



In August 1899, the Southern Pacific built a 3.26 mile branch southeast from this location on the SP Coast Line (1901) at Guadalupe to a sugar mill at the future Betteravia Junction (not shown separately on the map). In 1911, the Santa Maria Valley Railway was incorporated by an English oil syndicate to build a 23-mile line from Betteravia Junction eastward through Santa Maria (on the Pacific Coast Railway) to the oil center of Roadamite to haul oil and asphalt from that location to the SP at Guadalupe. The SMV commenced construction on July 11, 1911, reached Santa Maria on October 7, 1911, and completed the line to Roadamite on November 5, 1911. The railroad was initially successful, but in the 1920's the sugar plant closed and the SMV declared bankruptcy. Captain G. Allan Hancock purchased the bankrupt railroad in 1925, renamed it the Santa Maria Valley Railroad, and built a modern, fully-equipped engine house, installed new ties and new rail, and purchased new locomotives. He also developed the SMV's agricultural customers in the Santa Maria Valley by introducing new irrigation methods, investing in packing sheds, and an ice plant, and building Rosemary Farms. By the mid 1930's the SMV was hauling many carloads of sugar beets to the Union Sugar Plant in Betteravia and hauling crude oil and vegetables out of the valley. The SMV was one of the busiest shortline railroads on the West Coast, hauling over 20,000 carloads per year. At the start of World War II, the SMV purchased the narrow gauge Pacific Coast Railway right-of-way from the grade crossing in Santa Maria south 3 miles to a new airbase, now the location of the Santa Maria Airport.

Roadamite ceased operations in the late 1940's and the line was abandoned back to Gates in 1950. The SMV was one of the last railroads on the West Coast to run main line steam locomotives; February 21, 1962, marked the last run of steam engine 21, with Captain Hancock at the throttle and Walt Disney in the cab. As typical of the shortlines, business went to trucking and, in August 1993, the sugar plant in Betteravia closed. The Roadamite Branch to Gates was abandoned in the late 1990's. In September 2008, the SMV moved its yard and office facilities from Santa Maria to the former sugar plant in Betteravia. Today, new customers have come on while current customers are increasing their tonnage. The SMV claims to be a full-service shortline railroad, performing contract switching, contract track repairs and inspections, and car repairs. The Friends of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad formed in 2007 to preserve the history of the Santa Maria Valley Railroad and to educate its members on the current railroad industry.

Northward view of the junction between the SP (1901) mainline and it's 1899 branch line (switch in the foreground) at the south end of the town of Guadalupe, at a junction called Barsug. This junction would later mark the junction of the SP (now Union Pacific) and the SMV as the SMV took over operations on the 3.26 miles of SP 1899 trackage.



Southward view at the same location as the previous photo. The lines to the left are the SP 1899/SMV, which has several sidings. The line to the right is the SP (1901) Coast Line.



Southwestward view of the SMV, 3 miles southeast of Guadalupe at Betteravia Junction. The switch is between the SMV main line to Santa Maria and the a 1-mile spur to the Betteravia sugar beet processing plant. This is where, on July 11, 1911, the SMV commenced construction from the SP's 1899 Betteravia Branch. Note the rich agriculture on the floodplain of the Santa Maria River, and the rolling hills in the distance.



Eastward view of Betteravia Junction, same location as the previous photo. The switch is between the SMV main line to Santa Maria (left) and the spur to the Betteravia beet processing plant (right).



Northwestward view of Betteravia Junction, the SMV main line to Santa Maria is in the distance and the spur to the Betteravia beet processing plant is in the foreground.



Westward view of Betteravia Junction, the SMV main line to Santa Maria is in the foreground.



Southeastward view of the SMV main line to Santa Maria at Betteravia Junction.



One mile southeast of the previous location at Betteravia. Here the tracks split into numerous spurs at the now-closed sugar beet plant.





One of the Betteravia spurs.



More Betteravia spurs.



One of the Betteravia spurs leads to an engine maintenance facility at the old sugar plant, now the SMV headquarters.



The Betteravia sugar plant facility, which closed in 1993 and is now the SMV headquarters. Note the rolling stock on the longest of the Betteravia spurs.