



On its push eastward from Los Angeles, California, to build out the southernmost of the five 1855 Pacific Railroad surveys, the Southern Pacific reached Yuma, Arizona, in November 1878, Tucson in March 1880, Lordsburg, New Mexico (this location) later in 1880, and El Paso, Texas, in May 1881. The line was completed as a transcontinental route in 1883, when the route east of the map area through Texas to New Orleans was completed. This route came to be called the "Sunset Route."

Eastward view of the SP Sunset Route (1881) at Lordsburg, New Mexico. The track in the foreground is a siding, the track to its right with tanker and box cars is another siding, and another siding and the double-track SP (1881) mainline, now Union Pacific, are barely visible beneath and beyond the tanker cars in the upper right of this photo. The sidings connect to one another and to the mainline out of sight in the distance and to the right of the photo.





In 1883, the narrow gauge (3-foot) Clifton & Southern Pacific Railway was completed from the Southern Pacific mainline at Lordsburg, New Mexico (this location) to the mining center of Clifton, Arizona, and in the same year was purchased by the Arizona & New Mexico Railroad. The A&NM standard-gauged the line in 1902. The A&NM operated until 1922, when it was purchased by the SP, and in 2008, the Arizona Eastern Railway purchased the line from SP successor Union Pacific. In 2011, Genesee & Wyoming Inc. purchased the AE and continues to operate this line under the Arizona Eastern moniker.

Westward view at the same location as previous. The sidings converge in the distance; this is the beginning of the Clifton & Southern Pacific (1883n). All evidence of the narrow gauge configuration is obliterated. There once would have been a transfer facility, to transfer freight and passengers from narrow gauge to standard-gauge trains, and possibly dual-gauge track and other facilities that would have been removed or modified during the A&NM's 1902 standard-gauging project. The next photo is at the convergence of the two sidings in the distance.





Eastward view 400 feet west of the previous location, where the sidings converge at the beginning of the Clifton & Southern Pacific (1883n). The gondolas on the far right are on a siding of the SP, now UP, mainline.



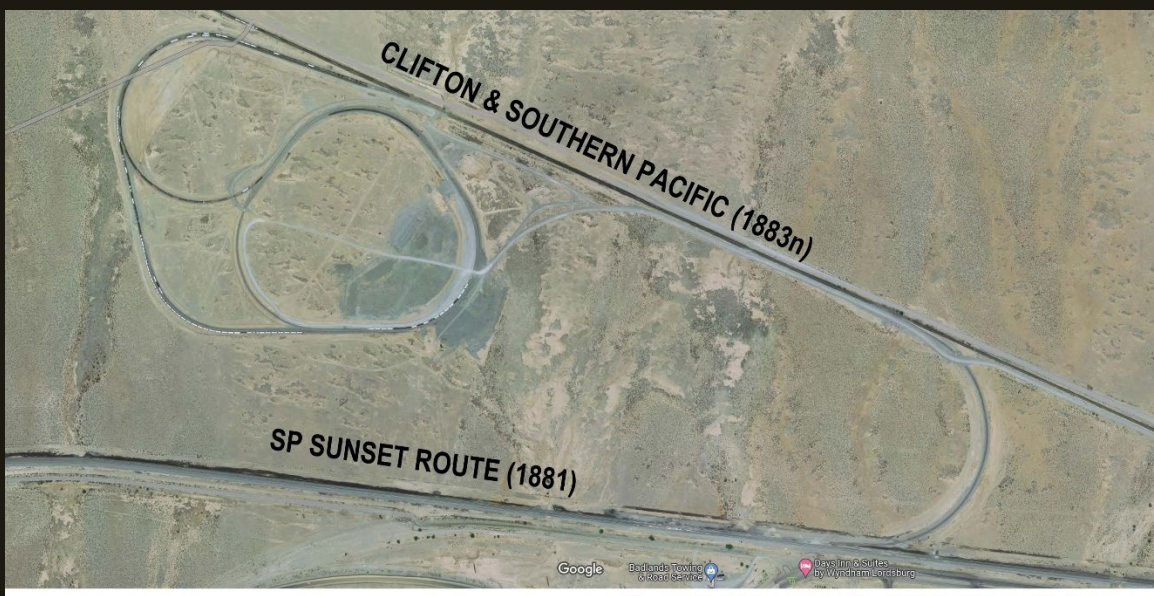


Westward view of the C&SP (1883n) at the same location as previous. The same gondolas are now on the far left. Although not obvious here, we will discover below that the track in the foreground is the east branch of a wye.





Westward view of the C&SP (1883n) 4,000 feet west of the previous location. The Arizona Eastern engine in the upper right distance is on the main track, the cars to its left are on a complex loop visible in the left (west) half of the below satellite image, and the track that merges with the main track in front of the engine is the west branch of an asymmetric wye, which is visible in the right (east) half of the below satellite image. The east branch of the wye is the connection to the SP (1881) mainline explored in previous photos and is out of sight to the right of the below satellite image.







Eastward view of the C&SP (1883n) 1,000 feet west of the previous location. The track to the right is the west branch of the asymmetric wye and the track in the foreground, which we have been calling the C&SP (1883n) mainline, functions as the east branch of the wye.





Westward view of the C&SP (1883n) at the same location previous showing its connection to the west branch of the asymmetric wye. Stored cars are visible on at least two parts of the loop. The train in the right distance is coming off the far side of the loop; the mainline to Clifton continues straight but cannot be seen beyond the engine with its lights on. I have not seen a loop like this anywhere else in the Southwest; it is certainly for turning trains and car storage, but I do not know the purpose of the multiple loops.





Westward view of the C&SP (1883n) 2,000 feet west of the previous location. Stored cars are visible on at least two parts of the loop. The train in the right distance is coming off the far side of the loop; the mainline to Clifton continues straight but cannot be seen beyond the engine with its lights on.