

GRANDE GOLD

A LEVIN DIVISION PUBLICATION

FROM THE YARD MASTER

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FUTURE ISSUES

THE CREEDE BRANCH - FURTHER TRACK PLANS PROTOTYPE AND MODEL. MORE ON MONTE VISTA

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

SOUTH FORK

In this issue we continue our modeling journey through the San Luis Valley. Some time ago I received an email from Roland Levin who resides in Stockholm in Sweden. He had obtained my address from a mutual friend, Rich Schwerer, a great DRGW fan and at one time, a manager in Caboose Hobbies, in Denver U.S.A.

Roland had traveled to the San Luis Valley on two occasions and had amassed a large amount of information, so much so, that he created a web site on the internet. This I highly recommend for anyone interested in this area of the U.S.

He was also surprised that I resided in a town with the same name as his surname. As time went by, much rail fan information was exchanged and it is with his permission that a number of his images of the valley are published in this little journal. I am very grateful for this as the images he recorded have expanded my

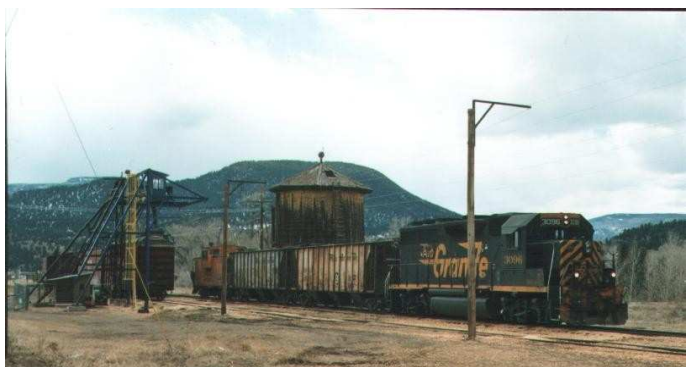
own memories of this unique area to a great extent. The first of Roland's photos appear on this page.



Nature's Grande Gold.



Above; GP40-2 3096 switching at South Fork. Below; A GP 40 about to depart South Fork. Both photos by Roland Levin, Stockholm, Sweden.



SOUTH FORK

We leave South Fork and move east to Hanna.

HANNA

In DRGW days Hanna was recorded on their track plans as a siding with a switch at each end. On the maps published by U.P. the east switch has been removed. I have included this siding in my layout but I have no idea what the surrounding area is like as we did not notice Hanna on our travels. On my layout Hanna siding will be used to store box cars and wood chip gons before being forwarded on to South Fork.

MONTE VISTA

Further east of Hanna was Del Norte. While details of the former depot and the track layout were noted, Del Norte does not feature in my layout plans and so to Monte Vista.

Monte Vista is an interesting railroad location, with sidings which serve large local agricultural industries. Over a period of time several sidings have been disconnected and this is evident in one of the photos.

My original track records of Monte Vista recorded in 1985 were correct in what we saw. What I did not realize was that the track that served what I recorded as a feed mill - actually Colorado Seeds, continued on to sidings serving Mountain King Potatoes and two large grain facilities operated by Coors. My prototype plan corrects the original omission. SPINS track plans of Monte Vista originally produced by S.P. and a later continued on page 4



Above; A general view of the mill complex at South Fork.
Photo; Roland Levin, Sweden.

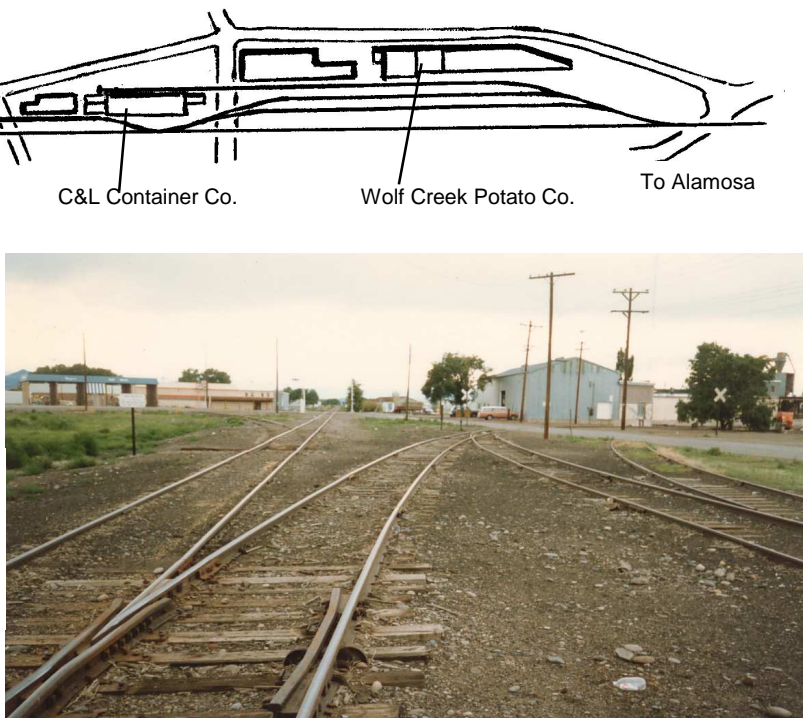
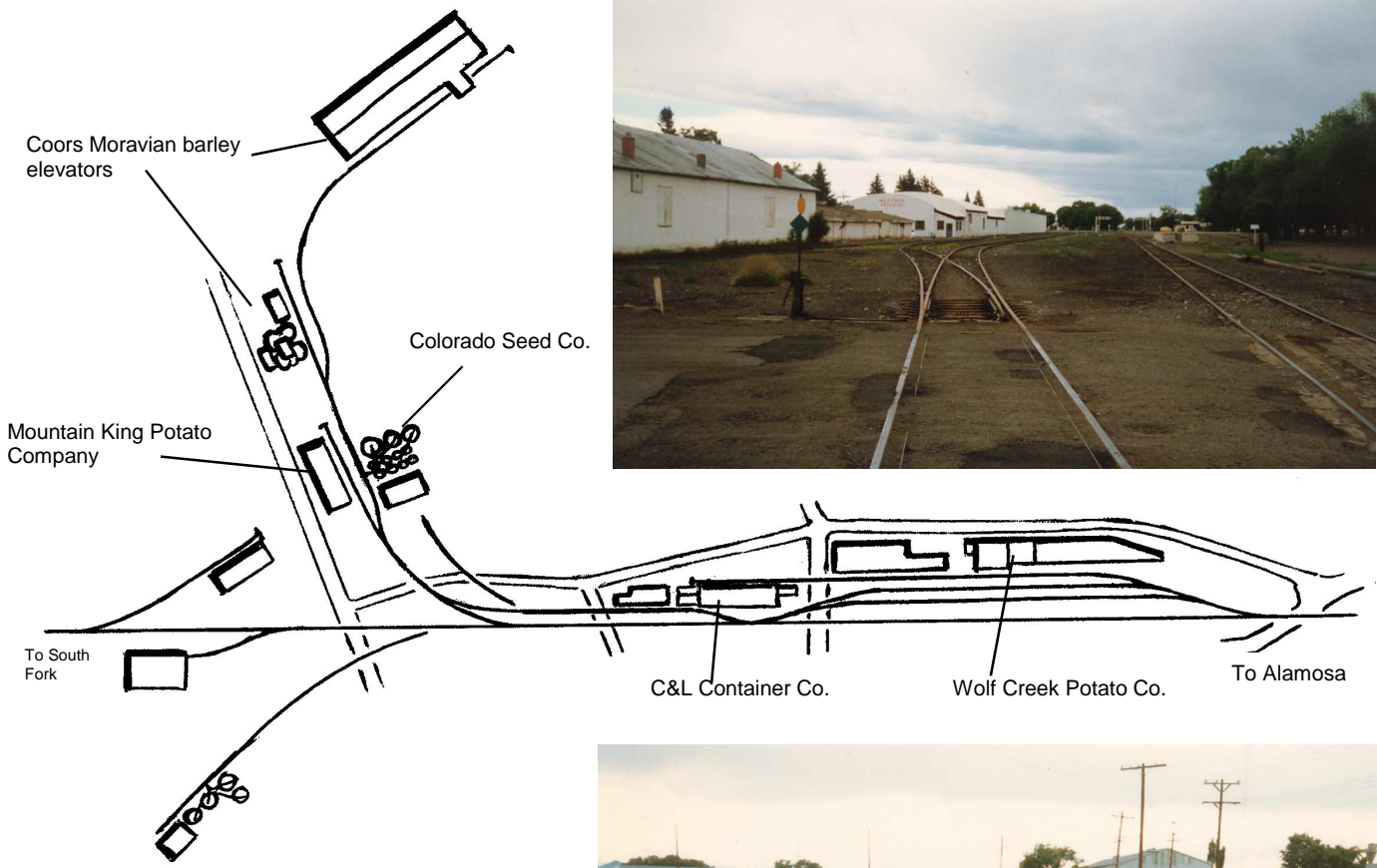
Below; A general view of South Fork looking east.



Below; A closer view of the chip loader and water tank. Note the tank cars on the siding. These contain magnesium chloride for use by the highway authorities for deicing roads on the mountain passes in this area.



MONTE VISTA – THE PROTOTYPE



Top right; Monte Vista yards looking east towards Alamosa.
 Right; Monte Vista yards looking west towards South Fork. Two of the switches are no longer operable.



Above; C & L Container Co at Monte Vista. Note the outline on the end of the structure where what I believe was an office block once stood.
 Left; Colorado Seeds elevator at Monte Vista.
 Both photos by Roland Levin, Stockholm, Sweden.

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version published by U.P. are also valuable. Roland Levin's track plan and photos published on his web site were additional sources of information.

One of two valuable sources for railroad track plans on the internet is a mapping system, TopoZone.com. While it is not always complete in every detail for model railroad purposes it is excellent to obtain the extent of the proportions of the prototype. The other is Microsoft TerraServer.com which presents a photographic image of a given area rather than a map image. Both give very good coverage of the San Luis Valley region.

Between the time of our first and last visit to this area an office block attached to C& L Containers had been demolished as had a large warehouse type building located between that firm and the Wolf Creek Potato warehouse. These changes were evident in TerraServer's image which was dated September 1998. Such changes create difficulties for a modeler trying to replicate a certain specific era. On my version of the DRGW to South Fork, my aim is to create something of the atmosphere of the area which we saw here between 1985 and 1995 and not to duplicate the prototype to its finest detail.

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MONTE VISTA – MY MODEL

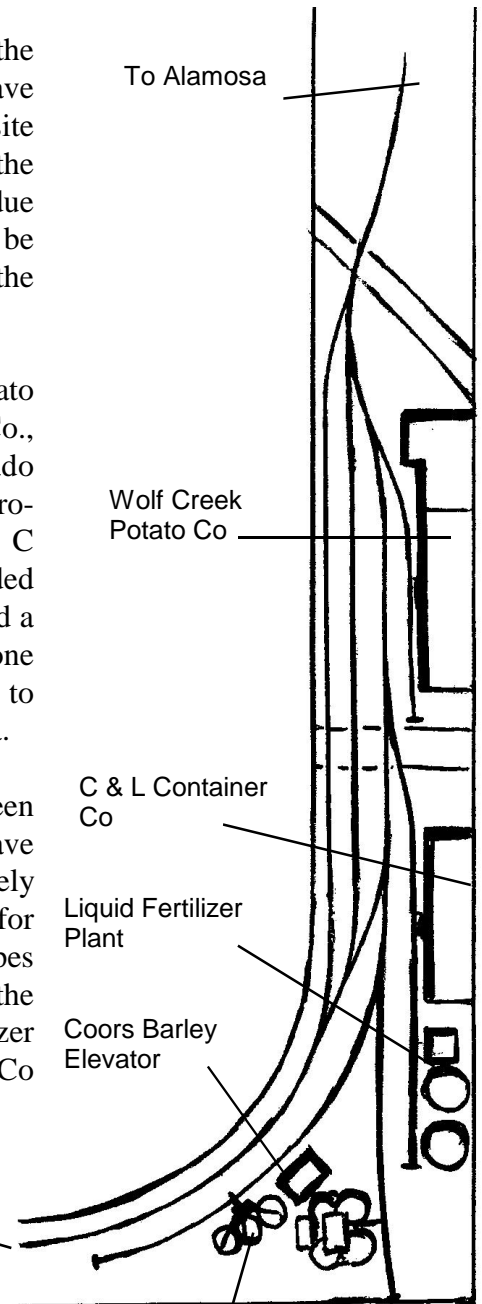
If you compare my model to the prototype you will find that I have laid out the sidings on the opposite side of the mainline to that of the prototype. This had to be done due to the way the top level had to be constructed without destroying the original layout below.

I have included Wolf Creek Potato warehouse, C & L Container Co., Coors elevator and Colorado Seeds. In a departure from the prototype a separate siding for the C & L Container Co. has been added and on this siding is to be located a liquid fertilizer plant similar to one located at Center. This will add to the switching options in this area.

This part of the layout has been tested for operation and I have found that despite its relatively small size, it is a little gem for switching. So far the basic shapes for the Wolf Creek Potato Co., the C & L Container Co, the fertilizer tanks and the Colorado Seed Co have been partly completed.

Each of these structures have had to be modified to suit the layout. Load out doors on the warehouses, not found on the prototype have been installed so as to provide a reason to spot cars on the sidings, serving these industries.

The size of the layout shown is a shelf 13" wide and 108" long from the switch at the Alamosa end to the wall behind Coors Barley elevator. The track is laid with code 100 rail. The switches are



Peco secondhand No 4 or 5 switches which in some cases have had to be rebuilt. The switch mechanisms are a simple wooden dowel extending from the fascia panel to which has been fixed a wire rod extending up to engage the switch blade mechanism. This simple system works well.

More in the next issue.

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