

The Silverton Railroad was built by Otto Mears in 1888-89. It ran from Silverton over Red Mountain Pass and down into Ironton, a distance of only about 20 miles. For a few years it was the best paying railroad per mile in the country. Among the more interesting communities along the railroad was the town of Guston. In 1892 the Reverend William Davis was sent to the Red Mountain mining area to start a Congregational church. The Guston Mine owner gave him a plot of land on a knoll to build the Church. The ruins of the church lie flat on the ground today obscured by a heavy stand of aspen trees. The cupola still stands next to the church ruins.

Large mines on the Silverton Railroad usually had two railroad spurs. The Guston was no exception. The upper elevation spur was used to bring in coal and supplies. The lower elevation spur was used for shipping ore out. Today the upper Guston spur is a road that passes above the Guston Mine. The lower spur is a long railroad grade that passes through a beautiful rock cut in order to reach the lower level of the Guston Mine buildings. Guston also had a depot on the Silverton Railroad. It was little more than a small passenger shelter on top of a loading platform but it was the only passenger shelter between Red Mountain Town and Ironton attesting to the importance of the Guston, Robinson and Scotch Girl Mines. Guston was at its zenith in the heady silver days of the 1880s and early 1890s. The photo below shows Guston in 1893 with the church and depot marked by arrows.



The silver panic of 1893 and the resulting recession was a death knell for silver mining on Red Mountain as the once famous mines closed down. Some mining of base metals continued up to the 1950s but never on the same scale as before. The Silverton Railroad never made any money after 1895 and it too was gone by 1926.

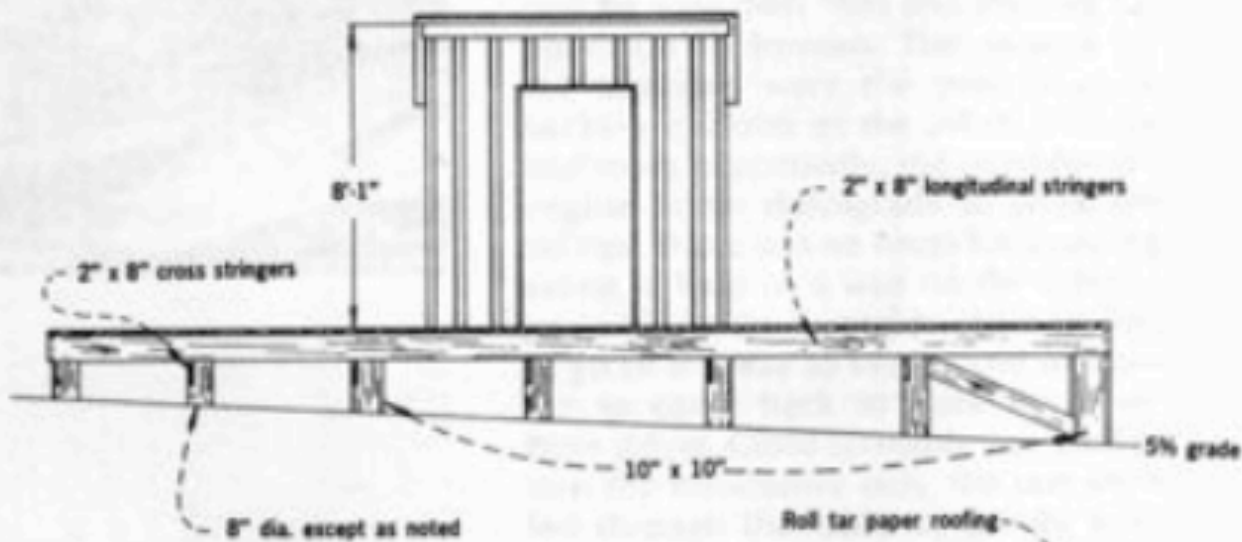
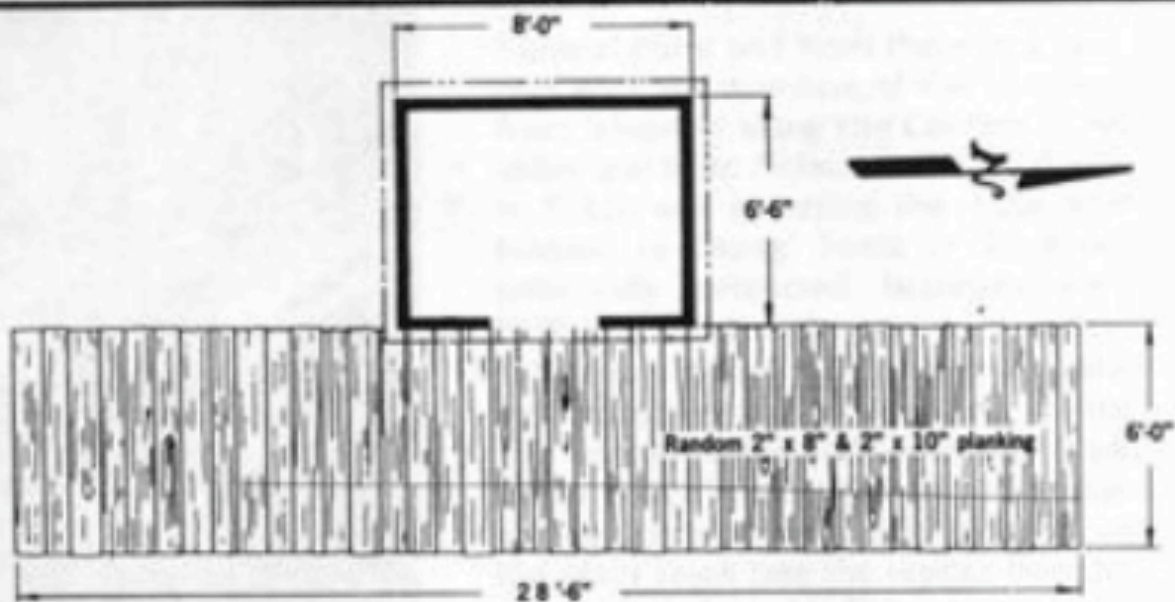
During the 1980s a tree fell on the depot smashing the platform and knocking the passenger shelter down the hill. It continued to deteriorate and by the summer of 2012 only a historian could tell it was a small loading platform.

Thanks to Tom Hillhouse's negotiations, the current owner, Larry Riddell, has given the Ouray County Historical Society and the Ridgway Railroad Museum an easement to the property. This easement allows us to rebuild the depot, lay rails in front of the depot and guarantees public access. Mike Hockersmith of Tisdale Law Firm provided the legal work for creation of the easement and Bob Larson and Tim Pasek of Monadnock Mineral Services provided the survey of the site. The Baumgartner family donated several pieces of 30-lb rail which will be laid in front of the depot.

A 1970 Jerry Hoffer photo of the depot is shown below on the left and a view from the same spot in 2013 is shown below on the right.



The plans below were used for the depot reconstruction. The measurements were made by John Robinson on a 1964 trip to Red Mountain. Brian Adams drew the plans which appeared in the Fall 1974 issue of *The Slim Gauge News*. Thanks to John Robinson for permission to reprint the plans. John also sent me his field notes from

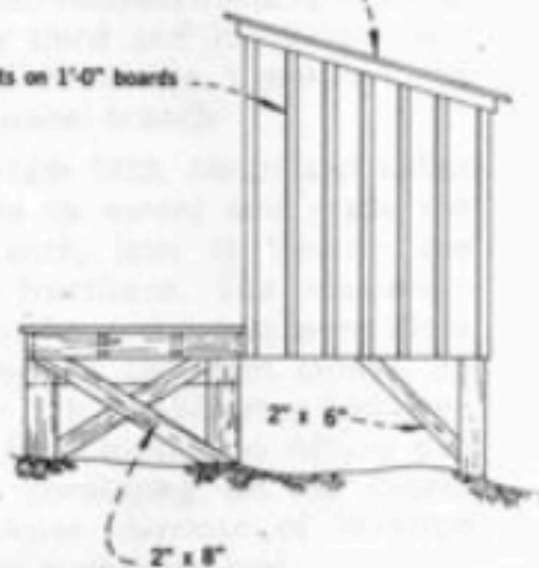


4" bats on 1'-0" boards

## Guston Station

This freight and passenger station was built with available materials. Passenger comforts were nonexistent, with only a small bench across the rear of the shelter.

Measurements by John Robinson.  
Drawing by Brian D. Adams



The two photos below were taken by Dave Grandt in 1956.



On September 26, 2014 we finished the accurate reconstruction of the Guston Depot. We began the process on June 16<sup>th</sup> with a day spent locating the approximate positions of the deck posts. Sessions followed on July 11, 18, 23; August 19, 29; Sept 4 and 26.

Below are three photos of the completed depot and one of the crew on September 26<sup>th</sup>. Pictured are l to r: Dudley Case, Rod Bunyard, Karl Schaeffer, Chris Weiser, Hale Houts, Bob Meyer, Tom Hillhouse and Don Paulson (not pictured Reid Henry and Stuart Harrah). In three of the photos you can see the rail that we moved a half-mile by first winching it down a 500-foot steep hillside and then dragging it to the depot site along a road. The rail is stamped "P. B. S. Co. 81." It was rolled by the Pittsburg Bessemer Steel Co in 1881 and was probably purchased new by the D&RG in the early 1880s. In 1889 Otto Mears purchased five carloads of used 30-pound rail (possibly from the D&RG) delivered to Silverton. When the Silverton Railroad was upgraded from 30-pound to 45-pound rail in 1904, some of the lighter rail was sold to a local mine and the current owner of that mine donated the rail to us. The rail was used on a mine trestle that ran over the SRR right-of-way. The trestle collapsed in the winter of 2013-14. Those of you that have been on my Ouray County Railroad Days hike along the Silverton Railroad right-of-way should remember that trestle.



