



The Southern Pacific built its Santa Barbara Branch in 1887, building westward from its 1876 mainline at Saugus along the Santa Clara River and across its rich agricultural floodplains, including this location at Santa Paula, to the coast at Ventura, then up the coast to Santa Barbara. In 1901, the SP completed its coastal route and the SP Santa Barbara Branch (1887) immediately became the southern part of the SP's new coastal mainline. However, the importance of this line was short-lived, ending in 1904 when it was bypassed by a parallel route farther south, the SP (1904). Thus, in 1904, the coastal part of the SP Santa Barbara Branch (1887), from Ventura northward to Santa Barbara, remained part of the coastal mainline, but the segment east of Ventura along the Santa Clara River (including this location) was used only for local traffic. The SP continued to haul citrus from the Santa Clara Valley into the 1950's. In 1987, the segment from Piru (15 miles east of Santa Paula) east to Saugus (on the SP [1876]) was abandoned due to storm damage and the remaining tracks from Piru west to the junction with the SP (1904) near Ventura (including this location at Santa Paula) became the SP Santa Paula Branch. In 1989, the SP's Santa Paula Branch was purchased by the Ventura County Transportation Commission. In 1991, Short Line Enterprises, a company that provided railcars for use in movie productions, moved its operations to Fillmore to use the rail line for filming and tourist excursions under the name Fillmore and Western Railway. Today, the F&W operates on track owned by the Ventura County Transportation Commission between Santa Paula (this location) and Piru (15 miles to the east), but in recent years has operated only on the 8 miles of track between Santa Paula and Fillmore. The majority of F&W rolling stock was acquired from four major studios: 20th Century Fox, Paramount, Warner Bros, and MGM.

Eastward view of the SP Santa Barbara Branch (1887) at Santa Paula. The depot is the original 1887 SP depot and is occupied today by the Santa Paula Chamber of Commerce & Gift Store and is used for filming, private events, and the western terminus of the F&W.





Northwestward view, same location as previous. The building is a former trackside mill built in 1888 and today houses the Ventura County Agriculture Museum, dedicated to the region's farming and ranching history.





Eastward view of the SP Santa Barbara Branch (1887) Santa Paula railyard, just east of the depot (shown in the first photo). In 2018, when this photo was taken, the tracks were covered with asphalt patch, so F&W trains from Fillmore cannot cross the street (10<sup>th</sup> Street) to the depot. I don't know if the patch has since been removed.