

GRANDE GOLD

A LEVIN DIVISION PUBLICATION

FROM THE YARD MASTER

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- The memories of The Denver and Rio Grande endure.
- Another Rio Grande branch line.
- Prototype information to help your modelling.
- Sold on Gold.
- Hobby ideas.
- Club News.
- The Future.
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Memories are powerful reminders of experiences of years gone by. Photographs are a visual record of these experiences. Model railroaders today owe a debt of gratitude to the photographers of yesteryear who had the interest and ability to record the railroad scene that holds our interest today. Many railroads have all but disappeared from our view.

The DRGW is but one of the railroads that has suffered that fate in the real world. Through a series of soft covered books the technical history of the motive power has been well recorded. A series of hard covered volumes have recorded the historical data.

Recent years have seen a number of excellent monochrome and full colour picture books



Nature's Grande Gold

published.

It is these and each of our own personal records that the images of the DRGW will remain for ever.



THE CREEDE BRANCH OF THE RIO GRANDE

The San Luis valley in Colorado is a huge broad valley full of surprises. They range from the huge sand mountains of the Great Sand Dunes National Monument, bison farms, The Cumbres and Toltec Narrow Gauge Railroad, two short lines one of which is still very active and the DRGW Railroad.

A visit in 1995 showed that the change of name to Southern Pacific did not obliterate the Grande Gold influence in this area. Rio Grande emblems were still to be seen on the crew's caps and the freight from Pueblo that day was led by a DRGW GP40-2. The same loco led the evening eastbound freight over La Veta Pass into a summer thunder storm. An orange DRGW caboose completed the consist. The yards at Alamosa for some years were a mystery to me. Much of the trackage had been

removed and generally little or no rolling stock was to be seen although there was considerable tonnage originating from Antonito and the San Luis Central Railroad. In 1995 I discovered the east yard where cars were assembled into east and west bound trains. The accompanying track layouts were drawn from notes made in 1988 and 1995. Alamosa was redrawn from notes made by Chris Walker.

Highway 160 west from Alamosa traverses the broad expanse of the San Luis Valley much of which is under cultivation or cattle ranching. At Sugar Junction the DRGW interchanges with the San Luis Central Railroad. South Fork on the western edge of the valley is the site of a large sawmill which is served by the DRGW. Also here is a water tank still

portraying the famous Grande logo. The track continues a little further on to Derrick where there is a Y and this is the end of current operations.

Further west the railroad enters a valley carved out by the Rio Grande River and crosses the river on a steel through truss bridge. Further up the valley aspens can be seen growing between the tracks. At Wagon Wheel Gap the original depot is still intact although now privately owned. Another gap in the ranges opens up onto an alpine grassland park where the sidings and ore loading ramps at Wasson were located. The railroad curves to the right leaving the valley of the Rio Grande and heads up the valley created by the Willow Creek. It is in this valley that the town of Creede and the ruins of the silver mining era are to be found.



Ore house below the Commodore Mine behind the town of Creede.

CREEDE

Much has been written on Creede, an old silver mining town located near the head waters of the Rio Grande River. Pictures of the township in its early days when served by the narrow gauge DRGW Railroad show a fascinating panorama of the town laid out under towering cliffs at the entrance to Willow Creek Canyon. A fire in 1892 levelled the business district which was rebuilt in brick. Fire again partly destroyed the area in 1936 but much still remains. The railroad depot is now the local museum and is well worth a visit. The railroad tracks remain in place although the area of the Y is being cleared of contaminated mining material.

Continue past the centre of

town alongside Willow Creek and you pass an underground fire station built into the canyon wall. Alongside this is an underground mining museum developed after 1988 and based on the silver mining methods used in this area. Further up Willow Creek the road turns left into West Willow Creek and the scene that unfolds will take your breath away. Perched high on the side of the canyon wall is the remains of the Commodore mine, the greatest silver mine on earth. Continue up the canyon on a grade almost too steep for a front wheel drive car and more mine relics are to be seen. It is almost unreal and what you can see is but a fraction of the buildings and infrastructure that

supported the silver mining boom of the 1890's.

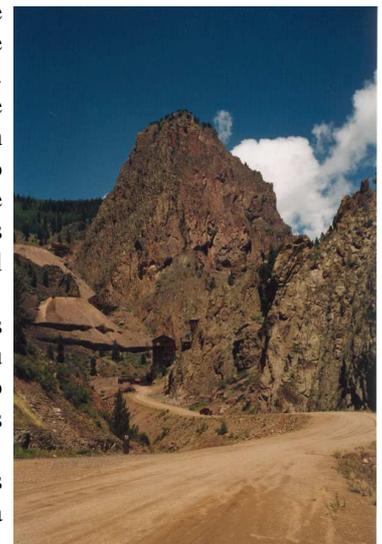
The Bachelor Historic Tour booklet available at the Museum is an invaluable guide to the mining ruins. The 17 mile tour of the mines could take an enthusiast a full day to discover just some of the secrets of the area. There is a reasonable priced motel located in town.

This semi remote area is well worth a side trip if you are on your way to Antonito or over Wolf Creek Pass heading for Durango.

The Great Sand Dunes National Monument is a sightseeing "must see". Railroad enthusiasts should not miss a visit to the San Luis Central Railroad. This is a very interesting short line.

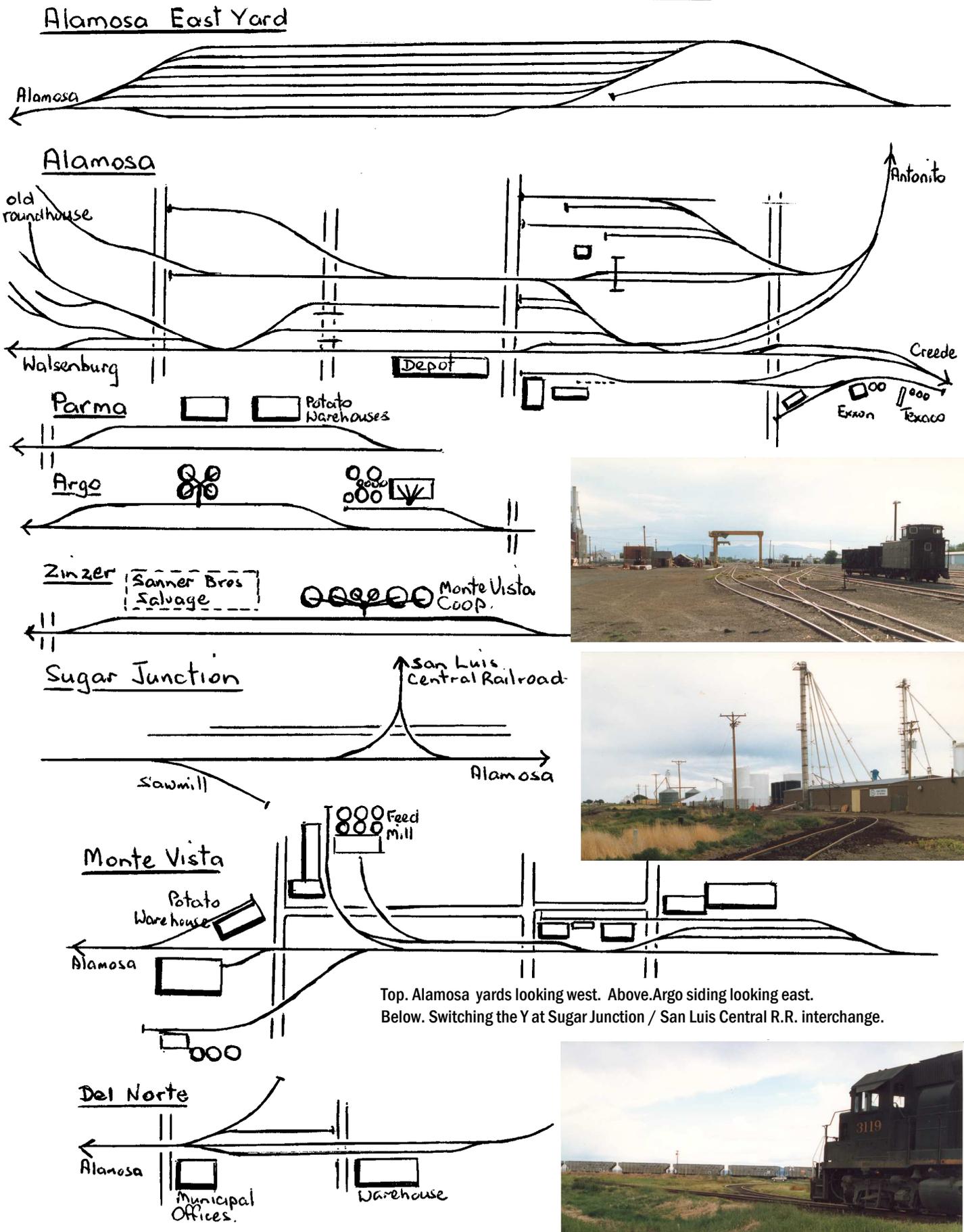
CREEDE

A Colorado boom town where men made millions from cliffs of solid silver.

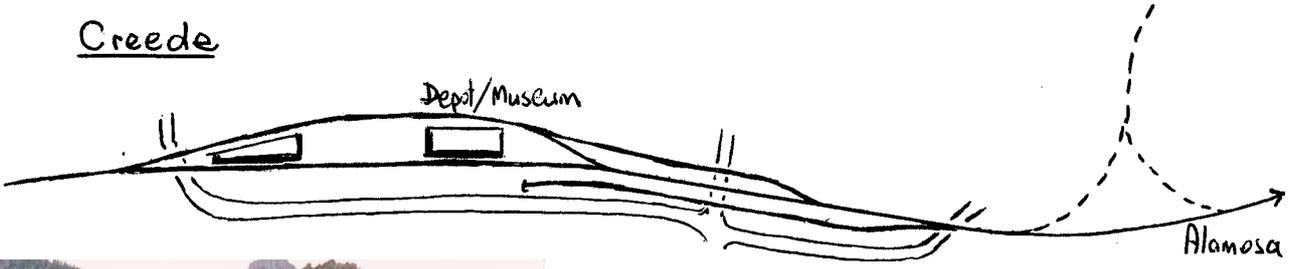
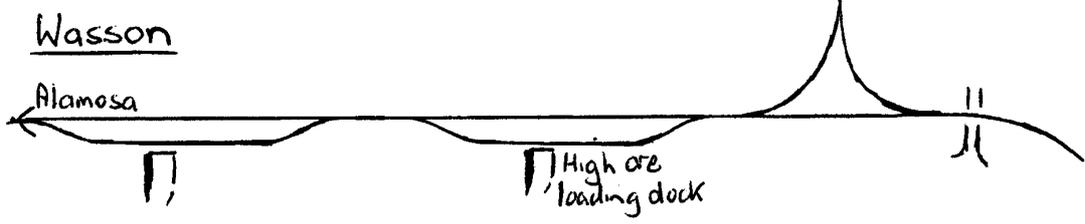
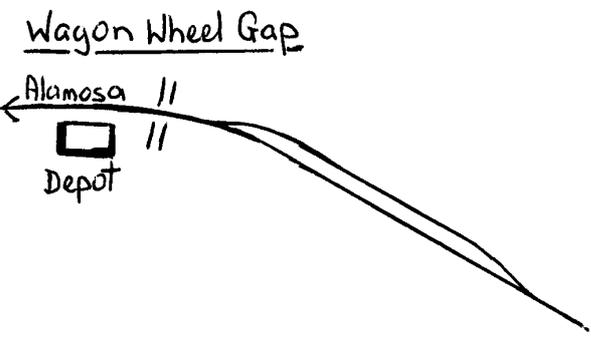
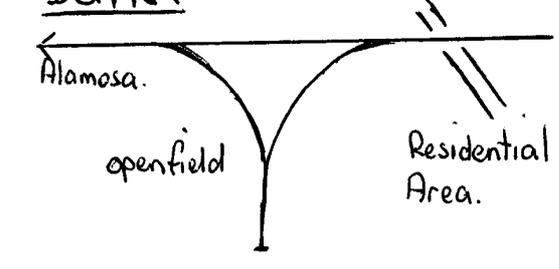
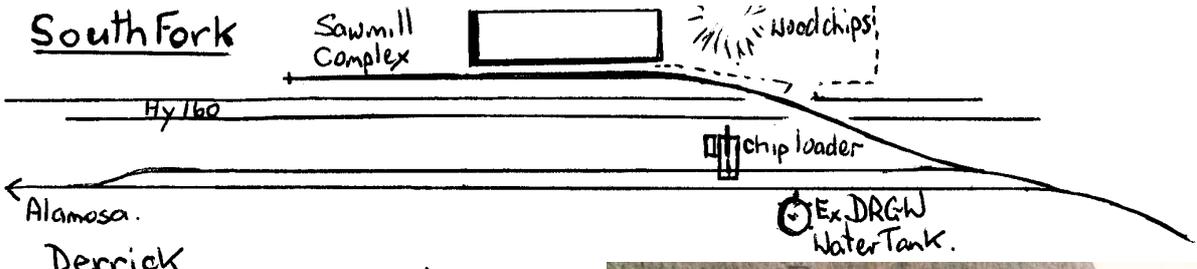


The Commodore Mine high above West Willow Creek behind Creede.

RIO GRANDE CREEDE BRANCH.



Top. Alamosa yards looking west. Above. Argo siding looking east. Below. Switching the Y at Sugar Junction / San Luis Central R.R. interchange.



SIGNALS ON THE DRGW

Illustrations – clockwise.

Approach to east switch at Tolland.

Departure west switch at Pando.

Intermediate block at Coal Creek.

Combined block signal near Phippsburg.

Sunnyside Branch and passing loop signals at the west switch at Mounds.

Main line and loop departure signals at the east switch at Malta.

Loop starting signals appeared to vary considerably . It was noted around Provo that some of these were all shapes and sizes and would make interesting modelling.



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SOLD ON GOLD

The other day the postie came
Delivering us some mail,
And very much to our delight,
No bills it would entail.

All keen to find out what was there
Atop our little rise.
Judy walked up to our letterbox,
To reveal a little surprise.

In amongst our mail
And about to unfold,
Was our very first issue
Of Rio Grande Gold.
A lovely little script,
Giving us more than just a hint
It was the very first of whats to come,
From whats known as Audray Print.

From the Mainline Thru The Rockies
To the mighty Moffat Division
Producing this periodical
Is an interesting decision.

With useful little titbits,
To colour oh so bold
Good luck to you Audray,
With Rio Grande Gold.

Graeme and Judy.

+++++

Not only are they great at model
railroading , but sounds like poetry too!

Editor.

**SHORT LINES SIDINGS
AND
OTHER STUFF**

MIXING PLASTER OF PARIS

When making a batch of this stuff for the basis of your scenery place the appropriate amount of plaster in an ice cream container.

Fill a household plastic bucket two thirds full of water. Take the ice cream container and submerge it in the bucket of water. Leave it for several minutes until all the air bubbles have risen to the surface. Remove the container and decant the surplus water. Give the plaster a quick stir and place where required on the layout.

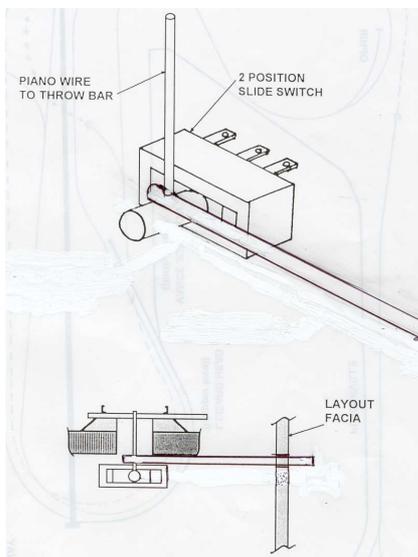
The resulting mixture is creamy smooth and free of lumps.

**SLIDE SWITCH POINT
MOTORS**

When mounting these slide switches under the layout on an aluminium bracket, instead of using a brass rod for the throw bar substitute a length of 6 mm wooden dowel.

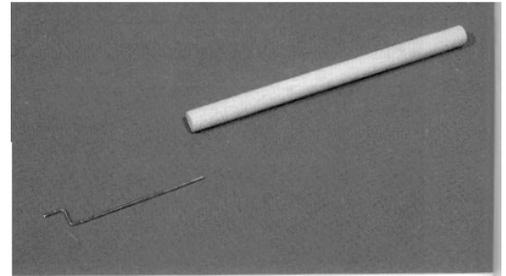
About 10 mm from the end drill a hole the size of the piano wire throw bar and slip this over the wire so it rests on top of the slide switch knob. Drill a 6 mm hole in fascia panel, thread the dowel through it and connect it with the slide switch. Align the slide switch action with the railroad point on the layout and attach to the baseboard. Cut the dowel rod off after leaving enough protruding to operate the slide switch.

The dowel could be recessed into the fascia panel if necessary.



UNCOUPLING TOOL

I noticed this little gem recently in a magazine and it works very well so long as there is no tension on the couplings. The end of the device is placed over the glad hand of the Kadee and then pulled towards the operator. The couplers disengage. They are easy to make too.



To make this tool cut a 13 cm piece of 6 mm dowel and an 8 cm piece of 1.5 mm brass rod. Put a couple of 7 mm bends at the end of the wire and then glue it into a hole made in the end of the piece of dowel. It works like magic.

MINI AMRA

PALMERSTON NORTH

On the weekend of the 13-14 February 1999 the Scale Rails Model Railroad Club of Palmerston North hosted a very successful regional convention. Over 60 modellers from as far away as Christchurch and Hamilton attended. Visits to 12 layouts, 10 American and 2 based on the English prototype were arranged. The remainder of the weekends programme comprised the presentation of two clinics, along with a buy sell and swap and a quiz programme which made the experts scratch their heads. Lunches as well as a barbeque on Saturday evening were provided for those attending.

Congratulations to the Club for organising such an enjoyable regional convention.

FUTURE ISSUES

The Cane Creek Branch of the former DRGW along with modelling ideas and club news will feature in the next issue to be published in June 1999.