



The Southern Pacific Jawbone Branch, aka Lone Pine Branch, extended 90 miles north from the SP mainline at Mojave, California, through Owens Valley to Owenyo where, in 1910, it reached the SP-controlled Nevada & California narrow gauge railroad (former Carson & Colorado Railroad). The Jawbone Branch helped build the Los Angeles Aqueduct. In 1914, the American Trona Company completed the Trona Railway to connect its mining operations at Trona, to the Jawbone Branch at a wye called Searles Junction.

This southeast view of Searles Junction shows the SP Jawbone Branch emerging from a deep cut on the west (right) horizon then splitting at the Searles Junction wye into two lines of stored cars. The more distant branch is the Trona Railway and the closer branch, with stored cars extending to the left end of the image, is the SP Jawbone Branch.



Southward view of switches and sidings on the SP Jawbone Branch just south of Searles Junction. The deep cut in the distance is in the upper right corner of the previous image. The cut replaced a large switchback that ran west (right) from here.



Searles Junction is in the distance of this northward view, which shows a branch line heading west toward the viewer. This branch is actually the original route of the Jawbone Branch and led to a switchback to descend to the next valley to the south. The switchback is now abandoned, replaced by the deep cut in the previous image.



Cars stored on a siding of the Trona Railway at Searles Junction. Note the old water tower for the steam locomotives that once plied this desert railroad.



The Jawbone Branch ends a few miles north of Searles Junction; the rest of the line northward was abandoned between 1972 and 1997. The remaining few miles of track north of Searles Junction is now a spur for car storage.



Three miles north of the end of track in the previous photo, showing the cut and fill on the abandoned grade of the SP Jawbone Branch.



Closer view of the cut in the previous photo.



This is the Trona Railway (1914) 3 miles east of Searles Junction, on a rare wet day in the desert.





The engineer uses flares as standard procedure at this remote road crossing at the same location as previous. This eastbound TR consist is moving locomotives to Trona.



Same location as previous, view the all-locomotive train as it passes.



Same location as previous, the locomotives disappear into the desert.