



In 1904, the Southern Pacific completed its Inter-California or "Inter-Cal" line. The Inter-Cal branched from the SP's Sunset Route (1881) at Niland, California, ran southward through Calexico, California, and entered Mexico at Mexicali, Baja California, then ran 50 miles east to re-connect with the Sunset Route at Araz Junction (this location). It was the Inter-Cal line that the SP used to block the Colorado River flood waters into the Imperial Valley that formed the Salton Sea (253 feet below sea level) in 1907. The entire length of the Inter-Cal in both Mexico and the U.S. traverses the rich agricultural lands of the Colorado River Delta, irrigated by diversion of the entire flow of the Colorado River, which no longer has surface water flow into the Sea of Cortez. In 1948, a few miles of the Inter-Cal grade in Mexico was used by the Ferrocarril Sonora-Baja California, and in the 1950's the remainder of the Mexico line (east of the 1948 junction with the Ferrocarril Sonora-Baja California) and the few U.S. miles near Yuma, including at this location, were removed. The line from Niland to the Mexican border is still in use by Union Pacific.

Westward view of the SP Sunset Route (1881) at Araz Junction. All traces of the connection with SP Inter-Cal (1904), which came in from the left (south), have been obliterated by later upgrading of the main line, but we can pick up the Inter-Cal grade if we move a few feet south (next photo).



Northward view of the fill grade (foreground) for the east branch of the Araz Junction wye for the SP Inter-Cal (1904). The tracks of the SP Sunset Route (1881) are visible in the distance.



Northward view of a trestle that once carried the SP Inter-Cal (1904) to Araz Junction. The container train is on the SP Sunset Route (1881).



Southward view 500 feet south of Araz Junction, showing supports for a bridge that once carried the SP Inter-Cal (1904) over the All American Canal. The canal is a primary conduit of diverted Colorado River water for irrigation. The Araz Junction wye splits into its two branches about 100 feet north of the canal.



One mile south of Araz Junction, where a bridge carries the SP Inter-Cal (1904) over a control channel for the All American Canal. The overgrown reeds to the left (northwest) is the canal and the Colorado River is to the right (out of sight to the southeast) in this northward view. A second bridge in the right distance carries the grade over another control channel.



Northeastward view of the SP Inter-Cal (1904) grade, one mile south of Araz Junction. The white K-rail in the distance is the same one that blocks the bridge in the previous photo.



Southwestward view of the SP Inter-Cal (1904) grade, same location as the previous photo.



Westward view of the SP Inter-Cal (1904) grade, a few steps southwest of the previous location.





Northward view of the same fill grade and small bridge as in the previous photo.