



The railroad that would become the Colorado Central Railroad was originally chartered as the Colorado & Clear Creek Railroad in 1865 by Loveland and other entrepreneurs in the town of Golden, which at the time was the capital of the Colorado Territory. Loveland and his partners planned a standard gauge railroad up Clear Creek Canyon to mining centers west of Denver. In 1866, the name of the railroad was changed to the Colorado Central & Pacific Railroad; in 1867, the company was reorganized with Union Pacific investors and in the same year the capital of Colorado was shifted from Golden to Denver; and in 1868, initial construction began on a line connecting Golden to Denver and the company changed its name to the Colorado Central Railroad with the goal of beating the Denver Pacific Railway to the UP mainline at Cheyenne, Wyoming. The DP line was completed to Cheyenne in June 1870, while the CC turned its attention to completing the 14-mile line from Golden to Denver, which it completed later in 1870. In the same year, the UP agreed to finance the CC's expansion north from Golden and construction reached 47 miles north to Longmont in April 1873, where it stalled for over four years due to an economic downturn, the Panic of 1873. Finally, in July 1877, the CC with UP backing started construction of its line from Longmont north to the UP mainline at Cheyenne and the 65-mile-long connection opened for traffic in November 1877. The CC was leased to the UP in 1879, which gave the UP complete control over the railroad traffic between Denver and Cheyenne, either over CC or DP tracks.

In 1890, the CC was one of a dozen UP-controlled railroads in Colorado and New Mexico that became part of a new UP-controlled Union Pacific Denver & Gulf Railway. In 1893, the UPD&G was separated from UP and sold under foreclosure to a group of its creditors and bondholders. In 1899, the group reorganized most of the standard gauge UPD&G (including the CC mainline from Denver to Cheyenne) as the Colorado & Southern Railway, which was later acquired by the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, which in turn was folded into today's BNSF system.

Southward view of the CC mainline two miles north of downtown Longmont, where the CC stopped northward construction toward Cheyenne in 1873, then started again in 1877 when this grade was built.



Northward view of the CC (now BNSF) mainline at the same location as the previous photo.