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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED	APR 28 1976
DATE ENTERED	SEP 27 1976

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

** Wagon Wheel Gap Railroad Station

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

27... at... 20... CO 147

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Wagon Wheel Gap

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3

STATE

Colorado

CODE
08

COUNTY
Mineral

CODE

079

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. Allan R. Phipps

STREET & NUMBER

1600 First of Denver Plaza Building

CITY, TOWN

Denver

VICINITY OF

STATE

Colorado

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Mineral County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Creede

STATE

Colorado

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Colorado Inventory of Historic Sites

DATE

November 26, 1975

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

State Historical Society of Colorado, 200 East 14th Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Denver

STATE

Colorado 80203

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

While the station is basically rectangular in shape, with the exception of the typical trackside dispatcher's bay (which in this structure is rectangular) and a slightly indented freight wing (both front and back-side), its simple design is effectively disguised by two bracket supported slightly bellcast shed roofs that are pierced front and back by off-center gable roofs signifying the 26' by 37' passenger section of the depot. A single stack chimney, decorated with a simple string course three-quarters of the way up, punctuates the roof on the front and just off-center of the crux which joins the roof ridges. At a level above the passenger floor level, the 50' by 72' single floor freight wing juts out from the main structure.

The typical clapboard siding is initiated on the bottom by plain vertical wainscoting extending around the perimeter of the building and brought to a conclusion by a slightly extended undecorated wooden course. Gable pediments are shingled, and bringing each gable to its peak is a radiating design which reverses the triangular upward thrust and brings the eye inward to a point centered over the decorated cornice highlighting the second story windows.

All of the windows in the structure, with the exception of the lights over the freight doors and two small windows staring out over the freight wing, are four pane and double hung. There are four doors, two of which open toward the front and two trackside. With the exception of one double trackside door, each of which is two panels, the doors are all in the four panel style with the cross member appearing two-thirds of the way down from the top. The freight doors show the typical braced "x" configuration on the top and vertical four panel construction beneath.

The station exterior continues to bear the original Denver and Rio Grande yellow paint highlighted by the chocolate brown, but the typical feet-and-freight-worn station platform surrounding the structure has been removed.

However, the interior continues to boast its waiting room, ticket and dispatcher's office, and freight area on the first floor and the living quarters and storage areas on the second, an arrangement not always found in Colorado railroad depots. Only the installation of an interior bathroom facility to replace the old five by ten privy distinguishes the station structurally from its historical appearance.

Today, housing an art galley, this lone survivor of an idea only half-realized stands by itself amidst the pine-covered mountains and nearby cottonwoods that march up the valley along the Rio Grande. Perhaps without realizing that Highway 149 passing by the old station caused in part its abandonment, travelers admire and sometimes stop at the cheerful little yellow and brown reminder of the days of silver and steam.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Recreation
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1883 -

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Wagon Wheel Gap, its name associated by early day travelers with a mysterious cluster of abandoned wagon wheels, is located in an area that remained unsettled during Colorado's hectic mining rushes. Only the occasional forays of explorers, hunters, and a few prospectors penetrated the Ute Indian held lands lying to the west of the lightly settled Spanish land grants in the San Luis Valley of Colorado. But, mineral finds in the mountains forming and flanking the Continental Divide created an irresistible tide that brought the Indian lands into the hands of the eastern newcomers.

The newcomers brought more than their picks and shovels, for with them came the whole paraphernalia of the life styles and transportation methods to which they were accustomed. While, as in the East, western transportation route usually followed the streams and rivers, most were unnavigable. Yet, the rivers had cut accessible routes into the towering mountains and by following the river courses, travelers and settlers were led into the otherwise obstructed high mountain mineral finds and grazing lands.

Wagon Wheel Gap stands astride the Rio Grande which, after it snakes its way from its mountain headwaters, leaves Colorado by way of the broad San Luis Valley and eventually finds its way into the Gulf of Mexico. Far south and centuries before, the conquistadores had followed its course north in an effort to explore, map, and settle its northern reaches. By the latter part of the nineteenth century, uppermost reaches, characterized by colorful rock outcrops, pine covered forelands, broad grassy valleys and natural hot springs, were being visited by hunters, fishermen, and travelers seeking relaxation in the high, clear mountain air.

The natural setting and seim-established resort atmosphere as well as its proximity to the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad reaching west for the silver fields near the Continental Divide drew the attention of its president, William Jackson Palmer. Veering north with a railroad spur at South Fork near Del Norte, location surveys were completed to Wagon Wheel Gap by June 1, 1881. Following quickly, grading and bridging was completed by the end of that year. Soon after, track gangs began laying the narrow (three-foot) gauge track and by July 6, 1883, work had been completed. The line opened for business a week later.

continued on page 2

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Denver and Rio Grande Great Western Engineering and Valuation Department Records

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY under one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	3	339	3	3	8	1	9	0	4	1	8	1	2	0
ZONE			EASTING			NORTHING								

B

ZONE			EASTING			NORTHING								

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

James E. Hartmann

1/7/76

ORGANIZATION

Colorado State Historical Society

DATE

303 321 7265

STREET & NUMBER

200 East 14th Avenue

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Denver,

STATE

Colorado

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

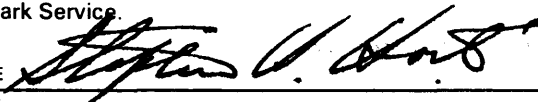
NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



TITLE Colo S. H.P.O.

DATE

1/22/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER



DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:



KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

9/29/76

DATE

9.17.76

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

Although the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad was encircling and trying to service the mineral rich San Juan mountains, activity at the little depot reached its peak during the early years when, as the terminal of the railroad, passengers debarked the train for their stay in the area or for further travel by stage coach while freight was transferred to wagons for its trip to the mountain settlements beyond.

Always seeking ways to increase business along his railroad that was both developing and colonizing Colorado, Palmer promoted the Gap as a Spa to rival the likes of Vichy and Baden-Baden and to that end, his own Mineral Hot Springs Hotel took its place among the lesser hostels punctuating the landscape.

The railroad continued to carry passengers and freight in and out of the mountains along the picturesque Rio Grande from its terminous at the Gap until it began to groan under the weight of rich silver ore being shipped from Creede just up the way following the strike of 1891. Shortly after, rails were extended past Wagon Wheel Gap to Creede.

For a while, business along the railroad rose to lusty new heights, but most of it went right on by the Gap station on its way to the boom town above. Even this was short lived, however, for the Silver Panic of 1893 crushed silver values and with it the booming economy of Colorado's southwest. The exuberance gone, the railroad and the Wagon Wheel Gap station continued to bring visitors and vacationers to its nearby natural hot springs, and surrounding hunting and fishing spots but it never quite rivaled its European counterparts.

Again, it was to be wheels that were to leave their legacy at the Gap, but this time, it was to be rubber wheels speeding along leaving in the dust the little brown and yellow station, just like so many other Colorado branch railroad stops. Passenger and freight business dwindled to such a degree following World War II that the passenger business was discontinued altogether while today, a freight train makes its way past the old station but once a week. New and more modern vacation spots also lured vacationers to other resort lands in the nation.

But the station remains as a surviving reminder of a booming time when the future lay there at the station, the hub of Wagon Wheel Gap.