



The Arizona & California Railway (1910) provided the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe with a shorter route from Los Angeles to Phoenix, compared to its Santa Fe, Prescott & Phoenix (1895) route via its original Atlantic & Pacific (1883) mainline. The A&C was constructed westward from a junction with the SFP&P (1895) at Matthie, Arizona, and reached Parker, Arizona, on the Colorado River, in June 1907, and reached the AT&SF mainline (SP-built Needles Branch [1883]) at Cadiz, California, in 1910.

Northwestward view of the A&C (1910) 5 miles west of Rice, California.





A low bridge carries the A&C (1910) over a wash at same location as previous.





Northwestward view of railcars stored on a A&C siding called "Freda," 4 miles west of Rice.





Southeastward view of the A&C (1910) at Freda; the alignment turns to the left (east) in the distance.





The A&C parallels California Highway 62 for about 14 miles and almost every foot of it is decorated with rock graffiti. In addition to rocks, the roadside art utilizes railroad spikes and other discarded material.







Now we're at Rice looking westward at the Rice siding.





Closer look at the A&C Rice siding, an old water tower is to the right (north) of the tracks. Just out of sight to the left of the track is the siding for the wye junction with the California Southern (1920).





These ruins are all that remain of Rice, California. The same water tower and stored cars are in the distance.





In 1914, the California Southern Railroad (not to be confused with the AT&SF-affiliated railroad of the same name linking Barstow and San Diego) was incorporated to build 50 miles from a point known as Blythe Junction, later renamed "Rice" (this location), on the A&C (1910) to reach the agricultural areas along the Colorado River around Blythe. Construction proceeded south and west from Rice through the desert and reached the agricultural center of Blythe in 1916 and reached the final end of track at Ripley, California, in 1920. The high point of the CS (1920) route was a pass between the Big Maria Mountains and the Little Maria Mountains before dropping down to the agricultural lands along the Colorado River. The A&C/AT&SF leased the CS in November 1921 and completed its acquisition in 1942. Traffic declined until the last trains ran in late 2007. In 2011 the owner, the independent Arizona and California Railroad, scrapped the CS (1920) trackage beyond the first four miles from Rice.

Northward view of the junction at Rice, where the CS (1920)(foreground) joins the A&C (1910)(with cars along a siding in distance). This is the north end of the 4 miles of CS (1920) trackage that remained in place, as a spur for freight car storage, following the 2011 abandonment of the remainder of the line.





Northward view of CS (1920), 1.8 rail miles from Rice, located where stored cars are visible in the right distance. The tracks run northwest here, then turn through an almost horseshoe bend to eastward, then a 90-degree left to approach the Rice wye on a northward alignment. The sinuous route is apparently to lower the grade on this alluvial slope.





Southward view of the CS (1920), same location as previous. The tracks end two miles up. The hills in the distance are the Big Maria Mountains and the railroad alignment runs through the gap at the far right horizon.





Now we've moved a few miles east of Rice looking northeastward at the A&C (1910), plied by today's Arizona & California Railroad.