



The Union Pacific Railroad arrived in Rock Springs, Wyoming, in 1868 and immediately began exploiting the abundant coal in the area to power its engines. I can't tell when the first branch line was built to the coal mines north of town, but ultimately a coal branch line extended 12 miles north of Rock Springs along Killpecker Creek to the mining town of Winton. Winton was declining by the 1930's, so I assume the UP Winton Branch was built around 1900. In 1962, US Steel extended the line about 70 miles to iron deposits around Atlantic City, Wyoming, but that line was abandoned back to a point about 6 miles south of Winton in 1983.

In this northward view, the straight track on the left is the UP Winton Branch at a point 6 miles north of Rock Springs and the same distance south of Winton. The line ends a half mile further up the track (north). The coal is on the eastern side of Killpecker Creek, and no fewer than 5 spurs branched east from the 12-mile-long Winton Branch. All the coal spurs have been abandoned except this one, which heads east one mile to mines around Reliance. Note the coal train in the right distance, at the end of the Reliance Spur.



Southward view of the Winton Branch (right) and the Reliance Spur.



Southwestward view of the Reliance Spur, with the Winton Branch in the distance.



The Reliance Spur leads to a coal train.



Westward view of a bridge that carries the Winton Branch over dry Killpecker Creek, about a quarter mile north of the Reliance Spur. The bank and dry bed of Killpecker Creek is visible in the foreground. The tracks end 500 feet to the right (north) of the bridge.