



In 1885, the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe-owned California Southern Railroad completed its line from San Diego over Cajon Pass through this location at Hesperia to the AT&SF-leased SP Needles Branch (1883) at Barstow, giving the AT&SF access to the southern California coast. Additionally, since 1905 when the San Pedro, Los Angeles & Salt Lake completed its route through Las Vegas, its trains (now Union Pacific trains) pass through Hesperia using trackage rights.

During World War II, renowned industrialist Henry J. Kaiser developed the Cushenbury limestone quarry to supply his steel making operations in Fontana, California. Following World War II, a population boom in California created demand for industrial minerals to support the construction industry. Kaiser built a cement plant at Cushenbury in 1957, and in anticipation the AT&SF built a branch line east from Hesperia to the plant in the prior year (1956). The facility was modernized in 1982 and Mitsubishi Cement purchased the plant in 1988.

Northward view of the CS (1885) at Hesperia, 1,600 feet south of the junction with the AT&SF Cushenbury Branch (1956). The tracks are, from left to right: BNSF (CS/AT&SF successor) mainline (with the back end of a container train); second track of BNSF double-track mainline; a siding (with BNSF engine; this siding connects to the Cushenbury Branch 1,600 feet to the north), a second siding, and a spur to a local business.



Southward view of the CS (1885) at Hesperia, 1,500 feet north of the previous location. The short, stopped train in the distance is the one with the BNSF engine in the previous photo. At the left, the two sidings in the previous photo converge to one siding.



Northward view of the CS (1885) at Hesperia, same location as previous. There are two switches on the right; the closer of the two is for the convergence of the two sidings (previous photo) and the second one is the junction with the AT&SF Cushenbury Branch (1956). The junction is a single switch; I could find no evidence of this ever being a complete wye and I could find no evidence of a turning wye. This makes sense because trains only go south on the mainline (to the Kaiser smelter in Fontana) and the branch was built in 1956, in the age of diesels, which don't need to be turned.



Southwestward view of the AT&SF Cushenbury Branch (1956), which joins the CS (1885) in the distance.



Northeastward view of the AT&SF Cushenbury Branch (1956), same location as previous, where the line turns to due east and continues about 30 miles to the Cushenbury limestone quarry.