the northern side of the Creede branch between Alamosa and South Fork while travelling by bus on the adjacent highway. I have been able to use a lot of the information contained in that video to help recreate my model.
Of the scenes illustrated on this page I suspect that the siding in Grand Junction has been cut. The old workshops in Helper shown here in 1985 had gone by 1988. IF YOU SEE SOMETHING OF INTEREST, PHOTOGRAPH IT, NOTHING REMAINS FOREVER.

Below; One of the several models of switch stands used on the old DRGW. Bottom right; Helper yards, Utah with a maintenance workshop in 1985. The building had been demolished by 1988.

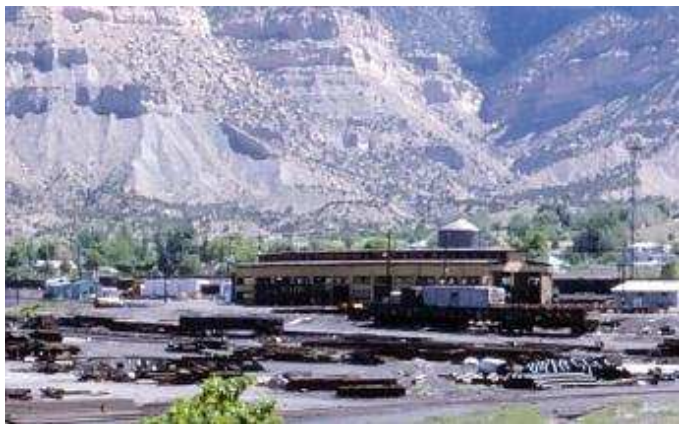
THE RAILROAD SCENE

Above; Structures at the western end of the siding at Desert.



Above; Switch stand and controls located at Castle Gate, Utah.

Above; Switching an industrial siding in Grand Junction.



A LITTLE PROGRESS ON THE MODEL OF THE LINE TO SOUTH FORK

Above; A westbound local entering the yard at Monte Vista.

Above; The Colorado Seed Co. at Monte Vista.

MODEL PHOTOGRAPHY

While I am no great photographer, I have struggled to record model railroad scenes. Depth of field and maintaining the correct colour balance under artificial lighting conditions are two of the greatest problems to be overcome in photographing model railroads.

So long as there is space to mount a tripod in the model railroad room, here is a method to overcome the worst of the two restrictions already mentioned.
To record a model scene on print film I use a Canon A1 camera and for colour transparencies a Canon T90 in each case coupled to a Sigma 24 – 70 mm zoom lens.
Set up the camera on a tripod and use a blue filter on the lens. I use a Cokin A 021 blue filter which modifies artificial light (2800K to 3400K) for daylight type colour film. This prevents that yellow colour cast on your photos.

For a light source I use a 1000 watt sun gun produced some years ago by a Christchurch firm for photographic purposes. This unit is hand held and can be moved around to achieve the best lighting angles for the model scene that is being photographed.

The camera is set either on the program setting or on the aperture priority setting at the smallest f stop. This will result in the greatest depth of field. Cock the shutter, focus the camera to give the optimum in focus depth of field to the scene. If the camera has a time delay on its shutter action program set this to 5 or 10 seconds.

I then illuminate the scene with the sun gun and check the best light angles through the view finder of the camera. When satisfied with what I see, the shutter is released. Using the 5 or 10 second delay ensures that the camera is not moved when the shutter is released. This is important as the exposure using this method can range from 1/60th of a second to several seconds. All the indoor photos published in previous issues of *Grande Gold* have been made using these methods.

Enter the digital camera era and with these modern compact cameras it is possible to record hundreds of images on one digital memory card or stick.
The illustrations on this page were all recorded with a friend's Canon A 70 digital camera. This camera is not much larger than a cell phone and despite its size has an extensive range of programs.

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Ray Mathewson
28 Wilton Street
LEVIN
NEW ZEALAND

Phone: (06) 3686560
Fax: (06) 3686526
Email: audray@xtra.co.nz

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One thing I have noticed with the pictures taken using the digital camera, is that the model scene seems to have a greater depth of field than those shot with a conventional camera.
Another plus with digital cameras is that the user has a number of options as to the quality of the final result. This Canon camera has at least five programs ranging in quality from what is required for emailing photos to reproducing very high quality colour prints.

This digital photography all adds another dimension to our hobby and to many, a digital camera will probably come at the expense of several Proto 2000 locomotives.

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SD 45

G.M's SD 45 3600 h.p. locomotives are old in their years and technology but somehow they have always appealed to me. Maybe it is their flared radiators or just the sheer grunt of their V 20 power plants or just because the *Rio Grande* had a number of them. I do not recall ever seeing5327 in action. In publications featuring the *Denver and Rio Grande* road power, there are very few illustrations featuring SD 45 No. 5327.

Above; Me and my favourite locomotive, SD45 , 5327 at Burnham Shops in 1988.

The day I saw this locomotive was outside the Burnham shops in Denver. She was not going anywhere as thieves had stolen the copper power cables that were attached to the traction motors. After being retired in 1993 5327 was rebuilt by Morrison Knudsen as an SD 40-2 and renumbered SP 8680.
Even my little Toyota Corolla has the number plate

SD 45

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We end this series on the San Luis Valley and my modeling efforts, with a view of the local from South Fork heading east to Alamosa. Later in the day at least four GP 40's will lift this consist over the La Veta Pass to Walsenburg and on to Pueblo.