



The Utah Railway Company was incorporated on January 24, 1912, with the name of Utah Coal Railway, shortened to Utah Railway in May of the same year. It was founded to haul coal from the company's mines in central Utah (including this location at Hiawatha). The Utah Railway opened in 1917, with a 20-mile line from the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railway (1883n) mainline to Mohrland with a few short branches to coal deposits (including the 3-mile spur that starts at the switch in this photo). Parent company Mueller Industries sold the Utah Railway in 2002 to Genesee & Wyoming Inc., a railroad holding company. Today's Utah Railway operates over 423 miles of track between Grand Junction, Colorado, and Provo, Utah, of which 45 miles are owned (including this trackage; the remaining trackage is operated under agreements). About half of the owned trackage is the original Utah Railway (1917) and the remainder is other, shorter branch lines. As of January 2017, the company no longer hauls coal.

Southward view of the Utah Railway (1917) at the south end of the small coal mining center of Hiawatha, 16 miles south of the D&RGW (1883n) mainline and 4 miles north of the end of the line at Mohrland. The junction in this view is the northern of two junctions, the second not visible in the distance, that lead to two spurs. The second spur is obscured by the sagebrush in the upper right, on the other side of the curved track of the closer spur on the right. These spurs are essentially switchbacks, climbing in elevation to the (abandoned?) town and coal mine that bear the "Hiawatha" moniker. The spurs run parallel to each another and split into sidings and rejoin, with a single track extending 3 miles to the Hiawatha Mine, according to a 1923 topo map. Satellite imagery indicates that tracks currently are present, sporadically, only for the first mile (including here). Note the dark, flat area just to the left (east) of the mainline track; a siding was removed from that area (see next photo).





Southward view of the Utah Railway (1917) a few steps to the left (east of the previous location). The switch is the same junction as in the previous photo (leading to the lower/northern of the two spurs. The second spur is obscured by the sagebrush and joins the mainline out of sight in the distance. The track in the foreground is a cut siding that once extended into the dark, flat area just to the left (east) of the mainline track.

Satellite imagery shows there is an abandoned (tracks removed) turning wye 3,000 feet down the line (toward Mohrland at the end of the line). The wye may have been abandoned when the Utah Railway switched from steam to diesel.



Eastward view of the Utah Railway (1917) 100 feet west of the previous location, where the tracks cross Utah "Highway" 122. There are four tracks that cross the road, from nearest to farthest: the upper spur (hidden by sagebrush in the previous photos), the lower spur, the mainline, and the cut siding (in foreground of previous photo).



Southeastward view of the Utah Railway (1917) at Hiawatha, 100 feet north of the previous location. The same crossing of Utah "Highway" 122 is just beyond the traffic cones. There are three tracks that cross the road in this view, from left to right: cut siding, the mainline (which extends to the foreground), and the lower spur (above the cone in the upper right corner of the photo). The crossing of the upper spur is just out of sight on the right. The mainline in the foreground has a switch and some ties still in place for an otherwise removed siding.



Northwestward view of the two spurs of the Utah Railway (1917) at Hiawatha, 50 feet west of the previous location and the mainline (out of sight to the right). The lower of the two spurs is in the foreground and the higher spur is in the upper left. The dark object on the extreme right edge of the photo is a discarded steel frame of some sort, which we'll use for reference in the next photo.



Northward view of the higher of the two spurs of the Utah Railway (1917) at Hiawatha, 40 feet west of the previous location and the lower spur. The lower spur is just visible in front of the discarded steel frame (referenced in the previous photo). In the foreground, the upper spur splits off a siding so now three tracks are heading to the Hiawatha town and mine.



Northeastward view, same location as previous. The siding switch on the higher of the two spurs is in the foreground, the lower spur is barely visible just in front of the closest two boulders, and the Utah Railway (1917) mainline is visible on the other side of the closest boulders (across the dirt road and just in front of the pile of boulders). The valley in the distance is the canyon of the Price River, which is followed by the D&RGW (1883n).



Now we've moved 3 miles south to Mohrland. The Utah Railway (1917) alignment has turned due west and we're looking eastward (in the direction of Hiawatha). The current end of track is in the center foreground, almost gone/buried. According to a 1923 topo map, the town of Mohrland, now gone, was to the right (south) of the track and the original (1923) end of the line was one mile behind the viewer at the Mohrland Mine loading site.





Eastward view of the Utah Railway (1917) one mile west of the previous location, where the line originally ended at the at the Mohrland Mine site. This building is the only trace I could find (on the ground or in satellite imagery) of the former operations, although the 1923 topo maps shows numerous buildings. As far as I can tell, the railroad ran just to the left (north) of the building, where the grade is now an unpaved road. According to inscriptions (below close-up), the building was built in 1909 for the King Mine operations. Therefore, the building pre-dates the 1917 railroad and the coal was somehow moved from the King Mine, located in the hills 3 miles to the northwest, to this location for shipping.

