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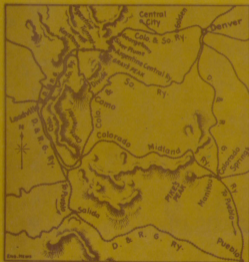
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THE ARGENTINE CENTRAL

A Colorado narrow-gauge



FRANK R. HOLLENBACK



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Aerial photo, about 1:49,000, of Argentine Central route.

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THE ARGENTINE CENTRAL

A Colorado narrow-gauge

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Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 59-14666

Sage Books are published by

Alan Swallow, 2679 So. York, Denver 10, Colo.

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Extension of the Argentine Central through the Argentine Tunnel and connection with the Colorado and Southern or Rio Grande at Keystone would have shortened Denver-Leadville distance to 122 miles, vis-a-vis 276 miles by Rio Grande standard gauge, 189 miles via Como and Boreas Pass on the South Park.

Introduction

On Colorado Day 1905 a group assembled in Silver Plume, Colo., to break ground and witness the beginning of the Argentine Central, a late-comer at an unlikely time and place, and one of the last¹ narrow-gauge lines to be built in the state.

For on August first of 1905 grading was started for "a line of the said Argentine Central Railway from and beginning at or near the Town of Silver Plume in the County of Clear Creek, State of Colorado, running thence over Leavenworth Mountain by the most feasible route; thence up and along Leavenworth Gulch to and near the top of McClellan Mountain, to and near the easterly base of the Rocky Mountains in the East Argentine Mining District. . . ."

The Articles of Incorporation² of The Argentine Central Railway Company went on to state: ". . . and in connection therewith to acquire, operate, equip, and maintain switches, sidings, spurs and branch lines for the purpose of reaching mines and other places along or adjacent to the line of said railway."

(Remarkably free of lawyer jargon and double-talk, the simplicity of this document probably saved the builder many a legal headache.)

Therein—"for the purpose of reaching mines"—was the reason for building the Argentine Central. Founder Edward J. Wilcox owned and operated mines in the rich East Argentine Mining District³ above Georgetown and Silver Plume. He wanted better transportation for ore and supplies between the mines and the railhead at Silver Plume.

(History of the district goes back to the early 1860's when rich silver sulfide—argentite—deposits were discovered by prospectors seeking gold. The mineral argentite and the district Argentine were named after the Latin *argentum* for silver.)

Whether by intent or incident the Argentine Central became famous as a tourist line: "THE GRAYS PEAK ROUTE—ONLY FOUR HOURS FROM DENVER TO THE SNOWBANKS

35159

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

OF

THE ARGENTINE CENTRAL RAILWAY COM-
PANY.

Recorder's Office,
STATE OF COLORADO, } ss.
Clear Creek County. }

I hereby certify that the within In-
strument was filed on the 11th
day of July 1905
at -/- o'clock P. M.

A B Comstock
Recorder.



Real bridge, phantom train. Good faking but some errors show. The Georgetown Loop was always featured as a part of the Argentine Central package. Edward B. Wilcox.

AND ICE PALACES OF MT. MCCLELLAN," the travel brochures said. As a further scenic attraction the Argentine Central was operated as an adjunct to the renowned Georgetown Loop. Colorado and Southern cars came up from Denver over the loop, switched to the Argentine Central at Silver Plume and were hauled, two and three at a time to near the summit of McClellan Mountain, 15.9 route miles southwest of Silver Plume.

Exactly one year to the day after construction began at Silver Plume the track reached the end of the line on McClellan at what was then thought to be an elevation of 14,007 feet. The project was started on August 1, 1905, and finished on Colorado Day, August 1, 1906.

Construction gangs worked until February 3, 1906, building the first leg to Waldorf, nine miles from Silver Plume! No more work was done until spring. Finally, on August 1, the entire 15.9-miles was completed amid appropriate spike-driving ceremonies. Then

it was time to make up joint passenger train schedules with the Colorado and Southern officials.

Builder and ex-preacher Wilcox sat down with Vice-President A. D. Parker of the Colorado and Southern. Parker ventured the opinion that Sundays would be big tourist days for the Argentine Central. Wilcox thought otherwise.

"I'm not going to run trains on Sundays," he said.

"You're crazy," replied Parker.

"Maybe so," said Methodist Wilcox, "but I'm not going to run trains on Sundays. You see, Parker, the Lord is my partner in all my business. He has done well by me and I am going to honor His day."

Wilcox was the Argentine Central; the Argentine Central was Wilcox. To understand one was to know the other. Here was a devout man, an ordained minister, who believed that religion and business are not only compatible but also are in many ways dependent upon each other. Maligned by critics—"The promoter was a minister who mixed business with religion by selling stock in the railroad company to his congregation"—he used the fruits of business success to become a giver, not a receiver. It was his conviction that he could best serve by tithing instead of preaching. Forever possessed of a mining fever, his ventures did not always make profits. But those who remember Wilcox recall his many benefactions to struggling churches and preachers.

The Argentine Central operated through the summer months of 1906 and 1907, carrying passengers, ore, and supplies on a daily except Sunday schedule. The effect of lost Sunday revenues on the financial status of the railroad is a moot point. Certainly the road didn't prosper. Dark days were ahead.

Late in the afternoon of October 21, 1907, far away from the Argentine Central domain, the National Bank of Commerce in New York unexpectedly announced that it would no longer collect amounts due on checks of the Knickerbocker Trust Company. Chaos hit the stock exchange, banks closed right and left, and the



Caricature portrayed Edward J. Wilcox tithing with proceeds from mining operations. Edward B. Wilcox.

Panic of 1907 spread across the country. Silver dropped from a mid-1907 price of 68.7 cents to a low of 53.00 cents in 1908.

Wilcox continued to mine silver for a short time, but he was soon forced to suspend operations. Just prior to the silver break he had rejected an English bid for his entire Argentine holdings, including the railroad. By 1908 he was heavily in debt, and a year later sold the Argentine Central at a fantastic loss.

The Argentine Central operated for a number of years after Wilcox left, changing hands several times and running under various names. It came to suffer the indignity of bankruptcy and a sheriff's sale. The colorful (to railroad addicts) and sturdy Shay engines were replaced by gasoline motor cars, ironically with the same motive power as the automobile which gave the road the knock-out punch to end its throes in 1917.

Trains Leave from Denver Union Station Daily

No.	Time	STATIONS	Direction	No.	Time
8:10*	0	DENVER & S.	Ar	5102	7:15*
8:57*	16	Golden	Ar	5635	6:25*
10:37*	37	Idaho Springs	Ar	7556	5:04*
11:25*	50	Georgetown	Ar	8407	4:22*
11:50*	54	SILVER PLUME	Ar	9122	4:06*
12:20*	54	SILVER PLUME G. & G. P. Ry	Ar	9122	3:55*
12:45*	56	Scotts City Camp	Ar	10722	3:35*
1:25*	62	Waldorf	Ar	11606	3:05*
2:00*	70	MOUNT McCLELLAN	Ar	14007	2:40*

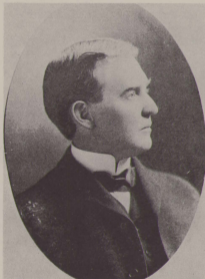
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Gray's Peak 14,441 ft., Pike's Peak, 14,107 ft.

I. The Argentine Central Railway Company

The Wilcox Era
1905 - 1909

The first phase in the short life of The Argentine Central Railway Company must properly be called the Wilcox Era. Canadian-born Edward John Wilcox, self-taught mining entrepreneur and one-time Methodist minister,⁴ conceived, built, operated, and finally surrendered the Argentine Central, all in the space of four years.



Edward John Wilcox
1857-1928

Wilcox owned some sixty-five mining claims: lodes, placers, and millsites, including the Waldorf group, in the East Argentine Mining District, nine miles above Silver Plume at the head of Leavenworth Gulch. Needing better transportation for ore and supplies, vis-a-vis horse and mule-drawn conveyance, he decided to build a railroad from the Colorado and Southern railhead at Silver Plume up Leavenworth Gulch to Waldorf—and, who knows, beyond, to the summit of McClellan Mountain.

Wilcox, James Magee, Jacob Fillius, Simon E. Wirt, and George Richardson filed Articles of Incorporation with the Secretary of State on August 10, 1905, ten days after actual construction on the railroad had started. Copies were filed the following day at the recorders' offices in Clear Creek and Summit Counties. The 1905 Denver Directory listed Wilcox as president of the Waldorf Mining Company, Wirt as a clerk in the same firm, and Magee simply as a mining man. Fillius was shown as a partner in Fillius and Davis, Richardson as a vice-president of the Central Savings Bank



Teams hauled supplies to Waldorf before the Argentine Central was built. Edward B. Wilcox.



Midway of this automobile trail—once the railroad grade—ground was first broken for the Argentine Central construction. Pavilion, one-time tourist rendezvous, in the distance.

in Denver. It is not known how these men came to be affiliated in the enterprise.

At the actual ground breaking ceremony which took place east of the pavilion in Silver Plume, Wilcox demonstrated a flair for pageantry—or hamming. Promptly at 7:00 A.M. on August 1, 1905, Mayor C. H. Dyer of Silver Plume, standing on the proposed grade, struck a pick into the ground. Mrs. Wilcox took this cue and turned a shovelful of earth, whereupon Aldermen Charles Stanton, Thomas McGrath, and W. H. Stevens did the same. Fifty workmen, spaced at 15-foot intervals, swung their picks, and the Argentine Central grading was underway.

(Mayor Dyer may not have had heart and soul in this chore, for he owned the C. H. Dyer Transfer Company, a probable hauler of goods to the Wilcox mines. Railroad competition would not help his drayage business.)

State Senator H. L. Roberts, Representative Barney J. O'Con-

nell, and townspeople of Silver Plume and Georgetown witnessed the ceremony. Little did they realize that after such a dramatic start construction progress would slow down to about one mile per month.

The Georgetown Courier on August 5, 1905, had this to say about the new enterprise: "The future of the East Argentine Mining District is now assured. When the announcement was made the first of the week that Edward J. Wilcox, general manager of the Waldorf companies, would build a rail line into the rich mineral section there was general rejoicing throughout upper Clear Creek. Mr. Wilcox is too well known in the mining world to need any introduction, and when he announces the financing or handling of an enterprise, even though it is the construction of a railway, the people realize that no 'hot air' exists.

"The building of the Argentine Central Railway Company for the purpose of traversing the Argentine camp . . . means that the cost of transportation will be reduced to a minimum and that eventually the upper Clear Creek and Georgetown areas will be entered among the forerunners of the gold and silver producing sections of the mining world," the *Courier* concluded.

Amid all the optimism no one observed, editorially at least, that there was no rail, motive power, or rolling stock on hand when grading began. That very day, however, Wilcox telegraphed the Lima Locomotive and Machine Company at Lima, Ohio, placing an order for the first Shay engine. Bearing shop No. 1561, it arrived in Silver Plume one month later, and as road No. 1 it was immediately put to work hauling the construction train. Forty-pound rail had been ordered from Pittsburgh, and on August 21, seven carloads were delivered. Nothing was said about rolling stock although in time the road had a few flats, coal cars, and an improvised caboose.

Optimism was rife. The newspaper predicted that with the gang of 50 laborers the rails would reach Waldorf within 60 days. Wilcox maintained headquarters at the Hotel de Paris in Georgetown.

Arthur H. Osborne, an 1892 graduate of the Colorado School of Mines, was the engineer and surveyor. He was also deputy U. S. Mineral, and Clear Creek County surveyor. One of his helpers on



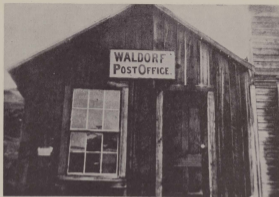
Shay mechanism is aptly shown in this McClure photo. Note stove pipe extension in stack. *Western Collection Denver Public Library.*

the railroad survey was Fred Tingle,² son of C. T. Tingle, Wilcox's mine superintendent and postmaster at Waldorf. (At an altitude of 11,666-feet, this post office was the highest in the United States.)

The grade was laid out with two switchbacks on Pendleton Mountain, necessary in order to gain elevation into Leavenworth Gulch from Silver Plume. Then up through the gulch the grade passed the St. Paul, Sidney, Leavenworth, and Domino tunnels before reaching Waldorf and continuing on to the summit of McClellan Mountain. From Waldorf a one-half mile spur was built to the Vidler tunnel.

James Hahlanan, borrowed from the Colorado and Southern, was track foreman. On September 24, the Colorado and Southern installed a 40-pound No. 8½ stub turnout, thus connecting that road with the Argentine Central, within sight of the pavilion in Silver Plume.

The Georgetown Courier, in the August 25 issue, was still optimistic: ". . . about 200 men are employed . . . will reach the Wilcox tunnel [Waldorf] within 60 days."



Highest post office in the United States. Edward B. Wilcox.



Argentine Central switchbacks on Pendleton Mountain. Georgetown Loop tracks in foreground. Edward B. Wilcox.



View along old Colorado and Southern grade, continuing (behind camera) to Graymount, and line of Argentine Central coming in from the right. Scars of side-hill cuts at two levels show on Pendleton Mountain in background. The two railroads joined at this site.

In the same edition the editor speculated: "It is more than probable that the Argentine Central will be built in a circle. In that event Georgetown will be headquarters and all tourist travel will start from this place. The plan is to run over the C. & S. tracks to Silver Plume, after which trains will be switched to the company [Argentine Central] road. It will run over Leavenworth Mountain and on to the Argentine District, after which the return trip will cover Green Lakes, passing on down via Griffith Mountain past the depot in this place." The reporter's authoritative tone gives some credence to the story, but at a time when the track wouldn't be reaching Waldorf, only nine miles away, for another five months!

The Courier said on September 16, 1905: "Within 60 days trains will be running over the Argentine Central. Wilcox says the remaining grading must be completed by October 1, and pro-



Hopes were high, progress slow, when grade came around Leavenworth Mountain in 1905. Edward B. Wilcox.

poses extending the line to Grays Peak early in the coming year. For the present the road will have terminus at the Wilcox tunnel." Such a statement sounds incredible considering the season—and at timberline, too—and the terrain. Apparently Wilcox was indomitable in the face of impossible odds.

With a December 23, 1905, Waldorf dateline: "Track laying . . . is progressing about 1500-feet per day. The track will probably reach the Sidney tunnel next week and Wilcox tunnel by mid-January. Wilcox says that when the railroad is completed ores from the company mines will be shipped in the amount of \$1000 per day, shortly to \$2000."

On January 13, 1906, laconically, this word came from Waldorf: "Wilcox is anxiously pushing his railroad."

Finally, the *Courier* broke the news Saturday, February 3, 1906: "The golden spike [the first of two golden spikes] was driven at five o'clock Wednesday afternoon in the presence of Manager E. J.



Enlarged view of Waldorf from Vidler tunnel. Telephoto lens was probably used for this half-mile shot. Wilcox tunnel at left of aerial tramway. Boarding house at extreme right. Trains backed down into Waldorf siding, then headed for Silver Plume, engine in front. Edward B. Wilcox.



McClellan Mountain on horizon beyond Waldorf mill, 1939.

Wilcox and C. L. Tingle of the Waldorf Mining Co., a number of prominent citizens of Silver Plume and the entire work crew at Waldorf. The spike was driven where the road ends near the Wilcox tunnel by James Hahlanan, assisted by William Dunning, master mechanic. Sup't. Tingle broke a bottle of water and christened the new town Wilcox [Waldorf].” (This is misleading but it is believed that Tingle may have meant Wilcox’s town. Wilcox himself had selected the name Waldorf.)

The golden spike story continued: “The heavy cost of transporting supplies to the seat of operations has now been eliminated while the transportation of ore has been reduced to a minimum.

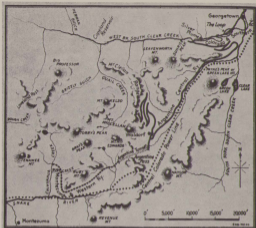
“The production from the Wilcox will now be heavy as thousands of tons of high, low, and medium grade ores have been blocked out. Early in the spring the Argentine Central will be continued to the summit.”

In another part of the same issue of the *Courier* a reporter who had visited Waldorf made this observation: “The Waldorf property or Wilcox tunnel first comes into sight; a lot of fine buildings, built for work, economical, strong and sightly; an excellent 50-ton mill, built on gravity lines, boarding house, stables, machine shop, power house, all very complete and most interesting. The ore bins are full and the mill is pounding away.

“... showing the way to the Vidler tunnel entrance to Summit County and on to Leadville and the Pacific Coast, and points on the C. & S. which will undoubtedly make some arrangements with Mr. Wilcox and the Trans-Continental Co. in order to get on with construction of this great route at the earliest possible moment.”

Now the first leg of the Wilcox narrow-gauge railroad was finished: nine miles completed and about seven to go if the summit of McClellan Mountain were to be reached. The prospective scenic value of such a route was recognized at this time when the *Courier* said: “From Mt. McClellan one can see one-sixth of Colorado, and Pikes Peak, Mt. Ouray, Mt. of the Holy Cross, Mt. Evans, Longs Peak, Mt. Rosalie and ten or twelve others.”

Not much was heard about the Argentine Central until May 12, 1906, when it was reported that the road “was being repaired after the stress of the winter months.” Repair crews were working each



After the Argentine Central reached Waldorf other companies were organized as part of a grand plan to link Leadville with Denver by way of the Argentine (Vidler) Tunnel. (U.S.G.S. maps do not show a Mt. McClellan.)

end, in addition to the gangs pushing the track from Waldorf to the summit. About 150 men were employed, including a smattering of Austrians and Czechs. A newspaper said “the work of extending the road to the summit of McClellan Mountain is being pushed as rapidly as possible.”

Construction progressed during the spring and summer. Surely no speed records were broken but finally one day, 12 months, 15.9-miles, and six switchbacks from Silver Plume, the track reached a point short of the crest of McClellan Mountain and stopped—at an alleged elevation of 14,007 feet.¹ On that Colorado Day, August 1, 1906, the second golden spike driving ceremony within a year was celebrated. (The first two switchbacks were on Pendleton

Mountain above Silver Plume. The scars on the mountainside are still visible from U. S. highway 6 through Silver Plume. The next four switchbacks are between Waldorf and the summit and were, in order, the Tobin, the Santiago, the Webber, and the Independence. See map.)

The *Silver Plume Silver Standard* of August 4, 1906, did an able job of reporting the ceremony on McClellan Mountain. Said the paper: "On Wednesday [August 1] was celebrated the completion of the Argentine Central Railway to the top of McClellan, just one year from the time ground was broken for this great enterprise which means so much to the Argentine Mining District, to say nothing of the great scenic attraction that the road is bound to become.

"Mr. E. J. Wilcox, to whose energy is due the completion and prosecution of this undertaking, arranged an excursion over the road to witness the driving of the golden spike, and a large number of Silver Plume and Georgetown people attended. Two observation cars were obtained from the C. & S. and they were well filled.

"V.p. A. D. Parker of the C. & S., J. H. Young, general sup't., and Wilcox, representatives of the press and others came up from Denver in a private car and were taken up by another engine. Parker drove the golden spike."⁸

THIS SPIKE DRIVEN BY A. D. PARKER
AUGUST 1, 1906
ELEVATION 14,007 FT.

[The inscription was not part of the newspaper story.]

"Unfortunately the weather on this occasion was not all that could be desired as it was raining and snowing on the range, making it rather cold so that those who had neglected to take wraps along found it somewhat unpleasant, but all this was forgotten when the party reached the Wilcox tunnel on the return where hot coffee and an elegant lunch were provided.

"Today regular tourist travel over this road in connection with the C. & S. will be inaugurated, and the pleasure seekers may be carried to an elevation of over 14,000-feet in the midst of the



Abandoned Colorado and Southern grade runs up from lower right of picture, roughly conforming with line of U.S. 6 through upper end of Silver Plume. Old Argentine Central grade, coming off Pendleton Mountain at left center, joins other grade under tall pines where No. 8 1/4 stub turnout once connected the two roads.

grandeur of the Rocky Mountains where there may be seen a perpetual ice palace whose beauty is indescribable."

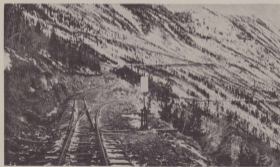
It was at this point Wilcox issued his dictum that Argentine Central trains would not run on Sunday. Six months later he and Parker met on the street in Denver. Parker told him that a mining man who had a railroad and wouldn't let it run on Sunday was big copy. As a result of the ban, Parker said, the Argentine Central received publicity all over the country. (Years later some cynic remarked that for a million dollars worth of publicity the Argentine Central lost a million dollars worth of business.)

An early account of the Argentine Central was given in the October 26, 1911, issue of *Engineering News*. Entitled "Two Interesting Mountain Railways, Operated by Geared Locomotives," that part dealing with the Argentine Central is fairly compre-

hensive. However, its accuracy is questionable because of certain erroneous statements. For example, the author (name unknown) states that "at its lower end it [the Argentine Central] connects with the end of a branch of the Colorado & Southern Ry. . . . but as this latter line is of standard gauge there is no through service or interchange of equipment." An absurd statement, of course, because an interchange was one of the premises upon which the Argentine Central was built; thus the 40-pound No. 8½ stub turnout.

The author, in giving the engineering data, qualified his information: "These particulars as to the physical conditions are somewhat theoretical or approximate as the line was built by a promoter and little attention was paid to engineering problems," he wrote. It cannot be agreed that the line was not laid out along engineering principles. That maps and technical data are not readily available must be conceded.⁹ After Wilcox sold the road the new owners were supposed to have resurveyed the line.

The *Engineering News* article gives this information—with some reservations: "Starting from Silver Plume (9,176-ft. above sea level) the grade is about 6% for the greater part of the distance, broken at intervals by stretches of level track. The maxi-



First switchback above Silver Plume on Pendleton Mountain.



What, no snowplow? Who shoveled into the Webber? Edward B. Wilcox.

mum grade is 6.6% for a short distance (combined with a curve of 286-ft. radius) and there is one-half mile of 2.4% grade. The normal minimum curvature is 32-degrees, but the three sharpest curves are of 143-ft. radius; a portion of one of these is on a 6% grade, the combined grade and curve resistance being equal to 8% on a tangent."

(Speaking of steep grades, John Allen recalls that the grade into the Kitty Osler was so steep the water in the glass would disappear when the engine was on this spur.)

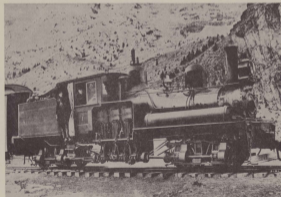
In addition to those previously mentioned, there was actually another switchback at Waldorf. Ascending trains, with the engine in front, swung around Waldorf. Descending trains, because there was no wye at the summit, backed down into a spur at Waldorf alongside the mill. Thus the train proceeded down to Silver Plume with the engine again in front. (Try it on the map.) The standing track at Waldorf can be seen in the picture. A coach and box car are spotted on it.

A one-half mile spur to the Vidler or Argentine tunnel left the main line at Waldorf. The tunnel was to be a part of a

transcontinental railway scheme which would, among other things, open a direct line to Leadville and the Montezuma country from Denver.²⁹

The Argentine Central grade was too steep for ordinary adhesion engines, yet it did not come up to minimum requirements for rack or cog operations. Therefore, the logical choice for motive power was the narrow-gauge Shay, a geared engine built by the Lima Locomotive and Machine Company at Lima, Ohio. The Shay had been in favor for many years as a very capable engine for steep grades and sharp curves, particularly on mining and logging roads in the West. In Colorado, the two-foot Gilpin Tram used Shays, as did the Uintah and the Denver, Boulder and Western, or Colorado and Northwestern.

The Shay is (many are still in use) a tank engine: boiler, cylinders, and tank are mounted on a steel frame supported on two four-wheel driving trucks. Three vertical cylinders on the right side of the firebox drive a longitudinal crankshaft which transmits power through gears and pinions to the driving trucks. Thus each



The first Argentine Central Shay. Bill Dunning in cab; George Ames, fireman. Edward B. Wilcox.

axle is driven, but only at one end. Flexible joints in the shaft connections provide compensation for vertical and radial movement or displacement of the trucks. The Shay engine was invented by E. E. Shay, a lumberman of Bar Harbor, Michigan, and had been manufactured by the original company since 1879.

Shays for both narrow and standard gauge service were built. Some—such as the 90-ton engine used on the Wolgen Valley line in Australia—had separate tender; but all employed the same principle.

ARGENTINE CENTRAL ENGINE ROSTER*

Shop No. 1561**	Road No. 1	Shipped from Lima August, 1905
Shop No. —	** Road No. 2***	Shipped from Lima Unknown
Shop No. 1674	Road No. 3	Shipped from Lima June, 1906
Shop No. 1852	Road No. 4	Shipped from Lima May, 1907
Shop No. 1855	Road No. 5	Shipped from Lima May, 1907
Shop No. 2095	Road No. 6	Shipped from Lima June, 1908
Shop No. 2159	Road No. 7	Shipped from Lima May, 1909

*In providing most of this information, Baldwin-Lima-Hamilton Corporation, successors to Lima Locomotive and Machine Company, states that there is no record of the engines which became road Nos. 1 and 2.

**From M. C. Poor's article.

***Engine No. 2 was a bad actor. John Allen says this Shay spent a winter at Waldorf on a track built on ice and snow. Came the spring thaw, and the track and No. 2 settled on one side. This sprung her so badly that derailments occurred constantly thereafter. John can recall one trip when No. 2 jumped the track nine times in nine miles. Hoping to cure No. 2's caprice, the management brought up a Lima engineer from Denver, a man weighing over 250-pounds. Like the proverbial trip to the dentist with a toothache, when the heavyweight was in the cab No. 2 never left the track.

TYPICAL SPECIFICATIONS OF SHAY GEARED LOCOMOTIVES IN ARGENTINE CENTRAL SERVICE

Gauge—Three foot
No. of axles, all driven—4
No. of driving trucks—2
Pinions, no. of teeth—19
Gear wheels, no. of teeth—42

Weight, working order—65,000-85,000 pounds

Tractive effort

Cylinders, three vertical—11 x 12

Valve gear—Stephenson link with Allen Richardson valves

Boiler, diameter of barrel—3 ft. 10 1/4 in.

Working pressure—180-pounds

Firebox—72 1/4 in. x 48 3/4 in.

Tubes, 2-in., number—167

Tube length—11-ft.

Water capacity—2400-gal.

Brakes, air

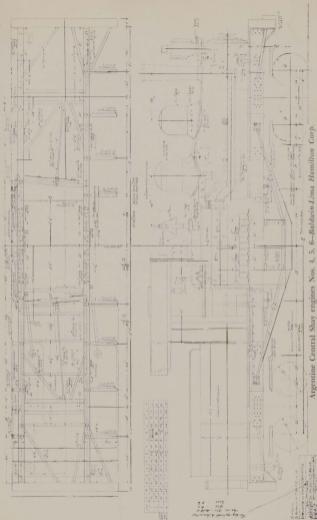
Eventually engines No. 4 and No. 5 were sold to the Feather River Lumber Company in California, becoming engines No. 2 and No. 1 on that line. Engine No. 3 was sold to the Uintah Railroad, a Gilsonite carrier operating out of Mack, Colorado.

By 1908, the Argentine Central owned five Shay engines, three flat cars, 12 coal cars, and one box car converted to a caboose. The road owned no passenger cars. For passenger service only Colorado and Southern "flat tops" were used for through traffic from Denver to the summit of McClellan Mountain.

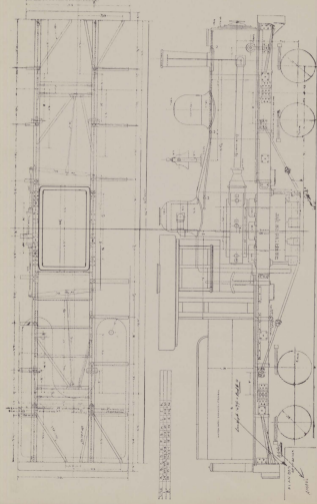
Passenger trains ran only during the tourist season. When the line was first opened, freight trains ran every day, weather permitting operation until early in December. As mining slackened, freight runs became infrequent. The rate between Silver Plume and Waldorf was \$3.00 per ton of freight.

There were no rules of the road on the Argentine Central although train and engine crews took Colorado and Southern examinations. The only bad accident on the railroad occurred about eight o'clock on the morning of November 23, 1906. A two-car train, consisting of a loaded coal car topped with 500-pounds of dynamite, and caboose, left Silver Plume for Waldorf. W. H. Stillwell, the general manager, W. J. Caverly, the dynamite salesman, four Austrian and Italian miners, Conductor Frank Hoyt, and Brakeman George Sharp were in the caboose. The train was pulled by engine No. 1 with Dunning and Smythe in the cab.

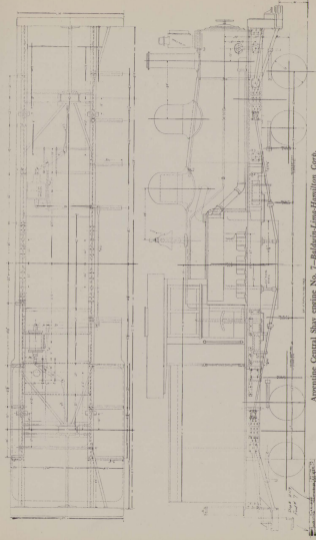
About 1000 feet up the grade the engine coupling parted. The engineer blew three sharp blasts—trouble! The townspeople knew



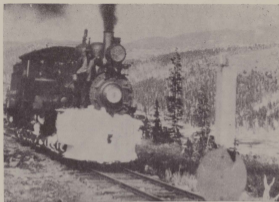
Argentine Central Shay engines Nos. 4, 5, 6—Baldwin-Lima Hamilton Corp.



Argentine Central Shay engine No. 3—Baldwin-Lima-Hamilton Corp.



Argentine Central Shay engine No. 7—Baldwin-Lima-Hamilton Corp.



No. 4 bucked snow before reaching switch below Waldorf. *Edward B. Wilcox.*



Tracks stopped short of the top, hardy spirits continued. What could be more incongruous than this scene? *Edward B. Wilcox.*

something was wrong. Hoyt climbed to the top of the caboose, set the hand brakes and dropped off as the runaway cars gained speed down the grade. Sharp did the same thing on the coal car. Stillwell and Caverly stood in the door of the caboose looking for a place to jump.

Then the coupling between the cars broke. The coal car derailed, strewing coal and dynamite along the cut, while the caboose continued down the track. It finally left the rails at the curve and demolished a building.

What happened to Stillwell and the miners is not known. Caverly was killed. He had jumped against the bank and fell back under the wheels. The dynamite did not explode.

An inquest was conducted by S. M. Smith, coroner, and J. W. B. Smith, district attorney. They found "that the said W. J. Caverly met his death by trying to escape from the runaway train. We recommend that the said Argentine Central Railway properly equip their cars for the better protection and safety of passengers and employees."

There is a weird sidelight on Caverly's death. His body was moved to an undertaking establishment in Silver Plume. The



Argentine Central grade rises on Pendleton Mountain from Silver Plume. Georgetown Loop in right foreground. Site of accident on grade to left.

Stetson hat he wore was hung on a nail. Today—more than fifty years later—the hat is still hanging on the same nail.

Another incident, of less serious nature and possibly with some humorous aspects, took place at Waldorf. Five young ladies bent on highjinx took a handcar and headed for Silver Plume, one-half mile below and nine miles away. Unable to brake the handcar, the girls resorted to shrieks, and finally jumped before the car gained too much momentum. No injuries resulted.

Argentine Central engines took water from a spout at Silver Plume, and from towers at the Sidney tunnel and Waldorf. Trinidad coal was used, but sometimes other coals were brought in by



Stetson hat belonging to victim of only fatal accident on Argentine Central still hangs on peg in this one-time Silver Plume morgue.



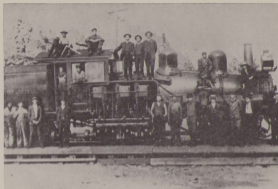
A Mr. Sawdy of Mile High Photo in Denver, below Waldorf. Probably downbound by gravity, but cautiously. Note sprag under wheel. What about a "meet?" *Edward B. Wilcox.*



Summer came late on the Argentine Central. After fighting snow, a stop at the Sidney water tower. *Edward B. Wilcox.*



Water tower at Sidney mine, half way to Waldorf. *Edward B. Wilcox.*



All occupations are represented in this 1906 picture. (See identification in text.)

the Colorado and Southern. Fireman Pete Lind claims he could always tell when Gunnison coal was in the firebox.

A picture was taken of 21 Argentine Central employees at Silver Plume in 1907. Of these, four are living in the Denver area: John Allen and Fred Coughlin in Denver, Peter Lind in Boulder, and George Rowe in Silver Plume. Actually, the latter was not an employee at the time the picture was taken. Later he did work for the railroad.

In the picture, reading from left to right: *On top of cab*, John Rowe, carpenter, and Fred Coughlin; *on platform*, A. G. (Alec) Beverly, engineer; Peter Lind, fireman; Charles Clair, brakeman; John Allen, conductor; Bert Pope, engineer; Charles Stanton, fireman; Frank Brown, conductor; Pete Gurie, brakeman; A. M. Lyons, engineer; Bechtel, conductor; *in cab*, Charles Smythe, fireman; George Ames, engineer and master mechanic; *ahead of cab*, Thompson, office; William Dutton; Ed LaPatch, office; *by sand dome*, Charles Stephens, fireman; *sitting under Stephens*, Harry Swan, blacksmith; *by smoke stack*, George Rowe and dog.

Peter Lind worked as fireman during the 1906 and 1907 seasons. He left the line for a similar job on the Gilpin Tram over in the next county, and later fired engines out of Como on the South Park. He remembers the tram as being the most exciting of all the railroads he worked.

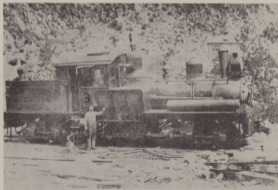
There was no lack of excitement the night Lind "came off the hill" on a "moonlight special." With 200 people, including Governor Henry M. Buchtel, aboard the three coaches, the trip which usually required 45 minutes was made in just 28 minutes! That is, from Waldorf to Silver Plume. Master Mechanic George Ames was the engineer, Frank Hoyt the conductor, and John Allen the brakeman. Lind was fireman. The brakes got so hot coming down Lind sprayed water from the tank on the shoes. This was Lind's third round trip of the day—one passenger train and a freight earlier—and he thought it would be his last!



Part of the gang, reading clockwise from Charles Smythe (upper right), A. G. Beverly, Charles Stanton (far right), A. M. Lyons, John Allen, Frank Shoemaker (facing half left), Howell (upper left), others are unidentified section hands. *Edward B. Wilcox.*



Wilcox album caption said "The Roadmaster." Also said that man with derby was Arthur Chapman of "Out Where the West Begins." *Edward B. Wilcox.*



No. 3 and Bert Pope, engineer. Silver Plume school in the distance. *Edward B. Wilcox.*

Firemen had no trouble keeping steam up at the high altitudes, but the water injectors often failed to function properly above Waldorf. A Colorado and Southern mechanic corrected the trouble.

Some people saw the beginning and the end of the Argentine Central. Fred Coughlin was one. In 1905 he worked on the grade, the following year on the track. In 1907, 1908, and 1909 he was an extra fireman in addition to being employed as watchman by the Colorado and Southern in Silver Plume. In 1921 he helped dismantle the line.

At one time there were five or six engine crews, usually paired about like this: Ames and Lind, Dunning and Smythe, Lyons and Stanton, Beverly and Stephens, and Pope and Rowe. Ames was also the master mechanic. Later he became traveling engineer on the Moffat Road. Engineers and conductors were paid \$125 for a 26-day month, while firemen and brakemen received \$86 and \$75 for the same pay period.



Official photographers sold over 1,500 picture post cards a day of groups like this. (John Allen on haunches.)



Hats with flowers, hats with plumes; "skimmers," caps, and derbys. Author's parents took this trip.

John Allen is another veteran of many years service on the Argentine Central. He began as timekeeper on the construction gang, worked up to brakeman and conductor, and stayed with the line until 1916 when he became dissatisfied with unsafe operating practices.

Apparently a tourist wasn't worth his salt who didn't ride the Argentine Central to McClellan when he came to Colorado, especially when part of the trip was up Clear Creek Canon and over the Georgetown Loop. (Many an album or attic around the country probably still holds pictures of a group at the summit. The official photographers, Senner and Mile High of Denver, often sold 1500 picture postcards a day.)

Visualize the Argentine Central tourist of 1906-08: After arriving at the Union Station—through the Mizpah arch by cab or tramway—he entrains in a Colorado and Southern "flat top." Leaving on either the Grays Peak Special at 8 A.M., or No. 51 ten minutes later, he enters Clear Creek Canon at Golden, 16-miles and 40 minutes from Denver. The canon has many tourist favorites: The Lions Head, Hanging Rock, Mother Grundy, Inspira-



Between trains Silver Plume pavilion was popular eating spot. *Edward B. Wilcox.*



The last Argentine Central Shay. Alex Beverly, superintendent; Charles Stanton, fireman; Bert Pope, engineer; Frank Ellis, brakeman; John Allen, conductor (left to right). *Western Collection Denver Public Library.*

tion Point and The Narrows. Passing through the historic mining towns of Idaho Springs, Empire, and Georgetown, and over the loop, the tourist reaches Silver Plume, where his car is switched to the Argentine Central.

Sometimes as many as six passenger trains a day were run to the summit. A train consisted of two or three cars. Only engines No. 6 and 7 could pull three cars to the summit.

A platform was built at the last switchback for passengers who felt that for physical or psychological reasons they were unable to go to the top. Trains carried first aid kits, and in case of emergency there was a telephone line from Waldorf to the end of the track. John Allen, veteran of hundreds of trips, recalls only one instance of a person getting sick on the mountain.

Once on top the train stood for about 85 minutes. There were things to do and see. The Ice Palace and the majestic scenery probably shared equal billing, followed by snowballing and other buffoonery. The Ice Palaces? Here is a description in the turgid prose of the day:

The subterranean Ice Palaces on Mt. McClellan easily rank with the greatest of Colorado's wonders. They are the only ones in the world which are accessible. Indeed, until the advent of the Grays Peak Route they were only reached by a perserving nomad of the mountains. Tradition maintains that they are the site of a cidevant mine, deserted by man, and we find it perfected by Nature, the Sorceress. Dense masses of crystals crowd every inch of granite wall and roof. The brilliant rays of electric lights are caught as if by millions of diamonds, and reflected again and again. The flash of fire to fire a million times multiplied, is heightened by a perfect network of the most delicate crystals of elfin tracery and lace as these coruscations sparkle and leap from fantastic shapes in frieze and fresco, springing into fountains of living fire before the entranced gaze, they constitute a scene of supreme loveliness which no pen can describe. Passengers to Mt. McClellan are taken through the Ice Palaces without charge.

Actually the Ice Palaces were abandoned mines, the "dense masses of crystals," icicles. Here it may be said that the naming of McClellan and Pendleton Mountains—both important in the Argentine Central scheme—had political overtones. Civil War Gen-



At the end of track on McClellan—a McClure classic. "Flattops" only were used. Edward B. Wilcox.

eral George B. McClellan and George H. Pendleton of Ohio, were Democratic candidates for President and Vice-President running against Abraham Lincoln in 1864. (McClellan carried Kentucky, Delaware, and New Jersey.) The naming is credited to Robert W. Steel, who prospected the slopes of McClellan in the 1860's. August Belmont, discoverer of the Belmont lode in the district, was one-time chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

The tourist saw an impressive panorama of mountain peaks and scenery, and, some said, one-sixth of Colorado from McClellan Mountain. Two nearby peaks, Grays and Torrys, were named after American botanists. Wilcox, as well as his successors, hoped eventually to reach Grays Peak with the railroad.

Speaking of things political, here is some advertising lure handed to Democratic National Convention delegates when they met in Denver in 1908:

Meet me at the summit of Mt. McClellan
for a snowball fight. . .

Low rate excursions every day of convention week



Well, the Ice Palace looked *something* like this, anyway.



Facing easterly from the end of track. Mt. Evans and Mt. Rosalie in the background. Group about to enter Ice Palace in old mine. Note three rock-hounds hunting mineral specimens. A McClure, for sure. *Western Collection Denver Public Library.*

Account of the National Democratic Convention, the exceedingly low rate of \$3.50 for the round trip Denver to Mt. McClellan and return will be in effect July 6-11. You can't see all of Colorado while here for the convention; see that which represents it all, namely the round trip to the summit of Mt. McClellan, where you can throw snowballs, visit the natural Ice Palace, and see more than on any other trip in Colorado.

The Argentine Central also ran many sunset and moonlight excursions. Here one is mentioned in a 1908 folder:

GRAYS PEAK ROUTE
Argentine Central railway

Highest railway in the world open for general traffic

Sunset excursions, leaving Denver about 1 P. M. and returning about 11:30 P. M., will be run frequently on Saturdays during the summer.

Stairway to the Clouds

When the great mountain fortresses were thrown up amid upheaval that made the earth reel, some of them were left without a loophole through which man could spin his "spiked rail," and his

ingenuity has been taxed to devise ways by which to scale towering strongholds. In the building of the Grays Peak Route, modern engineering skill triumphed over one of the most redoubtable obstacles ever encountered in railway construction.

With a picture to prove it, a 1909 folder had some extravagant things to say about the view from McClellan Mountain:

Standing on this lofty summit the traveller is lost in the immensity of a sea of mountain peaks, like angry billows lapping the horizon in sharp and definite contrast. Within the range of vision are such lofty giants as Rosalie, Evans, Longs, James, Pikes, and Torreys, the latter the highest of all. Here one views an ensemble of indescribable grandeur, at once a chaos of massiveness, a wild profusion of cyclopean incompleteness, a confusion in repose, a wilderness of sublimity. No artist's brush, no pen can ever describe the majesty of the scene. It must always remain uppermost and ineffable in memory.

How could a tourist fail to heed this rhetorical entreaty? The designation, Grays Peak Route, either reflects wishful thinking on



Looking northerly along McClellan Mountain. Last switchback, which brings train facing in same direction, is hidden by rocks in foreground. *Edward B. Wilcox.*

the part of the management, or was used in context. Also, there is no Mt. McClellan, per se. Rather, it is McClellan Mountain, or McClellan Range, a long, high ridge with an escarpment on the west side. The railroad came up the more gently sloping east side, albeit with switchbacks.

Directors of The Argentine Central Railway Company filed yearly reports with the Colorado Secretary of State's office for the years 1905, 1906, 1907, and 1908. The statements were always submitted in February of the following year. The board membership remained the same during the four years of the Wilcox Era. Excerpts:

1905

Whole actually paid in. Indebtedness this date bonds \$200,000. Building but not in actual operation. Company has constructed between eight and nine miles of road but is not actually engaged in business and is not yet fully equipped.

Two Shay engines, estimated value	\$16,000
Right-of-way	10,000
Tools and other supplies	10,000

1906

Bonds	\$200,000
Floating debt	65,000
In active operation with about 16-miles of track.	
Two Shay engines, estimated value	16,000
Coaches and cars	10,000
Right-of-way	40,000
Tools and supplies	10,000

1907

Bonds	\$200,000
Floating debt	100,000
16 miles of track.	
Four Shay engines	\$32,000
Right-of-way	40,000
Tools and supplies	10,000
(Coaches and cars not mentioned)	

1908

Bonds	\$200,000
Floating debt	100,000
Five Shay engines	\$35,000

Cars	6,000
Right-of-way	40,000
Tools and other supplies	10,000

These reports are not very comprehensive unless one can read between the lines. It is evident that the road lost money from the beginning. Many questions about its financial affairs remain unanswered. For instance, was any interest paid on the bonds? If so, were these payments included in the floating debt? But here is the real clincher: Today, after more than fifty years, *some bonds of The Argentine Central Railway Company are still redeemable!* Finally, how much of his own money did Wilcox put into the enterprise, and who were the bondholders?

While in England in the summer of 1907, Wilcox was offered \$3,000,000 for all of his Waldorf properties, including the railroad. He considered the bid too low and rejected it. A few months later silver prices tumbled and mine production dropped



Trail over Argentine Pass winds away from Waldorf. Each year mill yields a little more to attrition of age, elements, and vandals. Snowshed (right center) between mine portal and mill stands ground in 1959.

—the Panic of 1907. Wilcox continued to mine silver, but not long. The railroad ran without interruption, however.

By 1908, Wilcox was \$700,000 in debt. On June, 1909, he sold the Argentine Central and incurred a loss of \$256,000. The selling price was \$44,000.¹¹

It is said that Wilcox cleaned up his obligations within seven years, and then became interested in another mining venture. This time it was the Artemesia mine in Sonora, Mexico, which he had purchased in 1906. But the mine couldn't be worked because of "political troubles causing too much unrest and brigandage."

In 1924, he went back to Mexico and reopened the Artemesia mine. He was stricken while on a visit in Los Angeles and died there January 7, 1928.

Now the Wilcox tunnel at Waldorf is caved, and each year another building vanishes, a victim of weather or vandals. In 1958 the post office was destroyed by fire. The county has made an automobile road out of sections of the old grade. The switchback scars are still plainly visible on Pendleton Mountain, and it isn't difficult to follow the old roadbed to the summit of McClellan Mountain. That much is left of the Argentine Central.

A monument was dedicated Sunday, August 1, 1948, at Waldorf. Forty-three years, again to the day, after ground was first broken for the Argentine Central a group of friends and former employees gathered at Waldorf to name a peak in the Argentine basin after Edward J. Wilcox—Mt. Wilcox.



Tablet at Waldorf honors Edward John Wilcox, commemorates Argentine Central Railway and dedicates 13,412 foot Mt. Wilcox, 1.5 miles southeast of Waldorf. Ceremony was held August 1, 1948.

II. The Argentine Central Railway Company

The Gray's Peak Scenic Development Company Era

The Era of the Sheriff

1909 - 1912

Briefly, *The Denver Times* of June 17, 1909, noted the beginning of a new era in the existence of the Argentine Central with a short, one-column story, headlined:

FORMAL TRANSFER OF ARGENTINE CENTRAL

David Brown Elected President
and Company Plans Expansion

The article stated that formal transfer of the road took place in the office of A. J. Woodruff at 1735 Curtis Street in Denver. It said that the name of the holding company for the Argentine Central would be The Gray's Peak Scenic Development Company²⁷ whose directors would be about the same as those for the railroad company.

If a strong board of directors meant prosperity, the signs were good. Names on the new board might have been taken out of a Denver business Who's Who. D. W. Brown, the new president of the Argentine Central, was also president of the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company. State Senator W. W. Booth and A. J. Woodruff were vice-president and secretary of the railroad. Booth was Denver manager of the Equitable Life Assurance Society, while Woodruff was a prominent mining operator. The other two members of the board were W. H. Malone, lawyer and secretary to Governor Shafroth, and Whitney Newton, vice-president of the Colorado Portland Cement Company.

There was also considerable influence represented in The Gray's Peak Scenic Development Company board membership. Here, in addition to the five Argentine Central directors, three new names appeared: George W. Brooks, secretary of the Smith-Brooks Printing Company; C. E. Wantland, president of the Colorado Land Board; and Zeph Charles Felt, real estate and investment broker.

Here it is noted that the new Argentine Central assumed the \$200,000 bonded indebtedness of the old company, as will be seen in financial reports to follow.

The ink on the transfer papers was barely dry before the officials and guests made a gala inspection trip over the newly acquired railroad. Two score prominent Denver citizens were feted on the ride to McClellan. The governor was in the advance party, but the mayor of Denver was unable to make the trip.

The Times article went on to say that "there would be no delay in preparations to extend the road from McClellan to Grays Peak and build a hotel at the summit."

The new management had ambitious plans, as will be seen in the Articles of Incorporation of the holding company.

Railroading got off to a flying start: "Unprecedented business has marked the operation of the Argentine Central under the new management. Last Sunday cash passenger business of over \$1000 was done." *The Republican* of July 22, 1909, reported that 300 contestants in the Glidden Reliability Tests from Detroit and Kansas City had made a trip over the line on Sunday.

Apparently, passengers in large numbers were carried during the summer of 1909, especially on Sundays. Now trains were running on Sunday. The trip was well advertised, and still a "must" for tourists visiting Colorado.

Freight business brought in some revenue, as will be seen, despite a drastic cut-back in mining activity.

There was an air of optimism. *The Denver Post* on June 22, 1909, said: "... the railway when extended to Grays Peak will be the highest in the world. When a full description is put to the public people from New York, London, and Paris will journey to Colorado to make the trip. The company will soon have rotunda-shaped hotel, plate glass windows on all sides, a dozen great telescopes, commodious sleeping apartments to accommodate 100 guests, restaurants, and reading rooms. Searchlights with 20,000 candle power will be seen for 200 miles."

(Steel cables were to be used in some way for the last several hundred feet at Grays Peak summit to assist trains, or passengers, or both.)

An Argentine Central brochure of 1909 described the trip:

Mt. McClellan, Altitude 14,007-feet

This great buttress to Grays Peak is the highest point in the world reached by a regular railway. There are no other peaks on this continent as high as Grays that can be scaled by anybody but mountain climbers equipped with ropes and alpenstocks. So those who wish to travel to still greater heights than this marvelous railroad approaches, must wait until airships are perfected. This panorama from McClellan or Grays Peak is one of matchless grandeur and sublimity.

This text would be confusing to a tourist. Perhaps the folder was published in anticipation of the extension to Grays Peak. Continuing:

In every direction tower America's most gigantic granites . . . in all about 106 peaks of ponderous size . . . some in Wyoming and some near the Utah line . . . Denver the beautiful appears to the east . . . one-sixth of the entire state is spread before the enraptured gaze . . . the great continental divide, the point where one rivulet sings its song to the Atlantic, and another to the Pacific . . . Colorado's mosses and wildflowers abound on every side . . . sixty-five species are found between Silver Plume and Mt. McClellan . . . the beautiful anemone and stately columbine holding undisputed sway over all others . . .

Then, before long, nothing more was said about the extension to Grays Peak, and for a good reason, despite the "unprecedented business." The facts, the sad facts, of the Argentine Central's financial health can be found in Poor's Manual of Railroads:

<i>Poor's 1911</i>		<i>For year ending June 30, 1910</i>	
Earnings		Expenses	
Passenger	\$20,005	M of W, structures	\$5,377
Freight	2,899	M of Equip.	3,501
Other	556	Traffic	5,928
		Trans.	13,585
	\$ 23,460	General	7,160
			\$35,551
Deficit from operations	\$ 12,041		
Deficit from restaurant	162		
Total deficit	\$ 12,203		

Charges			
Taxes	\$	1,514	
Hire of equipment		420	
Joint facilities		341	
Deficit for year	\$	26,478	
Deficit forwarded		4,223	
Total deficit June 30, 1910	\$	30,701	
General balance sheet:			Property owned \$699,027
Capital stock	\$500,000		Work. assets 2,694
Funded debt	200,000		Deficit 30,701
Acc. liability	1,500		
Work. liability	30,922		\$732,422

\$ 732,422

Locomotives 4, flat cars 10, box cars 3, service cars 2
(Locomotives No. 2, 4, and 5 had been sold).

<i>Poor's 1912</i>		<i>For year ending June 30, 1911</i>	
Earnings		Expenses	
Passenger	\$17,865	M of way, structures	\$ 2,658
Freight	4,325	M of Equip.	3,683
Other	896	Traffic	1,883
	\$23,084	Trans	9,863
		General	5,968
			\$24,055
Deficit	\$	973	
Net outside revenue		84	
Net deficit		889	

General balance sheet:			Property owned as investment \$699,027
Capital stock	\$500,000		Work. assets 2,694
Funded debt	200,000		Deficit 30,701
Acc. liabilities	1,500		
Work. liabilities	30,922		\$732,422

Only one conclusion can be drawn from this report: The Argentine Central was still losing money. The rest of it is filled with generalities.

The Gray's Peak Scenic Development Company filed a report with the Secretary of State on February 28, for the year 1909. It listed the officers as G. W. Brooks, president; John R. Lewis and

A. L. Abrams, vice-presidents; A. J. Woodruff, manager and secretary; and W. W. Booth, treasurer. The report stated that there was no indebtedness, and that the company owned 3,000 shares of The Argentine Central Railway Company stock of par value of \$100 per share.

The axe began to fall on the railroad July 26, 1911. On that date a complaint for foreclosure was filed as docket No. 51,707 in Division 1 of the District Court in Denver, Judge Hubert L. Shattuck presiding. This was from the petition of James F. McAvoy "doing business under the name and style of Madison Grocery and Market."

The Central Savings Bank of Denver was the plaintiff. The defendants were The Argentine Central Railway Company, The Continental Trust Company, the Morey Mercantile Company, the National Fuel Company, the Idaho Springs Lumber Company, The Colorado and Southern Railway Company, The London Guarantee and Accident Company, L. E. Taylor, R. H. Dwyer, W. W. Booth, A. J. Woodruff, and Thomas Cunningham.

James Q. Newton was appointed receiver on August 3, 1911, and filed his first report on the affairs of the Argentine Central December 28, 1911.

Poor's Manual of Railroads for 1912 said it was officially informed: "The Argentine Central Railway was to be sold February 5, 1912, but application was made February 1, 1912, to the Supreme Court to stop the sale. This was done by parties in interest, and will pave the way for reorganization. The road will probably be operated during the summer of 1912, as negotiations to that effect are now on."

There were other claims filed in the suit: W. C. Smyth, night watchman, \$338.58; E. O. Fairchild, day watchman, \$240.00; E. J. Tuttle, traffic manager, \$1060.00; J. Allen, laborer, \$121.17; George Rowe, laborer, \$26.58; Charles O'Connell, laborer, \$9.00; A. C. Stephens, laborer, \$143.88; George B. Lott, auditor, \$50.00; A. G. Beverly, engineer, \$612.00; W. B. Houghton, auditor, \$450.00; Mrs. Jerry Buckley, \$126.90; R. H. Dwyer, \$350.00; Colorado Telephone Company \$76.00; Fairbanks-Morse & Company, \$32.50.

The bonded indebtedness now consisted of \$24,000 interest plus the \$200,000 principal.

An appraisal of supplies and equipment, made by F. O. Webb and E. J. Tuttle, gave these figures:

15 freight cars	\$ 1,450.00
2 pairs trucks	30.00
4 engines	12,000.00
Track material	1,661.40
Track tools	\$ 50.00
Shop tools, supplies	335.00
Office furniture	275.00
	<hr/>
	\$ 15,904.40
Track	10,067.10
Buildings	160.00
Track scales	250.00
	<hr/>
Grand Total	\$ 50,961.50

This, then, was the junk value of a railroad whose property was listed at \$699,027 on the balance sheet, a railroad whose O. R. would cause railroad men to shudder.

An eleven-page foreclosure sale decree was signed by Judge Shattuck January 2, 1912. The judgment stipulated that the property was to be sold within five days, but appeals delayed this action for several months.

The Rocky Mountain News on June 15, 1912, carried this small item:

ARGENTINE CENTRAL WILL
BE SOLD TODAY

Bids for Railroad to Be
Received at Georgetown
Courthouse

Georgetown, June 14—The sale of the Argentine Central Railroad under orders of Judge H. L. Shattuck of the District Court in Denver is scheduled to take place tomorrow at the Courthouse in Georgetown.

During the last two weeks appraisers have gone over the property, their report having been submitted to Judge Shattuck.

Then came another delay, a last ditch stand, perhaps, on someone's part. There was no sale on the scheduled day.

Finally, on August 19, 1912, Sheriff Thomas W. Cunningham of Clear Creek County (a defendant in the case) notified the court that he had offered the Argentine Central for sale from the steps of the courthouse in Georgetown to the highest bidder. William Rogers, with a bid of \$20,002, was high. Rogers, apparently a bond holder, asked that he be allowed to turn in bonds and matured interest in payment. At this point details of the sale become confused, but first a word about William Rogers.

Rogers had incorporated The Grays Peak Railroad Company in 1904, along with Emil Thielens of Philadelphia, and Thomas Fielding, Nathan Gregg, Jr., and Clarence J. Morley, all of Denver, with a capitalization of \$250,000. This proposed railroad had a few features in common with the Argentine Central: ". . . a line of railway from Silver Plume around the face of Leavenworth Mountain to the southeast base of Grays Peak," and in addition, "by the most feasible route to Keystone, Summit County . . . to Minturn and Wolcott, Eagle County . . . reaching mines, factories, resorts, towns and places." This railroad was never built.

Eight years later Rogers came along and bid \$20,002 for a railroad which would have cost many times that figure to build in 1904. According to the record Rogers was credited with \$5,000 already paid in, \$3,500 to the court, and an \$11,000 bond.

A Sheriff's Deed was issued November 22, 1912, to William Rogers, Willis M. Marshall, William Iliff, and F. W. Blankenbuhler, thus ending the second era of The Argentine Central Railway Company. But it wasn't quite dead—yet.

The Georgetown and Grays Peak Railway Company

The Argentine and Grays Peak Railway Company

The Blankenbuhler Era

1912 - 1920

1912 - 1917

In this third and last era of what was originally known as the Argentine Central, eggs and railroading were scrambled, as it were, in the organization of a new holding, and a new operating company.

Having acquired title to the properties of The Argentine Central Railway Company by Sheriff's Deed the previous year, the new owners on June 13, 1913, incorporated The Georgetown and Grays Peak Railway Company. The objects and purposes were "to take and hold all the estate, franchises, rights, powers and privileges, claims or demands of the said Argentine Central Railway Company, whose property and franchises were sold and conveyed as aforesaid."

The Articles of Incorporation stated that the term of existence of the company would be 50 years, and that the capital stock would be \$100,000, divided into 1000 shares. The management of the company was vested in a board of five directors: William Barth, Willis M. Marshall, William Rogers, F. W. Blankenbuhler, and W. S. Iliff, all of Denver. Another strong board! Marshall was president of the Central Saving Bank. Barth held the same position with Equitable Realty Company, and Blankenbuhler was head of the Colorado Ranch Egg Company. William Rogers, the man who thought of building the predecessor of the Argentine Central, lived in Denver and was listed in the directory simply as "mining."

The Articles of Incorporation of The Argentine and Grays Peak Railway Company were filed a few months later, on July 19, 1913. The articles stated that the objects and purposes for which the company was created were "to acquire and purchase, lease, maintain, operate, extend and complete the property and franchises formerly

of The Argentine Central Railway Co. and of The Georgetown and Grays Peak Railway Co. . . . its successors and assigns."

The board consisted of F. W. Blankenbuhler, Bertha Blankenbuhler, Fred C. Howes, William W. Garwood and Howard B. Crandall. Howes was a clerk at the Colorado Ranch Egg Company, Garwood a lawyer in the firm of Garwood and Garwood. Crandall was president of the Rhodes Ranch Egg Company. In the railroad enterprise Blankenbuhler was president and general manager, Howes the auditor. A. C. Stephens was superintendent at Silver Plume.

It is difficult to define the areas of responsibility and administration of the Georgetown and Grays Peak and the Argentine and Grays Peak. Poor's would list one and then the other each year. It was intended, of course, for the latter to be the operating company. In 1915, Poor's published this report for the year ending June 30, 1914:

Argentine and Grays Peak Railway
Denver to Mt. McClellan 60 miles.



Blankenbuhler and family. *Herb Blankenbuhler.*



Blankenbuhler on the ascendancy. John Allen and Billy Fox, Colorado and Southern conductor. Third trainman not identified. *Herb Blankenbuhler*

Georgetown and Grays Peak Railway
Total 15.4 miles (Vidler tunnel 0.5 mile).
Locomotives 3 Freight cars 16
Leased to Argentine and Grays Peak Railway
No bonds or other indebtedness except loan of \$875, and unpaid taxes.

The report for the year ending June 30, 1915, stated that all taxes had been paid to date and that Charles Sandstone was superintendent. There was no report for the year ending June 30, 1916, nor were there any thereafter.

Blankenbuhler was not a "mining man" (that broad term which so often is used to cover so much territory). There is no telling how he became involved in a non-profit scenic narrow-gauge railroad, good business man that he apparently was. His son, H. W. Blankenbuhler, doesn't know, either. (The sons of both Wilcox and Blankenbuhler recall childhood summers spent around the railroad, but each was too young then to have retained any facts about the operation.)

As a one-time telegraph operator, Blankenbuhler may have had

a long-cherished dream of owning his own railroad. Certainly it was not in juxtaposition with his successful produce and apartment house businesses in Denver.

In 1914, Blankenbuhler made plans to retire the three remaining Shay engines. With cheaper motive power in mind, he commissioned the Vulcan Iron Works to build gasoline motor cars with seating capacities of 25 and 35 passengers. The automobile age had arrived—even as a compromise on the rails. Unfortunately, drawings of these cars are no longer in Vulcan's files. Memories differ about the kind and make of engines in the cars. One party thinks they were Oldsmobile engines, while another says they were four and six cylinder Wintons with four speed transmissions. Anyway, the cars had 20 and 24-inch wheels and air brake equipment. Fred Coughlin, Tom McGinnis, and Ray Nelson operated the vehicles. At one time Blankenbuhler toyed with the idea of using Stanley Steamers for the run to McClellan, but for some reason these were not feasible.

By this time there was practically no freight traffic over the line. In the fall the seats were removed from the cars and coal was hauled up to the power company's maintenance building at Waldorf. (The high line from the Western Slope came over near-by Argentine Pass.)



Lettering on motor car No. 8 says: "Cloudland McClellan Gray's Torrey's Peaks A. & G.P. Ry."



There was no Mt. McClellan, per se, nor was there a 14,007-foot elevation anywhere on McClellan Mountain. *Herb Blankenbuhler.*

Blankenbuhler advertised his scenic railroad. Here, as it appeared in the *Denver Times* of July 15, 1914, is a typical ad:

Come and ride with us up through the clouds to the snow banks and Ice Palaces of Mt. McClellan

Special Rate Daily This Week

\$4.50 Round Trip

Leave Union Depot via C. & S.

8 A.M. and 9 A.M.

Return Denver 7 P.M.

F. W. Blankenbuhler, Pres. and Gen. Man.

Arthur Luckhaus, G. P. A.

Phone Main 6290

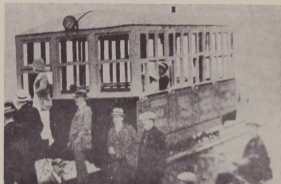
1641 Market St.

Ticket Office 701 17th St. and Union Depot

The Argentine and Grays Peak Railway Company

"The Grays Peak Route"

This particular day the ad came out at the same time a short piece of publicity appeared in the same paper. It said that Blankenbuhler delivered two carloads of snow at the *Times* office for the Elk's Convention. The snow was "garnished by columbines," the item said. Thousands, it reported, saw snow for the first time.



Motor cars replaced Shay engines and coaches on A. & G. P. Ry.

Blankenhuhler apparently believed in the old adage, "If you can't lick 'em, join 'em." (People were no longer dependent upon mountain railroads for mountain sightseeing.) He advertised:

Automobile Denver to Silver Plume
Distance 50 miles

Automobilists who are making pleasure trips through the mountains will find excellent roads leading from Denver through Golden, over Mt. Lookout (Denver's new mountain parks), Floyd Hill to Idaho Springs, thence Clear Creek Canon to Silver Plume, where automobiles can be parked and guarded. From Silver Plume the trip can be made via the Georgetown and Grays Peak motor cars to the summit of Mt. McClellan and return in three and one-half hours.

Admission of 25 cents was now charged to see the Ice Palace at the old Johnson mine, and the fare from Silver Plume to McClellan and return was increased. Meals and accommodations were available at Scenic Camp City located between Silver Plume and Waldorf. It was operated by Howard Crandall, the other produce man turned railroader.

The motor cars were now meeting the Colorado and Southern trains from Denver instead of really operating jointly. Whereas in the earlier stages Blankenhuhler had left details of operations in the hands of others, he now supervised every operation. It was 1917 and the end was drawing near.

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION
of
The Argentine and Grays Peak
Railway Company

We, the undersigned, F. W. Blankenhuhler, president, and Fred G. Howes, secretary, The Argentine and Grays Peak Railway Co., 1641 Market St., Denver, Colo., on the first day of November 1917 . . . ordered said corporation to be dissolved.

We further certify that all debts owing by said corporation have been fully paid and assumed by us. November 1, 1917.

F. W. Blankenhuhler, president

Fred C. Howes, secretary

The Colorado Public Utilities Commission on November 9, 1918, granted permission for abandonment of the line.

Public Utilities Commission Decision No. 215
Application No. 30
November 9, 1918
ORDER

It is ordered that The Georgetown and Grays Peak Railway Company operations be and it is hereby permitted to discontinue operations upon its line of railroad, and to remove the rails and dismantle its railroad property.

George T. Bradley
LeRoy J. Williams
Commissioners

9 November 1918

It might have been the War Years, or the automobile, or public apathy, or mismanagement, or any number of other factors that doomed the third and last Era. Probably it was a combination of many things, or maybe it was fate.

Sometime between 1917 and 1920, The Georgetown and Grays Peak Railway Company became the property of a wrecking company in Denver, the inevitable destiny of all defunct railroads. This document was filed May 4, 1920:

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

of

Georgetown and Grays Peak Railway Company

... that the Georgetown and Grays Peak Railway Co. . . . has fully paid all its debts and obligations, and that on the 30th day of April 1920, at an open meeting of the stockholders regularly and duly called for that purpose at which meeting every share of stock was represented, the said corporation . . . was by unanimous vote dissolved and the stock cancelled; that the undersigned were by authority of said meeting directed to publish a full notice of such dissolution and to take such steps and perform such further acts in the process as may be necessary to dissolve such a Corporation. . . .

Georgetown and Grays Peak Railway Co.
B. P. Morse, president

Ben Grimes, secretary

The 15.9-miles of main line track and the one-half mile Vidler spur track were taken up in September and October 1921, using 12



Trail to Argentine Pass from Waldorf dump, old roadbed to Vidler tunnel—less easily defined—on cut below trail. Bottom center two sets of railroad ties are visible, one running to engine pit, the other a part of main track loop around Waldorf, 1959.



Ghost town Waldorf, 1959.

gondolas and two flat cars borrowed from the Colorado and Southern, and a camel-back engine. Snow fell before all the plates, spikes, and bolts, which had been left alongside the roadbed, could be loaded. Buckley Brothers of Silver Plume contracted to bring the fastenings down the following summer. As kids, the Buckleys had sold trinkets and souvenirs to tourists in Silver Plume. The last iron of the one-time Argentine Central—the No. 8½ stub turnout—was removed January 13, by a crew working under orders of William Hess, Colorado and Southern chief engineer.

Thus ended a railroad, born of a mining venture, whose only justification for existence, in the first place, might be found in the answer Edward John Wilcox gave his son when asked why he had left the ministry and gone back to mining.

"It's like this, son," Wilcox replied, "every time I began to prepare a sermon I'd think of mining, and how much I could make and give to the Church. I decided I could do the Church more good by mining than by preaching."

Notes

¹The narrow-gauge Uintah Railroad, a Gilsonite carrier running from Mack, Colorado, to Dragon, Utah, was built in 1905. In 1906, the Colorado & Northwestern was extended from Ward to Sunset. The Rio Grande built a *standard-gauge* line from Durango to Farmington in 1905 later reduced to narrow-gauge.

²Articles of Incorporation.

³Also known as Argentine, Queens, and West Argentine, overlaps the Griffith Mining District. Legal: Secs. 35 and 36, T. 4S, R. 75 W.

⁴Wilcox held pastorates in Longmont, Denver, and Pueblo.

⁵Fred Tingle was fatally injured in collision of freight train, of which he was engineer, and Colorado and Southern passenger train at Broomfield, Colorado, September, 1958.

⁶A grandiose plan, worthy, to connect Denver and Leadville by way of Silver Plume, the Argentine (Vidler) tunnel, and Keystone by rail. In 1910, The Argentine Tunnel Railway Company and The Montezuma and Western Railway Company were incorporated, as adjuncts of the Argentine Central, although there was no corporate tie-up with the latter. Also involved was The Argentine-Montezuma Tunnel and Mining Company and The Argentine Construction Company. All of the legal manipulations fill many pages of records in the Miscellaneous Records Book 97 at the Clerk and Recorder's office of Summit County in Breckenridge.

⁷U.S.G.S. maps show about 13,115-feet: Colorado Yearbook gives 13,423-feet as the elevation of McClellan Mountain.

⁸Wilcox's son, Edward Barkley Wilcox, would give a pretty penny to learn the present location of the spike.

⁹Said with tongue-in-cheek. Undoubtedly, someone has good maps and records.

¹⁰A line came up from Georgetown.

¹¹The question: How much money did Wilcox put into the Argentine Central? How much was outside money, and whose?

¹²Here Gray's was spelled with an apostrophe, a style used by The Gray's Peak Scenic Development Company people.

Regrettably, many questions are left unanswered. In fact, it might seem that more were created than were resolved. To get the Argentine Central in perspective there should be greater knowledge of the motivating influences which prompted men to become associated with the enterprise. Was it predestined to fail because of its very nature, place or time? In order to succeed a railroad's services must be needed, and it must go from someplace to someplace. Did the Argentine Cen-



Vidler tunnel (left center) at end of .5-mile spur from Waldorf. Trail over Argentine Pass begins climb (center). Railroad circles Waldorf. Edward B. Wilcox.

tral comply with these conditions? Was it its own victim of nature, time and place? Was it enough that it afforded a better understanding of the boundless world? Perhaps it was.

Articles of Incorporation

WHEREAS, EDWARD J. WILCOX, JAMES MAGEE, JACOB FILLIUS, SIMON E. WIRT and GEORGE RICHARDSON, all of the City and County of Denver, State of Colorado, have associated themselves together for the purpose of incorporation under the general incorporation acts of the State of Colorado, they do therefore make, sign and acknowledge these certificates in writing, which, when filed, shall constitute the Articles of Incorporation of The Argentine Central Railway Company.

ARTICLE I. The name of said Company shall be THE ARGENTINE CENTRAL RAILWAY COMPANY.

ARTICLE II. The objects for which said Company is created are:

To construct, own and acquire by purchase, consolidation, condemnation, lease or otherwise, and to operate and maintain railway lines, spurs, sidings, and switches in connection therewith, in the State of Colorado, and in such other States in the United States as may be selected by the Board of Directors, and to receive and convey persons and property on, over and along the same; to operate the same by any power or means now known or in use, or which may hereafter be invented, discovered or used and to acquire, hold, sell, pledge, or otherwise dispose of the capital stock of any other railroad and railway company, and to acquire and hold by purchase, lease, consolidation, condemnation or otherwise any other line of railroad and railway, and to sell, mortgage or otherwise dispose of the same, and to cross, intersect or connect its railways with any other railway.

Also to acquire by gift, purchase, condemnation or otherwise rights of way over, across and along private property, and for use in the construction, maintenance and operation of said railway lines.

To acquire, construct, operate, maintain, sell, lease, pledge or otherwise dispose of machinery, shops, depots, buildings and stations, houses, power plants and stations for generating and transmitting electricity, together with lines of poles, wires and their appurtenances, for conveying electricity and electric current for power and other purposes.

To conduct an express business upon said lines of railway, and to purchase, lease, construct, equip, maintain and operate telegraph and telephone lines in, upon and along said lines of railway for the use of the company.

From time to time to borrow money and issue and dispose of its bonds, promissary notes or other obligations; to mortgage its property

and franchises to secure the payment of any debt contracted by said corporation.

And said company shall have and exercise such powers as shall be necessary, requisite or proper to accomplish the objects and purposes aforesaid, and shall have the power to purchase and deal in patent and other rights pursuant to the carrying on of the business of said railway, and to acquire any personal or real property which may be necessary, requisite or convenient for the use and business of said company.

ARTICLE III. The term of existence of said Company shall be fifty (50) years commencing from the date of the filing of these Articles of Incorporation with the Secretary of State of the State of Colorado.

ARTICLE IV. The capital stock of said Company shall be Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000) divided into Five Thousand (5000) shares of One Hundred Dollars (\$100) each.

ARTICLE V. The Board of Directors of said Company shall be five (5), and the names of those who shall manage the affairs of the Company for the first year of existence are Edward J. Wilcox, James Magee, Jacob Fillius, Simon E. Wirt and George Richardson.

ARTICLE VI. It is proposed to construct a line of the said Argentine Central Railway from and beginning at or near the Town of Silver Plume in the County of Clear Creek, State of Colorado, running thence around and over Leavenworth Mountain by the most feasible route; thence up and along Leavenworth Gulch to and near the top of McClellan Mountain, to and near the easterly base of the main range of the Rocky Mountains in East Argentine Mining District, County of Clear Creek, State of Colorado; and in connection therewith to acquire, operate, equip, and maintain switches, siding, spurs and branch lines for the purpose of reaching mines and other places along or adjacent to the line of said railway.

ARTICLE VII. The principal office of said Company shall be kept at the City of Denver, County of Denver, State of Colorado, and the principal business of said Company shall be carried on in the County of Clear Creek, State of Colorado.

ARTICLE VIII. The Board of Directors shall have power to make such prudential by-laws as they may deem proper for the management of the affairs of the Company not inconsistent with the laws of this State for the purpose of carrying on all kinds of business within the objects and purposes of such Company, with power to fill vacancies in said Board of Directors until the annual meeting of the stockholders, and shall have power to appoint an Executive Committee to act in the intervals of the sessions of the Board of Directors.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, The said incorporators have hereunto set their hands and seals this tenth day of August, A.D. 1905.

EDWARD J. WILCOX (SEAL)
JAMES MAGEE (SEAL)
JACOB FILLIUS (SEAL)
SIMON E. WIRT (SEAL)
GEORGE RICHARDSON (SEAL)

STATE OF COLORADO)
CITY AND) ss.
COUNTY OF DENVER)

I, Lida O. Brown, a notary public within and for said City and County of Denver in the state aforesaid, do hereby certify that Edward J. Wilcox, James Magee, Jacob Fillius, Simon E. Wirt, and George Richardson, who are personally known to me to be the same persons described in and who executed the within duplicate Articles of Incorporation, appeared before me this day and personally acknowledged that they signed, sealed and delivered the same as their free and voluntary act and deed.

Witness my hand and notarial seal this 10th day of August, A.D. 1905.

My commission expires February 28, 1907.

Lida O. Brown (Signed)
Notary Public.

35159

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
OF

THE ARGENTINE CENTRAL RAILWAY COMPANY

Recorders Office)
STATE OF COLORADO) ss.
Clear Creek County)

I hereby certify that the within Instrument was filed on the 11th day of Aug. 1905 at 1 o'clock P. M.

A. R. Comstock
Recorder
Fee 50 cts.

Abstract
CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION

of
The Gray's Peak Scenic Development Company
I.

To subscribe for, purchase, or in any other manner acquire and hold, with the same rights of ownership therein as may be permitted to

natural persons, the shares of capital stock, bonds and obligations of any corporation organized under the laws of any state, territory, district or colony of the United States or of any foreign country.

II.

To build, erect, construct, lease or otherwise acquire, manage, occupy, maintain and operate buildings for hotel purposes, restaurants, office buildings and other structures; to buy, own . . . for accommodation of the public and individuals, to occupy . . . hotels, restaurants, lunch and tea rooms, barber shops, billiard halls, cafes and bars for the accommodation of the public and individuals.

III.

To build, buy, lease or otherwise acquire, own, operate and maintain merry-go-rounds, loop-the-loops, gravity and pleasure railways, aerial coasting swings, search lights and all other devices of a like nature calculated to afford amusement to the public and profit to the company.

Also to . . . license or sell plays, operas, songs, music or dramatic manuscripts or copyrights whatsoever which may be used as a basis of amusement or instruction of persons in public or private places. Also to conduct amusements of all kinds to . . . lands and other buildings for the erection, operation and maintenance of theaters, opera houses and amusement enterprises of every character with suitable plans, machinery, lighting and heating apparatus and other appliances connected therewith.

Capital stock \$300,000 in 300,000 shares par value \$1 each.

Seven member board of directors:

George W. Brooks
W. W. Booth
D. W. Brown
C. E. Wantland
Zeph Charles Felt
W. H. Malone
A. J. Woodruff

(Set our hands and seals the 29th day of June A. D. 1909.)

A copy of the articles was filed June 30, 1909, with F. L. Peck, Recorder, Clear Creek County.

Abstract of
Articles of Incorporation
of

THE GEORGETOWN AND GRAYS PEAK RAILWAY COMPANY

We, William Barth, Willis M. Marshall, William Rogers and F. W. Blankenhuhler, all of the City and County of Denver, desiring to associate ourselves . . . in pursuance of the laws . . . relating to the forma-

tion of corporations, to form a company for the purpose . . . acquirement and purchase of certain railway property and franchises and the construction and operation of certain lines of railroad and telegraph lines within the State of Colorado . . . do, make, sign and acknowledge . . . and do state and declare and specify as follows:

First

That the corporate name . . .

Second

That the said company is created for the objects and purposes . . . to wit: To acquire and purchase, maintain, operate and extend and complete the property and franchises formerly of The Argentine Central Railway Company sold and conveyed to William Barth, William Rogers, Willis M. Marshall, William S. Iliff and F. W. Blankenbuhler, under and by virtue of a certain decree of the district court . . . entered on the second day of January A.D. 1912 in a certain suit wherein the Central Savings Bank, as trustee, was plaintiff and The Argentine Central Railway Company, et al, were defendants . . . to take and hold all the estates and franchises, rights, powers and privileges, claim or demand, of the said . . . whose property and franchises were sold and conveyed as aforesaid. . . .

Third

The railroad . . . extends from the town of Silver Plume to the Summit of Mt. McClellan in Clear Creek County.

Fourth

The term of existence . . . shall be fifty (50) years. . . .

Fifth

The government . . . shall be vested . . . in a board of five directors, William Barth, Willis M. Marshall, William Rogers, F. W. Blankenbuhler and W. S. Iliff. . . .

Sixth

The capital stock of this Company shall be \$100,000 divided into 1000 shares . . . fully paid and non-accessible.

Seventh

. . . created for the purpose of carrying on business in the state of Colorado.

Eighth

. . . principal business in the County of Clear Creek; the principal office in the City and County of Denver. . . .

Ninth

The stockholders . . . or the board of directors shall have power to make . . . such prudential by-laws for the . . . company as may be necessary.

In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hand and seal this 17th day of March A. D. 1913.

Copy filed Clear Creek County June 5, 1913.

Abstract of
Articles of Incorporation
of

THE ARGENTINE AND GRAYS PEAK RAILWAY COMPANY

We, Fred W. Blankenbuhler, Bertha Blankenbuhler, Fred C. Howes, William W. Garwood and Howard B. Crandall, all residents of the City and County of Denver, associates ourselves together under and in pursuance of the provisions of the laws . . . relating to the formation of corporations to form a Company for the purpose . . . of certain lawful business . . . including the acquirement, purchase and leasing of certain railway property and franchises in the construction and operation of certain lines of railroad and telegraph within . . . the State of Colorado.

That the said Company is created for the objects and purposes: To acquire and purchase, lease, maintain and operate, extend and complete the franchises formerly of The Argentine Central Railway Company, and of The Georgetown and Grays Peak Railway Company, a Colorado corporation; to build, construct, complete and maintain the said line of railroad beginning at the town of Silver Plume . . . to the terminus of said railroad, the summit of Mt. McClellan. . . .

. . . the corporate life is fifty years . . . five directors . . . capitalization \$100,000 in 1000 shares . . . each fully paid and non-accessible.

Copy filed Clear Creek County July 19, 1913

Sources and Acknowledgments

Allen, John—whose tenure as timekeeper and conductor on the Argentine Central spanned three eras, for helping to keep the record straight, *Baldwin-Lima-Hamilton Corporation*—successors to Lima Machine and Locomotive Company, builder of the Shay engine, for data and drawings.

Bancroft, Caroline—whose insistence upon accuracy from all in things historical prompts greater effort in that direction.

Blankenbuhler, Mr. and Mrs. H. W.—son and daughter-in-law of F. W., for pictures and mementos of the final era.

Bloch, Don—for both a subjective and objective viewpoint.

Coughlin, Fred—who, man and boy, has never really been away from the Argentine Central, for observations and experiences.

Davis, Elmer O.—who wrote about the Argentine Central in the November, 1948, issue of *The Colorado Magazine*.

Librarians—of the Denver Public Library Western History Depart-

ment who found all available material, and then continued to look further.

Lind, Peter—who fired the Shays several summers, for identifying faces in pictures, for anecdotes.

Percy, P. E.—the Baldwin-Lima-Hamilton engineer who dug through fifty-year old files for drawings, and data on Argentine Central motive power.

Poor, M. C.—whose *Brief History of The Argentine Central Railway Co.* was published in Railway and Locomotive Historical Society Bulletin No. 64.

Reichwein, Mrs. Betty—keeper of records at the Clear Creek County Court House, for getting out dusty old incorporation papers.

Rowe, George—who as a boy posed for a picture with his dog on No. 7, for pointing out where Argentine Central rails once joined the Colorado and Southern.

Tingle, Fred—one-time Argentine Central engine watcher, much later engineer of ill-fated Colorado and Southern freight train, for sidelights and stories.

Wilcox, Edward Barkley—son of the Argentine Central's builder, for graciously granting access to the family album, for recalling things from childhood days.

X, Mr.—who was overheard in a bookstore asking for something on the Argentine Central.



In 1948, the testimony of rotting ties . . .

Edward B. Wilcox

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