



The narrow gauge Denver, South Park & Pacific Railroad began construction south from Denver in 1873 and reached the mouth of the South Platte River Canyon in 1878, 20 miles from Denver. In 1879, the tracks crossed the summit of Kenosha Pass, on the drainage divide between the North and South Forks of the South Platte River then crossed the Continental Divide via the Alpine Tunnel to reach Gunnison in 1882. At Gunnison, the DSP&P turned northward to the coal mining center of Baldwin, where the DSP&P reached its end of the line in 1882. In order to continue its goal to reach the Pacific Ocean, the DSP&P continued grading north from Baldwin for about 5 miles but no tracks were laid and construction stopped in 1883. In 1889, the DSP&P was sold at foreclosure and in 1899 was acquired by the Colorado & Southern Railway. The Colorado & Southern started dismantling in 1910 and the last freight and passenger trains operated in April 1937. The DSP&P (C&S) was then abandoned, except for the line between Leadville and Climax, which the Denver & Rio Grande Western converted to standard gauge in 1943.

The DSP&P alignment runs north from Gunnison along Ohio Creek for 16 miles at which point the line splits. According to an 1894 topo map, the east branch continues 2 miles up Carbon Creek (tributary of Ohio Creek) to the town of Baldwin, which is widely cited as the main townsite servicing the area coal mines. Grading for the not-to-be line to the Pacific Ocean continued up Carbon Creek for about 5 miles before work stopped in 1883. An 1888 topo map shows the west branch continuing 2 miles up Ohio Creek to a location called "Mt Carbon," and an 1894 topo map shows the line continuing an additional 4 miles up Ohio Creek to this location, which on the topo map is just an end of track with no name. The mining center of Baldwin seems to have moved around; a modern topo map shows "Baldwin" at the prior location of "Mt Carbon."

Westward view of the DSP&P (1882n) near the end of the west (Ohio Creek) branch. According to historical topo maps, this part of the railroad (the last 4 miles) was built sometime between 1888 and 1894 (not shown separately on the Southwest Railroad History Map).



Slightly different westward view of the DSP&P (1882n) near the end of the west branch.