



There are a couple of things going on at Thayer Junction, Wyoming. The bolted track is the 1868 UP mainline. In this southwestward view, the curve in the track takes the grade around a bend in Bitter Creek, which the UP follows for 60 miles. The train in the background is on the active UP double track mainline, which leaves the original grade for 2 miles to straighten the grade around the bend in Bitter Creek by crossing the creek at two locations; the original grade stays on the north bank of the creek. The re-alignment of the grade likely occurred in the years before 1918, when the UP completed double tracking of its entire transcontinental mainline.



Northeastward view of the 1868 grade around the Bitter Creek bend at Thayer Junction. A few cars are stored on this inactive track.

Also in this view is the other thing that is going on at Thayer Junction, but it is hard to see. Between the foreground curve and the cars there was once a junction with an 8-mile-long UP coal spur to mines around the town of Superior. The UP Superior Branch veered to the left (west and north) and the longer ties that extend to the left were for the switch.



Northeastward view of the 1868 UP mainline around the Bitter Creek bend at Thayer Junction, northeast of the stored cars. Here the tracks curve eastward and join the active mainline 2 miles up (east). The bridge crosses the dry creek of Horsethief Canyon, which the UP Superior Branch followed up to the town of Superior.



The dry creek of Horsethief Canyon at Thayer Junction. The piles carried the Superior Branch over the dry creek to the grade visible on the right. A web page for the town of Superior notes that "about 1903 plans were laid for the construction of a railroad from Thayer Junction on the main line to Superior," so I estimate the construction completion year as c1905.