



In 1881, construction of the D&RG (1883n) narrow gauge mainline reached Gunnison, Colorado, where the D&RG continued building both westward to complete its mainline to Utah and northward to the mining center of Crested Butte, which was reached in 1881. Crested Butte produced primarily coal but also silver and gold. By 1955, the D&RG Crested Butte Branch (1881n) and the entire D&RG (1883n) narrow gauge mainline were abandoned.

Southeastward view of the Crested Butte Depot for the D&RG Crested Butte Branch (1881n). The D&RG built the Depot on 1883. Historical photos show at least two tracks on this side of the building. An 1888 topo map shows that spurs led from here to the mines. The Depot was active until the tracks were removed in 1954. Rehabilitation of the Depot spanned four years from 2012 - 2016 and now houses offices for the High Country Conservation Advocates and the freight room and the south end of the building are available for rent for events and meetings.





Southwestward view of the other side of the Crested Butte Depot.

716 ELK AVENUE
DENVER AND RIO GRANDE DEPOT
CONSTRUCTED 1883

THE DENVER AND RIO GRANDE NARROW GAUGE RAILROAD ARRIVED IN CRESTED BUTTE ON NOVEMBER 21, 1881. THE MOMENTOUS EVENT CONNECTED THE TOWN AND THE AREAS COAL RICH MINES WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD. THE TRAIN WAS LIMITED TO 50 CARS, MAINLY FREIGHT INCOMING, AND COAL OUTGOING WITH A PASSENGER CAR ADDED WHEN NEEDED. DURING THE WINTER, A ROTARY FLOW STEAMED THROUGH SNOW AND AVALANCHES TO CLEAR THE TRACKS. THE WOOD FRAME DEPOT WAS CONSTRUCTED BY THE D&RG CO. AND REMAINED IN USE UNTIL 1954 WHEN THE RAILROAD WAS ABANDONED. THE BUILDING'S NORTH END SERVED AS THE PASSENGER WAITING ROOM. THE FREIGHT ROOM WAS ON THE SOUTH END AND THE OFFICE IN THE CENTER. UPSTAIRS WERE THE STATION-MASTER'S QUARTERS. CHARLES AND INA MCCANDLESS OPERATED THE DEPOT AND LIVED HERE WITH THEIR FAMILY FROM THE 1940'S TO 1954 WHEN THE STATION CLOSED.