



The development of irrigation canals and wells in north-central Colorado circa 1900 opened the area to farming, the most profitable being the sugar beet industry. In 1899 the City of Loveland was the first to open a sugar beet processing plant in Colorado and within a few years factories were being built in Eaton, Greeley, Longmont, Fort Collins, Windsor, Johnstown, Sterling, Fort Morgan, Brush, and Ovid. The Great Western Railway was organized in 1901 and built slowly until its short-haul system was complete in 1917. While GW's main purpose was to transport beets, sugar, molasses, coal, and lime rock, it also operated a passenger service from 1917 to 1927. Train service for beets was phased out in favor of trucking in the late 1970's. Today, the Great Western Railway operates on over 80 miles of owned tracks and trackage rights hauling agricultural products, paper, plastics, sand, forest products, brewing grains, beer, and miscellaneous by-products.

This northward view of the GW line 4 miles east of Longmont has a siding for an agricultural plant, but it's hard to tell whether the plant still uses the railroad.