



In 1883, the Denver & Rio Grande completed a narrow gauge line west from Salida (on the D&RG Leadville Branch 1880n) over Marshall Pass on the Continental Divide and connected with the Denver & Rio Grande Western at aptly named Grand Junction, Colorado (this location), completing a narrow gauge mainline from Denver to Utah. In 1887, the D&RG completed its narrow gauge Aspen Branch, which was built northward from the end of the Leadville Branch (1880n) over the Continental Divide at Tennessee Pass to the Colorado River at Dotsero, then west along the Colorado River to Glenwood Springs. In 1890, the Colorado Midland and D&RGW cooperated to build a standard gauge line, the Rio Grande Joint Railway, along the Colorado River west from Rifle (where D&RG Rifle Extension 1889n arrived the year before) to Grand Junction (this location). Also in 1890, the D&RG standard-gauged its Leadville Branch (1880n), Aspen Branch (1887n), and Rifle Extension (1889n), and the D&RGW standard-gauged its D&RGW (1883n), completing a standard gauge line from Denver to Ogden, Utah. This connection completed the D&RG/D&RGW Tennessee Pass Route, which supplanted the D&RG (1883n) Marshall Pass Route as the D&RG mainline across the Rockies. In 1934, the D&RGW's Dotsero Cutoff was completed and the Tennessee Pass Route was supplanted by the Moffat Tunnel Route (Denver, Northwestern and Pacific 1913) as the D&RGW (which had since absorbed the D&RG) mainline across the Rockies. At Dotsero, the Moffat Tunnel Route joined the Tennessee Pass Route west to Grand Junction (this location), and west of Grand Junction both routes followed the original D&RG (1883n) Marshall Pass route to Utah.

Northwestward view of the D&RG (1883n) 3,500 feet south of its connection with the D&RGW (1883n) at Grand Junction. The D&RG (1883n) follows the Gunnison River (and its tributaries) from Marshall Pass to here. The D&RG (1883n) from here south to Montrose was standard-gauged in 1906.





Southward view of the D&RG (1883n) 2,500 feet north of the previous location. The bridge in the left distance carries the grade over the Colorado River. The water that is barely visible just beyond the walking trail in the right distance is at the confluence of the Colorado and Gunnison rivers, the "grand junction" for which the city was named. The concrete overpass is 5th Street.





Northward view of the D&RG (1883n) at the same location as previous. Although there were certainly realignments over the years, the left (west) branch of the wye is today's representation of the connection between the D&RG (1883n) and the D&RGW (1883n). The east (right) branch of the wye is the 1890 connection between the D&RG (1883n) and the Rio Grande Joint Railway (1890). The mainline in the distance represents the 1890 connection between the Rio Grande Joint Railway (1890) and the then-newly standard-gauged D&RGW (1883n), which completed a standard gauge line across the Rockies via Tennessee Pass. Today, rail traffic across the Colorado Rockies comes through this location at Grand Junction via the Moffett Tunnel Route, as it has since 1934. This wye creates a "grand junction" that mimics that of the rivers in that the D&RG (1883n) follows the Gunnison River, the D&RGW (1883n) follows the Colorado River downstream, and the Rio Grande Joint Railway (1890) follows the Colorado River upstream.