

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

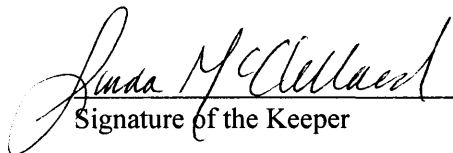
NRIS Reference Number: 09000222

Property Name: Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Caboose No. 0577

County: Montrose State: Colorado

Multiple Name:

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



Signature of the Keeper

April 21, 2009

Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 5: Classification

“Public-federal” is, hereby, added as a classification of ownership for this property. Although the City of Montrose owns the railroad car, the United States Government (National Park Service) is the owner of the property where the caboose is on display and has initiated this nomination.

The Federal Preservation Office (NPS) and Colorado State Historic Preservation Office were notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file**
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

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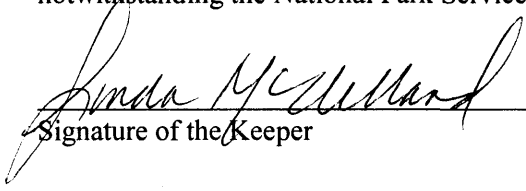
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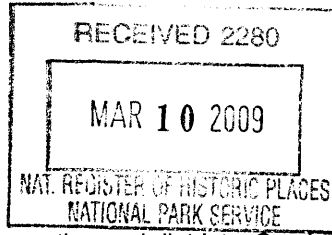
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222

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Caboose No. 0577

other names/site number 5MN.9099

2. Location

street & number Approximately 1 Mile North by Northeast of US 50 at Cimarron, adjacent to Morrow Point Dam Road, Curecanti National Recreation Center (CURE) [N/A] not for publication

city or town Cimarron [N/A] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Montrose code 085 zip code 81220

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [X] statewide [] locally. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Adrian McCalland Signature of certifying official/Title March 11, 2009 Date

National Park Service State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

to W. T. ... Signature of certifying official/Title 3/2/09 Date

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register [] See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register [] See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register
- other, explain [] See continuation sheet.

Adrian McCalland Signature of the Keeper 4/21/09 Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
--------------	-----------------	--

0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/ rail-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/ museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/ narrow gauge caboose

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation
walls
roof
other WOOD/ weatherboard
METAL

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Caboose No. 0577
Montrose County/ ColoradoSection number 7 Page 1**DESCRIPTION**

Denver & Rio Grande Railroad (D&RG)¹ Caboose No. 0577, which measures 8' x 22' 6", is on exhibit on the historic D&RG Pratt Truss Bridge. (The bridge is currently listed on the National Register as D&RG Narrow Gauge Trestle, NRIS #76000172).² The caboose is one of a number of historic transportation-related resources within Curecanti National Recreation Area. Although the historic rolling stock never leave Curecanti National Recreation Area, the National Park Service may occasionally rotate Caboose No. 0577 with other railroad cars on exhibit at the Cimarron Visitor within Curecanti National Recreation Area, an interpretive facility constructed at the former location of the D&RGW rail yard in the townsite of Cimarron, Colorado. The car is also moved to the visitor center maintenance area for repairs and preservation treatments. This caboose is currently one of three pieces of narrow gauge equipment and/or rolling stock on exhibit at the D&RG Pratt truss bridge, approximately one and a half miles away from the Cimarron Visitor Center. (For ease of reading, Denver & Rio Grande, Denver & Rio Grande Western, and Rio Grande are used interchangeably throughout the nomination.)

While the caboose is currently on the bridge, both the Visitor Center and the bridge are appropriate locations for exhibiting the caboose. They both provide an appropriate setting, allowing the caboose to convey its significance as an important vehicle that helped crews conduct business and offered some creature comforts to them.

Built in 1886, Caboose No. 0577 was one of 16 all-wood eight-wheel cars constructed for the D&RG by its own shop. This caboose is an excellent example of rail stock that worked the narrow gauge rails and helped in the expansion of the mineral and livestock industries in Western Colorado. Caboose No. 0577 is unique as are all cabooses due to the modifications crews made for their personal comfort and enhanced workability. In 1973, the Caboose, along with Boxcar No. 3132 and Locomotive No. 278, were placed at their current location and William Jones repainted all three in 1975.³

Specifications

Constructed at a cost of \$685, the car weighed 20,000 pounds and measured 17' in body length, 22'6" over the end sills, and 8' over the side sills. She rode on standard American Car and Foundry-style 3'7" wheel base twenty ton caboose leaf spring arch bar trucks with 26" diameter wheels. These new cars were the first D&RG cabooses to ride on four-wheel trucks. One of the benefits of the increased length and wheel modification of these types over the old 9-foot wheel-base Bobber style arrangement was that the car not only had a smoother ride, being less prone to pitch fore and aft, but also a bit of extra crew storage capacity. The new cars were covered with standard freight car sheathing of 1"x 6" tongue and groove boards, applied vertically on the exterior and horizontally on the interior, and had Westinghouse airbrakes.

¹ The Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Company (D&RGW) had several predecessors. The railroad first incorporated in 1870 as the Denver & Rio Grande Railway Company (D&RG) and became the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad Company in 1886. Beginning in 1921 the railroad operated as the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad Company. The name of the railroad equipment includes the title of the contemporary railroad associated with either the construction or rebuilding of the resource at the designated period of significance.

² The 1976 National Register nomination incorrectly identified the bridge as a trestle. The correct engineering terminology for the span of bridge is Pratt truss. The nomination form should be amended to update the information and correct the name. This nomination form will consistently refer to the bridge by its correct name: Pratt truss.

³ Jerry B. Day, "The History of C-16 #278," *The Prospector*, First Quarter 2003, Vol. 2, Number 1, 8-9.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Caboose No. 0577
Montrose County/ ColoradoSection number 7 Page 2

The new cars received a number of structural modifications from the earlier four-wheel cars. Conversion of the slanted cupola sides on the Bobbers to a new vertical-sided and roomier center cupola style was one of the most noticeable exterior changes. Car body ends changed from curved to squared ends. While the cabooses were originally built with six windows on each side, due to the tendency of train crewmen to kick out the center side window when climbing down from the cupola, the center windows on each side of the car were blocked out. When stoves were added, yet another window was removed, leaving only a single window on the stove side. The interior area near the stove was then sheathed with metal to reduce the risk of fire. Removal of the end platform windows also occurred.

Cupola window arrangements varied as well. Caboose No. 0577, for example, had single-pane side cupola windows as compared to the four-pane side cupola windows used on many of her sisters. The side windows served as escape hatches.⁴ When built, the cars had a windowed box on the cupola roof into which a signal lantern could be placed. These were generally removed around the time of World War II.

Alterations

Home-built cars like this one were subject to modification during their working careers, so no two were ever completely alike, especially in terms of the interior arrangements for seats and storage lockers. This was even truer after the cars entered service. Train crews used them as a home-away-from-home, not just as a workplace, when on the road; they often made custom modifications to suit their own comfort and convenience.⁵

In response to evolving Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) safety requirements, early modifications included such practices as standardizing the placement of the hand brake and the roof walks or running boards consistent with those required for boxcars; coordinating the action of the hand and air braking systems; revising the type and locations of grab irons and cupola handholds; and installing safety railings on the end platforms. By 1920, when it was inventoried by the ICC, the caboose also possessed a conductor's valve and gauge which allowed the conductor to signal for the train to be stopped. The gauge is missing on No. 0577, although its housing and air piping are still present.⁶

Paint Schemes

The cars were originally painted a bright red with white lettering. The interiors were done in a light pea green color and ceilings in a mustard tan or light blue, with floors and platforms mineral brown. Sometime during or right after World War I, the cars were painted Boxcar or Freight Car Red. Car interiors were painted a pea green with black trim.⁷

⁴ Robert E. Sloan, "Rio Grande Narrow Gauge Cabooses." *Finescale Railroader: The 2006 Narrow Gauge Annual* 9 (September 2005): 4-60, 7-8; Robert E. Sloan, *Century + Ten of D&RGW Narrow Gauge Freight Cars 1871 to 1981*, (Winona, MN: BHI Publications.), 172.

⁵ Sloan, *Finescale*, 5-6, 13-15.

⁶ ICC, C.F.R. Title 49, Section 131.10; I.C.C. Lumberton.

⁷ Sloan, *Finescale*, 11; Sloan, *Century + Ten*, 171; Robert L. Grandt, *Narrow Gauge Pictorial, Volume V: Cabooses of the D&RGW* (1987), 3.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Caboose No. 0577
Montrose County/ ColoradoSection number 7 Page 3

The number the car currently bears, 0577, was applied in 1887 when the D&RG renumbered its growing freight car and caboose fleet. In the old numbering scheme, the car was identified as number 93.⁸

Caboose No. 0577 currently is painted in the Royal George/Moffat Tunnel herald of 1936, the same scheme used on all D&RGW rolling stock. Interestingly, sometime after World War II, the car had been painted with the railroad's name mistakenly applied on the name board, reading "Denver and Western Rio Grande," rather than the correct "Denver and Rio Grande Western." At that time it was marked in the company's "Flying Rio Grande" scheme. Amazingly, she seems to have worn that mistake until retirement.⁹ When retired in 1952, the car was painted in the "Flying Rio Grande" scheme adopted by the railroad in 1939.¹⁰

Integrity

Since her retirement in 1952 and preservation work in 1975, Caboose No. 0577 exhibits a high degree of integrity. The caboose clearly represents the elements of design, materials, and methods of construction used by the D&RG in constructing and maintaining active working narrow gauge equipment and rolling stock over a span of sixty-six years, a length of service clearly indicative of the soundness of her design.

The caboose does have a number of condition issues such as peeling paint, wood rot, deterioration of its structural underframe members, and a thinning metal roof. Originally, a tar and canvas roof covering was typical for these cabooses.¹¹ However, the varied and extreme environmental conditions to which the caboose is subjected suggest that maintaining the current metal roof is the best preservation practice.

8 Sloan, *Finescale*, 5, 28-30.

9 Sloan, *Century + Ten*, p. 210; Grandt, pp. 80-81.

10 AFE No. 3103; Bill of Sale from A.E. Sorensen to Montrose Garden Club, May 2cd, 1955; Lease Agreement between the City of Montrose, Colorado, and the National Park Service, August 16, 1973 and March 15, 1989.(originals on file at City of Montrose Office of Community Development.

11 Andrew L. Dahm, "Survey of D&RGW Equipment on Display at Cimarron, Colorado." Prepared for the National Park Service and Mr. Paul Zaenger, July 2, 1997, 24, 26.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [X] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
[] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
[X] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
[] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [] A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
[] B removed from its original location.
[] C a birthplace or grave.
[] D a cemetery.
[] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
[] F a commemorative property.
[] G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- [] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
[] previously listed in the National Register
[] previously determined eligible by the National Register
[] designated a National Historic Landmark
[] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
#
[] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record
#

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ENGINEERING
TRANSPORTATION

Periods of Significance

1886-1952

Significant Dates

1936

Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

DENVER & RIO GRANDE RAILROAD

Primary location of additional data:

- [X] State Historic Preservation Office
[] Other State Agency
[] Federal Agency
[] Local Government
[] University
[] Other

Name of repository:

Colorado Historical Society
Cimarron Visitors Center (CURE)

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Caboose No. 0577
Montrose County/ ColoradoSection number 8 Page 4**SIGNIFICANCE**

Caboose No. 0577 is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A at the State level of significance in the area of **Transportation** for its association with freight train operations on the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad (D&RG). Caboose No. 0577 had the distinction of being the largest group of narrow gauge cabooses in service in the United States.¹² Often built by the railroad's own shops, cabooses like No. 0577 typically spent their service days working on particular portions or branches of a railroad and were often assigned to a particular conductor. It appears Caboose No. 0577 spent most of its working career on the D&RG's Third Division, which ran between Salida and Montrose, Colorado, and was photographed numerous times in service between the two points, including once at Cimarron in July 1939.¹³ Caboose cars served as mobile offices in support of railroad operations and as homes-away-from-home for train crews by providing them with cooking and sleeping accommodations. Modifications by the crews to reflect their individual tastes and preferences resulted in no two caboose cars ever being exactly alike. The period of significance for Transportation is 1886-1952, the year of its construction to the year it was retired from service.

Caboose No. 0577 is also eligible for the National Register under Criterion C, at the State level of significance, in the area of **Engineering**, as an intact example of a caboose designed and built by the railroad's own shops. Caboose No. 0577 served as the rolling office for freight train crews. On long trips they also functioned as kitchen and dormitory. The 1886 car typifies the small cabooses used by the D&RG as well as other railroads in the late nineteenth century. As the design of the caboose evolved, they became larger to accommodate larger train crews in greater comfort. Wood construction gave way to steel for greater crew protection and decreased maintenance. The utility of the car's design is reflected in its remaining in service until 1952. The period of significance for Engineering is the year of its construction, 1886.

Author Robert Sloan categorizes the evolution of the D&RG narrow-gauge caboose into five classes.¹⁴ These classifications represent specific building periods when the design of the caboose evolved to meet changing railroad needs including longer hauling trains and increased crew sizes.

D&RG purchased the Class 1 cabooses new and possibly modified others from existing railroad cars between 1871 and 1885. These first D&RG cabooses were two-axle four-wheeled with a 16-foot body nicknamed "Bobbers." Their name came from the hard bobbing or pitching ride that their crews endured, especially on poorly laid and maintained track. Ultimately, the Bobber-style cabooses proved too small and rough riding to meet the demands of the D&RG and its train crews as the railroad evolved from a short to a long-distance hauler.

In response to the need for a more comfortable ride and increased space for the crew, the D&RG developed the Class 2 caboose. The Class 2 cabooses were two truck, eight-wheeled cars with a longer wheelbase and 17-foot body. Caboose No. 0577 falls within this class of caboose, which the D&RG manufactured between 1885 and 1890. This class of caboose proved to be a "work horse" for the railroad during its service from 1886 until 1953; those that were not retired were reused and converted into Class 5 cabooses. According to Robert Sloan, "ten of the fifteen Class 2 cabooses survive on display" including No. 0577, which is displayed in its historic setting at Cimarron, Colorado.¹⁵

¹² Grandt, 1.

¹³ Ibid., 3, 77-81.

¹⁴ Sloan, 192-194

¹⁵ Ibid.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Caboose No. 0577
Montrose County/ ColoradoSection number 8 Page 5**Denver & Rio Grande Western and Narrow Gauge**

While many railroads eventually came to Colorado, there was no railroad that would come to be identified with, and symbolize the greatness of the state more than the Denver & Rio Grande (D&RG). No railroad was to make as significant a contribution to the economic development of the Colorado-Utah region than the D&RG. Indeed, it was often said that wherever the Rio Grande went, development and settlement followed.¹⁶

Incorporated in 1870, the Denver and Rio Grande Railway was the dream of William Jackson Palmer, a Civil War veteran turned railroad man. In a time when most railroads were busy building East to West, Palmer envisioned a North-South line linking Denver and El Paso, Texas, and eventually Mexico City. Palmer, an avid believer in the West's vast mineral and agricultural potential, especially for the raising of livestock, desired to build a transportation system that would tap into the wealth these resources could provide.

Rich gold and silver deposits were locked in the remote vastness of the mountains, but successful development of mines required reliable transportation. Palmer also recognized the unique quality of the wheat that could be grown in the high and dry mountain valleys. This type of hard, high protein wheat would eventually come to be in considerable demand by the milling industry. But, as Palmer and other enthusiastic boosters of the future state freely admitted, "Colorado without railroads is comparatively worthless."¹⁷

Railroad building in the Rocky Mountain West offered challenges not faced elsewhere in the country. Geography and topography presented formidable demands and barriers to railroad design and construction. The mountains and the steep-walled narrow valleys of western Colorado, especially environmental factors influencing curvature and gradient, tested the skills of engineers to develop equipment types that could operate in such settings.

One solution to the formidable construction challenges that Palmer faced was to build his railroad as a narrow gauge line. At this time, there was no standardized track gauge -the distance between the inside of the rail heads - in the United States. While President Lincoln recommended a five-foot gauge for the nation's first transcontinental railroad, there were other gauges in use, including a six-foot gauge on the Erie. Indeed, it was not until 1886 that a "standard gauge" of four-foot eight-and-one-half inches became the norm for U.S. railroads.

Narrow-gauge railroads had become popular in Europe, however, and what was called "narrow gauge fever" spread to the United States during the 1870s. In 1876, for example, there were 81 narrow gauge railroads operating in 26 states, but nowhere were they more effective and longer lived than in the Rocky Mountain West.¹⁸ Howard Schuyler, a Palmer associate, visited the two-foot gauge Festiniog Railway in North Wales and compared its operation favorably with what the Rio Grande was considering. Palmer himself travelled to England on his honeymoon and talked with narrow gauge advocates there. Subsequently, Palmer decided to adopt a three-foot gauge for his "Baby Road," as it

¹⁶ James H. Baker, ed., *History of Colorado* (Denver: Linderman Co., Inc., 1927), 818; O. Meredith Wilson, *The Denver and Rio Grande Project, 1870-1901: A History of the First Thirty years of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad* (Salt Lake City: Howe Brothers, 1982), 62, 114.

¹⁷ Robert G. Athearn, *Rebel of the Rockies: A History of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964; reprint, as *The Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1977), 4-5.

¹⁸ Stewart H. Holbrook, *The Story of American Railroads* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1947), 360.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Caboose No. 0577
Montrose County/ ColoradoSection number 8 Page 6

was affectionately known by its supporters. The Rio Grande was to be the first major narrow gauge railroad in the United States, and the first north-south line west of the Mississippi River.¹⁹

Narrow gauge railroading promised several initial advantages. Proponents of narrow gauge argued strongly about the substantial cost savings that would be realized in construction and operating costs versus those for standard gauge. By following the local topography as tightly as possible, costs in mountainous terrain were estimated to be about one-fifth of what standard gauge costs would be. In broken and rolling country, the type of country where the Rio Grande would start, costs were estimated to be about one-half that of standard gauge. Roadbeds, cuts, trestles, and tunnels could be constructed with less dirt work in rugged terrain with the narrower gauge. Lighter, less expensive rails could be used to support smaller and lighter locomotives and rolling stock that could more easily negotiate the sharp curves needed to reach deep into the mountains. Also, it was anticipated that some of the branch lines of the railroad that linked the mines to their sources of supply would be built by the mining companies themselves. Thus, the narrower gauge would lower their construction costs, too. Finally, since Palmer had little competition at first, he anticipated that his gauge selection would become the standard for other railroads entering Colorado.²⁰

The decade of the 1880s was a peak period in terms of Colorado railroad construction. About 3,100 miles of track were constructed, with the majority being in the western mountains. By the summer of 1882 the railroad had reached into the Black Canyon of the Gunnison on its way to Montrose and Grand Junction, part of the original main line from Denver to Salt Lake City and Ogden in Utah. The company's 1882 annual report to its stockholders indicated that the stretch through the Black Canyon required heavier work than on any other stretch of railroad in the country, and that the rock work required to navigate the canyon was more expensive than even that portion of the line from Durango to Silverton through the towering San Juan Mountains.²¹

In spite of numerous successes in many states, narrow gauge railroading in America never lived up to the hype of its promoters. Perhaps William Jackson Palmer admitted as much in 1881 when the Rio Grande began to convert parts of its original line, between Denver and Pueblo, to dual gauge and ordered its first batch of standard gauge equipment. In 1890 the railroad completed a standard gauge line to Grand Junction via Tennessee Pass. As a result of the new line, the Rio Grande could offer standard gauge service between Denver and Salt Lake City; the narrow-gauge main line from Salida to Grand Junction was demoted to secondary status.

While initial construction costs of the narrow gauge were an apparent advantage, little was after that. Costs to operate the railroad in terms of train crew size and the building of the physical plant - such as depots, maintenance, watering and coaling facilities - differed little between the two gauges. In addition, narrow gauge cars only carried about two-thirds of the capacity of standard gauge cars. When standard gauge became the dominant track gauge in the country, break-bulk points - places where cargo was transferred between the two gauges - proved costly in terms of labor and time. Finally, the automobile and the truck began to eat away at what little profits remained for the narrow gauge lines by furnishing cheaper and more readily accessible means of transportation.

¹⁹ LeRoy R. Hafen, *Colorado and Its People: A Narrative and Topical History of the Centennial State, Vol. 2* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1948), 647.

²⁰ George W. Hilton, *American Narrow Gauge Railroads* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 49-51; Athearn, 14.

²¹ Hafen, 535; Denver and Rio Grande Railway Co., *Annual Report* (New York: William Mann and Son, 1882), 89.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Caboose No. 0577
Montrose County/ ColoradoSection number 8 Page 7

For nearly a century, the Denver & Rio Grande's narrow gauge lines served Colorado well. While most of the line saw conversion to standard gauge, the "slim gauge" still contributed to the state's economy through World War II, hauling mail, manufactured goods, commodities, and people. Following the war, freight revenues continued to increase due to the growth of industries along the D&RGW line; however, passenger traffic declined. During the 1950s the Rio Grande was involved in a series of legal disputes with the Union Pacific Railroad (UP) as the former attempted to expand its operations. While taking on the powerful UP, the D&RGW abandoned lines failing to produce revenue in a manner described by Robert Athearn as "the process of pruning dead branches from the main trunk in the interest of efficiency."²²

In 1948 the railroad abandoned a portion of its famous Black Canyon of the Gunnison route, part of the original main line constructed in 1882 by the D&RG.²³ By the early 1950s, the Rio Grande abandoned some 40 percent of its narrow gauge lines and activity on its subsidiary, the Rio Grande Southern, also decreased. These declines in business did not warrant keeping an extensive narrow gauge car roster. Unless buyers could be found, almost 500 pieces of narrow gauge equipment stored at Alamosa were proposed for dismantling.²⁴ Narrow gauge trackage continued to diminish over the years until finally in 1967, due to heavy financial losses, the Rio Grande decided to abandon the remaining portions of its narrow gauge mainline between Alamosa and Durango, Colorado, and the branch from Durango to Farmington, New Mexico. By the end of 1968, the last Rio Grande narrow gauge train made its final run.²⁵

Fortunately, when No. 0577 was retired, it was sold FOB (Freight on Board or Free on Board) at Montrose to Andrew E. Sorensen of Montrose, Colorado, in December 1952 for \$650, instead of being scrapped. In May 1955 Sorensen sold the car to the Montrose Garden Club for \$500, who in turn donated it to the City of Montrose. Starting in August 1973, the City leased the car to the National Park Service for one dollar per year. The current lease expires in 2088.

Black Canyon of the Gunnison Route

The ride through the Black Canyon of the Gunnison was one of the most scenic portions of the narrow gauge main line from Salida to Montrose, and it became popular with tourists. The awe-inspiring route through the canyon was fifteen miles long, beginning on the eastern end in Sapinero and ending at the western end in Cimarron. A spectacular outcropping of rock in the canyon known as the Curecanti Needle was even featured as part of the railroad's herald for forty years. It was one reason that the "Baby Road" considered itself "the Scenic Line of the World."

Begun in Pueblo, the D&RG reached Salida in 1880, Gunnison in 1881, Cimarron in August 1882, and Montrose a month later. Though the line did carry some trans-continental traffic until 1890,²⁶ most of the traffic consisted of ore and coal from the San Juan and Gunnison area or increasing numbers of livestock as that industry grew in the region. The Black Canyon of the Gunnison Route connected the silver mines of the San Juans and the Rockies to smelters in Leadville and Pueblo, then to Denver and

²² Athearn, 344-345.

²³ Ibid., 345.

²⁴ AFE No. 2640.

²⁵ Ibid., 345.

²⁶ In 1890 the D&RG converted their narrow gauge line to Grand Junction via Tennessee Pass to standard gauge thereby diverting through traffic from the Marshall Pass-Black Canyon main line.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Caboose No. 0577
Montrose County/ ColoradoSection number 8 Page 8

markets in the east.²⁷ Traffic decreased on the line following the Silver Crash of 1893; however, activity from the San Juans resumed shortly after when the area experienced an increase in gold mining.²⁸ While hard rock minerals fluctuated, coal remained a constant cargo, moving both east and west, for over half a century. Gunnison coal fueled mills, smelters, and railroads, and heated homes.²⁹

After the opening of the D&RG standard gauge lines and the subsequent decrease in through passenger traffic, the railroad moved into the leisure travel industry by providing daytime runs through the canyon, a service which continued until the 1930s.³⁰ At first, the D&RG offered the scenic narrow gauge route as an option for passengers traveling from Denver to Utah. Later the railroad created popular travel packages that included riding the Marshall Pass–Black Gunnison line. Until the turn of the twentieth century, passengers left Salida at 6:30 in the morning on narrow gauge passenger cars, having traveled overnight on standard gauge trains from Denver, and arrived in Grand Junction at 6:00 in the evening where they would switch back to standard gauge cars and continue on to Salt Lake City.³¹ The D&RG then moved from providing a scenic connecting service for through passengers to promoting purely sightseeing excursions. For example, boarding in Denver, tourists stopped at the resort town of Colorado Springs and then continued on to Pueblo. From Pueblo they rode the Black Canyon line to Montrose where they caught the Rio Grande Southern, which delivered them to Durango. From there, passengers rode to Alamosa on the Cumbres Pass Route and then continued back to Denver completing a circle.

Cimarron was an important stop on the D&RG's original line from Denver, Colorado, to Salt Lake City and Ogden, Utah. What began as a tent city when the railroad was under construction grew into a town of 300-500 people whose lives and schedules revolved around the arrival and departure of trains.³² Services for passengers included a quick twenty-minute meal in the restaurant or, for those who wanted a longer rest, an overnight stay in the railroad's hotel. At Cimarron, the railroad added locomotives to west-bound trains to assist in their climb up the difficult four-percent grade over Cerro Summit towards Montrose. In addition to serving as a "helper station," Cimarron became an important stop for loading cattle and sheep headed to markets via the railroad. Buildings formerly at the site that are no longer extant include a hotel, depot, roundhouse, and other related railroad structures.

²⁷ Cornelius W. Hauck, "Transcontinental II: Black Canyon Revisited," *Colorado Railroad Annual*, No. 8 (1970): 101.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 101.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 105.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 108.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 108.

³² National Park Service, "Narrow Gauge Railroad Through the Canyon," National Park Service, <http://www.nps.gov/cure/historyculture/railroad.htm> (accessed 20 March 2008).

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Caboose No. 0577
Montrose County/ ColoradoSection number 8 Page 9

Traffic over the line decreased gradually. The mining industry declined, with ore shipments dropping off as well. In addition, more and more connecting lines converted to standard gauge, limiting the line to just local traffic. The Depression took its toll on the travel industry and train tourism. When the D&RGW completed the Dotsero cut-off in 1934, the railroad diverted even more traffic, including scheduled passenger service, through the Moffat Tunnel.³³ During the 1940s, except for occasional passenger excursions, the principal traffic on the line consisted of the seasonal movement of sheep and cattle.³⁴ Due to the high operating costs associated with the steep four-percent grade and decreasing sheep traffic, the railroad began to abandon the route through the Black Canyon in 1949 starting with the twenty-six mile section between Sapinero and Cedar Creek.³⁵ In 1952 the railroad closed the tracks from Montrose to Cedar Creek.³⁶ In 1954 the D&RGW abandoned the line between Poncha Springs and Sapinero, thereby closing the entire line.

³³ Hauck, 108.

³⁴ Ibid., 108.

³⁵ Athearn, 345; Tivis Wilkins, *Colorado Railroads: Chronological Development*, (Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing Co., 1974), 245.

³⁶ Wilkins, 254.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Caboose No. 0577
Montrose County/ ColoradoSection number 9 Page 10**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Caboose No. 0577
Montrose County/ Colorado

Section number 9 Page 11

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Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Caboose No. 0577
Name of Property

Montrose County/ Colorado
County/State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property less than one

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.) (NAD 27)

- | | | | |
|----|------|---------|----------|
| 1. | 13 | 277590 | 4258776 |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
| 2. | | | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
| 3. | | | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
| 4. | | | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing |

The UTMS were derived by OAHP from heads up digitization on Digital Raster Graphic (DRG) maps provided to OAHP by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lance Westfall, Historian; Frank Carl Barna, Historian for the property owner (Forest Frost- NPS contact)
organization National Park Service; Bureau of Land Management date August 5, 2008
street & number 12795 W. Alameda Pkwy.; 2850 Youngfield St. telephone (970) 240-5433
city or town Lakewood state Colorado zip code 80210; 80228

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Montrose (Contact- Dennis Erickson, Parks Planner/ Project Manager)
street & number 107 S. Cascade Ave./ P.O. Box 790 telephone (970) 240-1430
city or town Montrose state Colorado zip code 81402

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Caboose No. 0577
Montrose County/ ColoradoSection number 10 Page 12**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA****VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The boundary of D&RGW Caboose No. 0577 extends only to the caboose. The caboose, whose measurements are 8' x 22' 6", is located on the Pratt truss bridge* of the D&RG crossing the Cimarron River (NRIS #76000172), the Cimarron Visitor Center rail exhibit, or the visitor center maintenance area, all within the Curecanti National Recreation Area.

Note: As stated above, D&RGW Caboose No. 0577 is currently located on the D&RG Pratt truss bridge crossing the Cimarron River. As such, the UTM points noted within this nomination are associated with the bridge location.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary of D&RGW Caboose No. 0577 extends only to the caboose. Caboose No. 0577, a locomotive, and six pieces of rolling stock are on display within Curecanti National Recreation Area. The National Park Service exhibits the railroad cars and locomotive as part of its interpretative programming on the history of the D&RG/D&RGW and the company's famous Black Canyon of the Gunnison Route. Although the caboose, locomotive, and rolling stock do not leave the recreation area, park staff may occasionally rotate the cars at the Cimarron Visitor Center with cars on exhibit at the Pratt truss bridge of the D&RG crossing the Cimarron River. In addition, the cars may be moved to the visitor center maintenance area for repairs and preservation work.

*See footnote 2 for information about the incorrect identification of the bridge in the 1976 National Register nomination.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

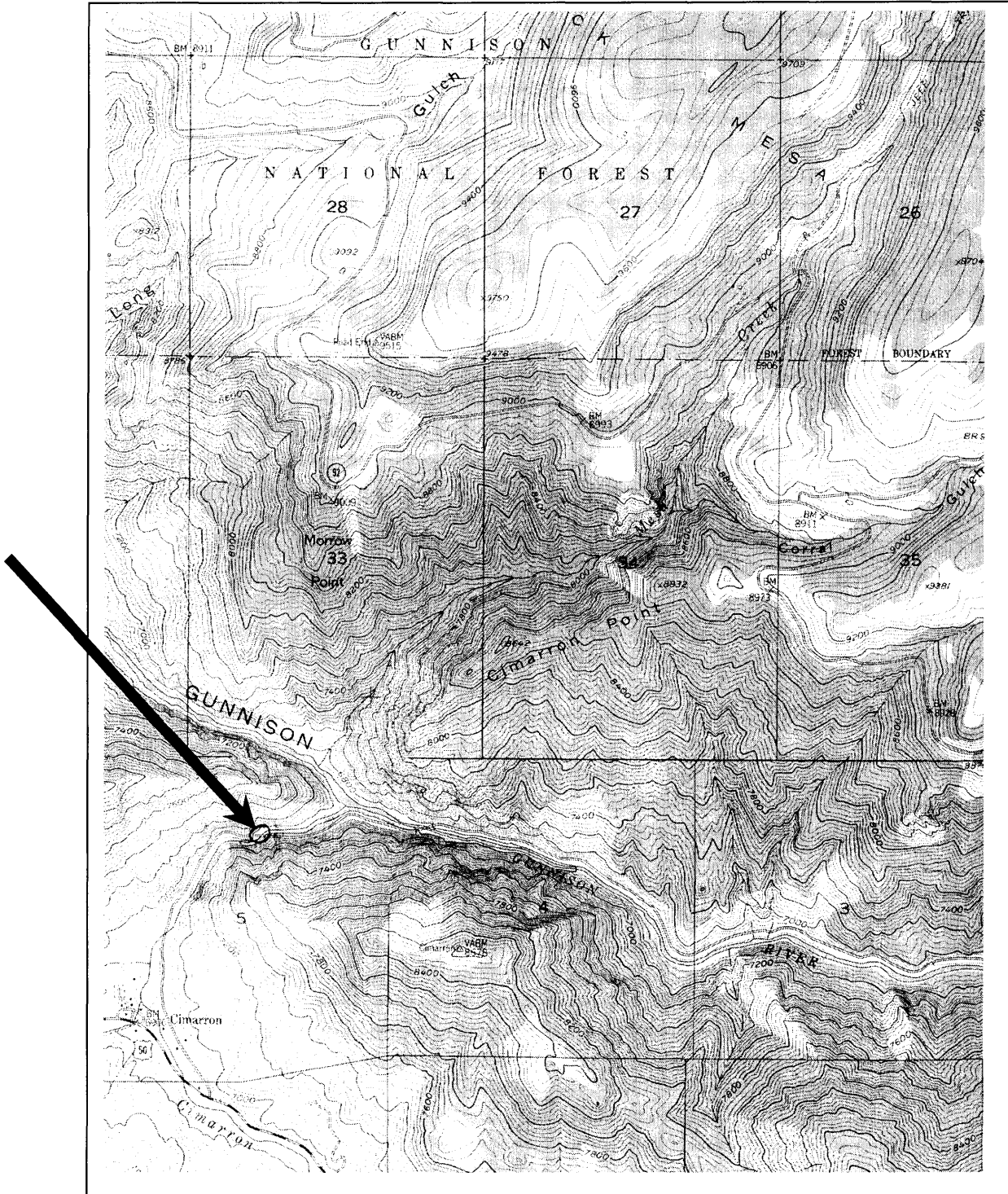
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Caboose No. 0577
Montrose County/ Colorado

Section number ___ Page 13

USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP
Cimarron Quadrangle, Colorado
7.5 Minute Series

UTM: Zone 13 / 277590E / N4258776
PLSS: NM PM, T48N, R6W, Sec. 5
NE¼, NE¼, NE¼, NW¼
Elevation: 6900 feet



National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Caboose No. 0577
Montrose County/ Colorado

Section number ___ Page 14

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-2 except as noted:

Photographer: Forest Frost
Date of Photographs: July 2008
Negatives: cd with tif images on file with the National Park Service, Washington, D.C

Photo No.	Photographic Information
1	CO-MontroseCounty-D&RGWCaboose0577-01. Left side elevation view of Denver & Rio Grande narrow-gauge Caboose No. 0577
2	CO-MontroseCounty-D&RGWCaboose0577-01. "B" end view of Denver & Rio Grande Western narrow-gauge Caboose No. 0577

PHOTOGRAPH LOG - HISTORIC

These photographs may not be included in Internet posted documents and other publishing venues due to copyright restrictions.

Photo No.	Photographic Information
H1	Standard Short Caboose Diagram, Folio Sheet, on file at the Colorado Historical Society.
H2	Cimarron Roundhouse, Photograph taken by Charles Goodman, August 1885. Source: Denver Public Library, Western History and Genealogy, Photo number CHS.Z3. Ronzio Collection.
H3	Broadside view of Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad - Locomotive Nos. 605 (standard gauge) and 340 (narrow gauge), Caboose 0577, and coal tenders at Montrose (Montrose County) Colorado. From Denver Public Library's Western History/Genealogy Dept., photo RR-1721. Taken May 24,1951, by Robert W. Richardson.

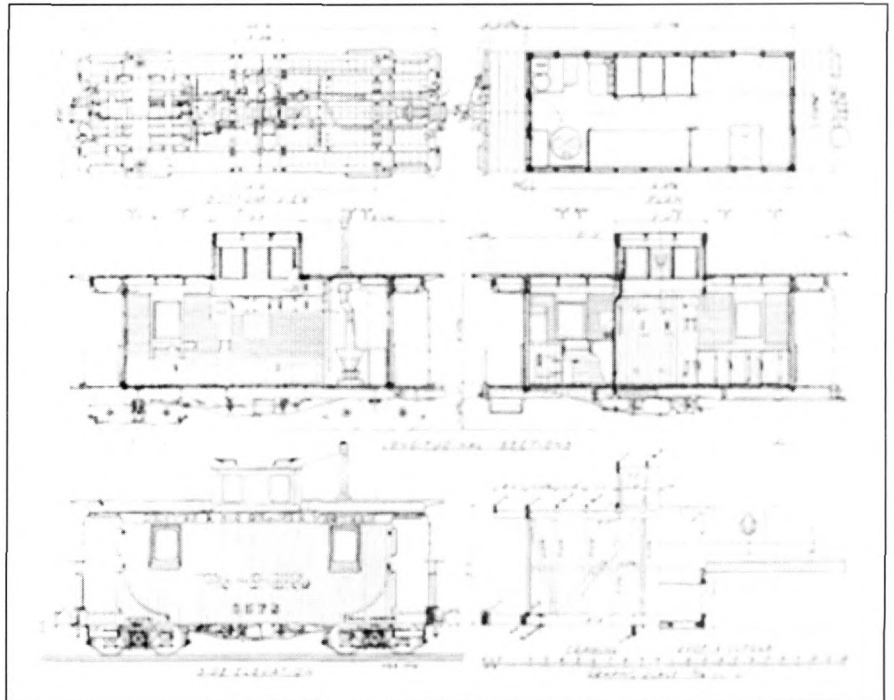
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

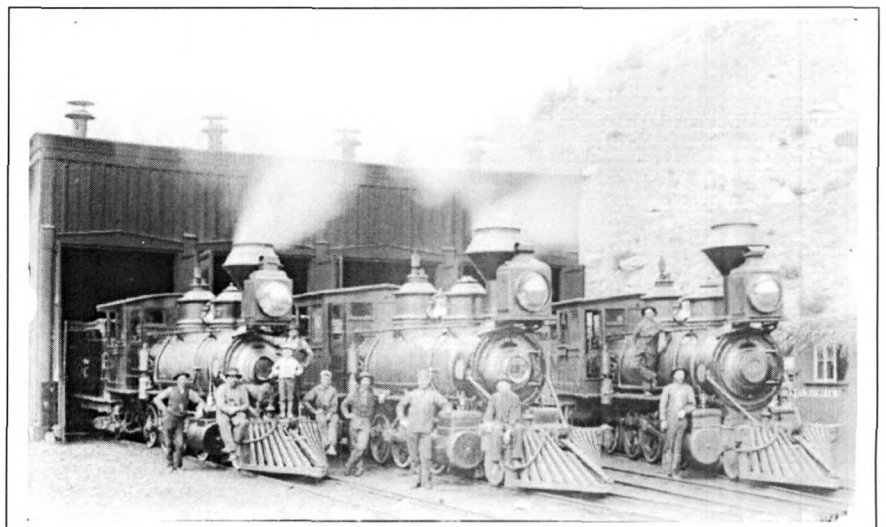
Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Caboose No. 0577
Montrose County/ Colorado

Section number ___ Page 15

H1: Standard Short Caboose
Diagram, Folio Sheet. On
file at the Colorado Historical
Society.



H2: Cimarron Roundhouse
Photograph taken by Charles
Goodman, August 1885.
Source: Denver Public Library,
Western History and Genealogy,
Photo number CHS.Z3. Ronzio
Collection.



**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Caboose No. 0577
Montrose County/ ColoradoSection number ___ Page 16

H3. Broadside view of Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad Locomotive Nos. 605 (standard gauge) and 340 (narrow gauge), Caboose 0577, and coal tenders at Montrose (Montrose County) Colorado. Taken May 24, 1951.



DENVER & RIO GRANDE WESTERN



0577

K-1-TRIPLE
WT. 18900 LBS
ALA 4-37

ROYAL GORGE
MOFFAT TUNNEL
NO. 11901

ROYAL GORGE
MOFFAT TUNNEL
NO. 11901

Name: Denver + Rio Grande Western Railroad Caboose No. 0577

County/State: Montrose, Colorado

Photographer: Forest Frost

Date: 2008

Negative: Digital

Description: Profile of Denver and Rio Grande Western narrow-gauge Caboose #0577

Photo number: 01 CO-Montrose County - D+RGW Caboose 0577-01.



0577

RETAINED MUST
NOT BE USED IN THE
2011 POSITION
ON EMPTY CARS

PASSENGERS ARE NOT
ALLOWED TO STAND
ON THE PLATFORM

Name: Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Caboose # 0577

County/State: Montrose, Colorado

Photographer: Forest Frost

Date: 2008

Negative: Digital

Description: "B" end view of Denver and Rio Grande western narrow-gauge Caboose # 0577.

Photo number: 02 CO-Montrose County-D+RGW Caboose 0577-02.