



In August 1904, prospectors found gold on the south side of a southwestern Nevada hill later called Bullfrog Mountain and speculators rushed to what became known as the Bullfrog Mining District. Within the district, gold rush settlements quickly arose near the mines, and Rhyolite became the largest. Starting as a two-man camp in January 1905, Rhyolite became a town of 1,200 people in two weeks and reached a population of 2,500 by June 1905. Stage coach and automobile lines ferried people and cargo between Rhyolite and railheads in Goldfield (Goldfield Railroad (1905) 60 miles north) and the rail station in Las Vegas (San Pedro, Los Angeles & Salt Lake Railway (1905)). Ernest Montgomery, the original owner, and his partners sold the mine to industrialist Charles M. Schwab in February 1906. Schwab expanded the operation on a grand scale, hiring workers, opening new tunnels and drifts, and building a huge mill to process the ore.

Three railroads rushed to serve Rhyolite. The first was the Las Vegas & Tonopah Railroad (1907), which ran its main line right through Rhyolite and began running regular trains to the city in 1906. In 1907, the Bullfrog Goldfield Railroad (1907) built from the north, crossed the LV&T at Beatty (this location), where both lines followed the Amargosa River through a water gap in the Bullfrog Mountains, then south of Beatty the BG made a big U-turn to access Rhyolite from the south. In the same year, the Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad (1907) built from the south and connected to the BG at Gold Center at the south end of the big U-turn to access Rhyolite via the BG. All three railroads were abandoned as the mines played out, and Rhyolite is now a ghost town.

U.S. Highway 95 was built through Beatty, which was where the LV&T crossed the BG. This mural in Beatty is the only evidence of the railroads in town, here featuring the T&T (whose tracks never reached Beatty). As we shall see below, there is plenty of georailfan material to explore around Beatty.



Eastward view of the LV&T (1907) grade a half mile west of Beatty, which is visible in the distance.





Westward view of the LV&T (1907) grade 1 mile west of Beatty.





Westward view of the LV&T (1907) 2 miles west of Beatty, about halfway to Rhyolite.





Westward view of the LV&T (1907) 2.5 miles west of Beatty, where a fill grade is washed out and a deep cut is present in the distance.





Closer view of the cut grade in the previous photo.



Westward view of the LV&T (1907) grade in the foreground, 4 miles west of Beatty. The remaining building of Rhyolite are in the distance. The darker building just right of center is the LV&T Depot.





Westward view of the LV&T (1907) grade (foreground) and the LV&T Rhyolite Depot.





The front of the LV&T Rhyolite Depot, which was constructed in 1909.





The back of the LV&T Rhyolite Depot; the tracks ran through the paved area between the depot and the old caboose. The caboose has Los Angeles & Salt Lake (LA&SL) and Union Pacific lettering (successors to the San Pedro, Los Angeles & Salt Lake Railroad (1905), of which the LV&T was a branch line).







The three-story John S. Cook and Co. Bank on Rhyolite's Golden Street was built in 1908 and epitomized Rhyolite's opulence, featuring Italian marble stairs and imported stained-glass windows, all brought in by rail.



Eastward view of the LV&T (1907) grade (foreground) and the LV&T Rhyolite Depot.





Westward view of the LV&T (1907) grade, same location as previous. The alignment curves to the right around the mountain in the distance and heads north to the railroad's terminus at Goldfield.





Now we are back at Beatty, looking north at the BG (1907) grade. The outskirts of Beatty are visible in the distance. U.S. Highway 95 is visible to the right (east), beyond which are trees along the Amargosa River, which cuts a water gap through the Bullfrog Mountains. The LV&T grade is either under the highway or on the other side, I could find no clear trace of the LV&T in this area.





Southward view of the BG (1907), same location as previous.





Now we are 3 rail miles south of Beatty on the BG at Gold Center, where the BG meets the T&T (1907) and makes a big U-turn to Rhyolite. In this eastward view, the BG is on the left and turns left (north) to Beatty. The curved fill grade to the right is the west branch of the wye for the T&T. A switch connecting the BG and T&T was once present in the immediate foreground.





Northwestward view at Gold Center, which was the northern terminus of the T&T (until the T&T took control of the BG in 1908). The west branch of the wye for the T&T is in the foreground and meets the BG is in the left middle distance.





Southeastward view at Gold Center, same location as previous. The west branch of the wye for the T&T is in the foreground and curves to due south. The east branch of the wye is barely visible in the left distance.





Northward view of Rhyolite, 4 miles northwest of Gold Center. The BG, which approached Rhyolite from the south after making a big U-turn south of Beatty and Rhyolite, is somewhere in this view and headed to its terminus at the LV&T Depot, visible in the center distance. A breached fill grade in the foreground may be the BG.





Northward view of the the LV&T Rhyolite Depot. The BG grade is in this view and may be this dirt road.