



The Ventura and Ojai Valley Railroad gave Ojai, California, a connection to the national rail network via a connection with the Southern Pacific's Coast Line, originally the SP Santa Barbara Branch (1887), at Ventura Junction (this location). The line was completed in 1898 by Captain John Cross and followed the Ventura River northward to Mira Monte, where the line turned northeast to the end of the line at Ojai. In 1899, the year after it was built, the V&OV (1898) became a branch of the SP. Most customers were citrus growers and other agricultural businesses and also included the Shell Oil refinery, which shipped refined petroleum products from the Ventura Oil Field. Passenger service ended in the early 1930's. In January 1969, the largest recorded flood on the Ventura River damaged the northern part of the line, which was then abandoned; freight service to the Shell refinery continued until the SP filed for abandonment of the branch in 1995. Conversion of virtually the entire line to a rail-to-trail, known both as the Ventura River Trail and as the Ojai Valley Trail, was completed in 1999.

Northward view of the V&OV (1898) 2,000 feet north of Ventura Junction and the SP Santa Barbara Branch (1887). This is the only location where tracks are still in place (as of 2019), although satellite imagery and the Abandoned Rails website suggest that remnants of an industrial siding may be present one mile farther north.





Southward view of the V&OV (1898) at the same location as previous. The vacant area behind the tree extends 500 feet south and all traces of the remaining 1,500 feet of the V&OV (1898) south this vacant area, including the junction with the SP mainline, have been obliterated.





Northward view of the V&OV (1898) at far end of the track in the first photo. Beyond the fence the Ventura River Trail follows the railroad grade; the trail to the right of the nearest curve is on a new alignment to allow safe access for bicycles.