



The Fort Worth & Denver City Railway Company was chartered in 1873 to build a line from the Gulf of Mexico to Colorado by way of Fort Worth. In 1881, the FW&DC came to an agreement with the Denver & New Orleans Railroad, which planned to build south from Denver, to connect the two lines at the Texas-New Mexico border. In late 1881, construction of the FW&DC commenced at Hodge Junction, just north of Fort Worth, Texas (east of the SWRRH Map area), and by 1888 the line had reached the Texas-New Mexico state line. Meanwhile, in 1882, D&NO had reached southward from Denver only to Pueblo, Colorado, and had stopped there. Therefore a new railroad, the Denver, Texas & Fort Worth, was organized to build the section of the FW&DC route south and east from Pueblo to the Texas-New Mexico state line (east of the SWRRH Map area). Before all this, in 1876, the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad had completed a narrow-gauge line south from Pueblo to El Moro, 5 miles short of the town of Trinidad, where building stopped (until 1887, see below) because of litigation that resulted in the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway gaining access to Raton Pass into New Mexico (which was the D&RG's reason for building south from Pueblo). The D&RG (1876n) was a "road to nowhere" until 1887 when the DT&FW, rather than constructing a parallel route north of Trinidad to Pueblo, worked out a trackage rights agreement with the D&RG that involved extending the D&RG (1876n) 5 miles south from El Moro to Trinidad (not shown separately on the SWRRH Map) in 1887 and dual-gauging of the D&RG (1876n) from Pueblo to Trinidad in 1888. Also in 1888, the DT&FW was completed between Trinidad and the Texas-New Mexico state line (where is met the FW&DC east of the SWRRH Map area). Service between Fort Worth and Denver began on April 1, 1888. During that year the DT&FW gained control of the FW&DC and in 1890 became part of the Union Pacific, Denver and Gulf Railway Company, the first step in a long history of mergers, splits, and re-organizations. Today, the DT&FW (1888), including this section near Branson, Colorado, is owned by BNSF and the UP runs trains via trackage rights.

Northwestward view of the DT&FW (1888), now BNSF, where it runs through ranchlands 7 miles west of Branson, Colorado. The distant highlands are part of an east-west trending line of mesas that constitute the topographic high that is crossed by Raton Pass.



Southeastward view of the DT&FW (1888) at the same location as previous. This is high-grade welded track on concrete ties.