



In 1876, the Central Pacific Railroad completed its Amador Branch (named for Amador County), one of many branch lines that extended from Central Valley mainlines eastward into the Sierra Nevada to tap gold and lumber resources. The CP Amador Branch (1876) starts at the CP's Western Pacific (1869) mainline at Galt, from whence it runs 25 miles northeastward then southeastward to its terminus at Ione, California. As part of Southern Pacific's take-over of the CP in the 1880's the line became known as the SP Ione Branch. In 1902, the Ione & Eastern Railroad (not shown separately on the SWRRH Map) proposed to build a 30-mile line eastward from Ione but managed only 6 miles of track to Sunnybrook. In 1904 the 6-mile line was bankrupt, sold, and renamed the Amador Central Railroad, which extended the line 6 miles from Sunnybrook east to Martell. The first train pulled into Martell later that same year. The AC (1904) served the Sierra Nevada Foothills gold mining communities and hauled lumber products. The last Passenger train departed Martell in 1942. Freight (lumber) ran until 1997, ceased temporarily, reopened temporarily as the Amador Foothills Railroad, then finally ceased for good in 2004. At some point after that, the last 1.5 miles of track was removed. In 2011 the AC (1904) was sold as the Amador Central Railroad to the Recreational Railroad Coalition Historical Society and the Amador County Historical Society with the intent of saving the line for historical, educational, and recreational purposes.

Northwestward view of the AC (1904) just east of Sunnybrook. Thus, is the beginning of the trackage built east from Sunnybrook by the AC in 1904.





Southeastward view of the AC (1904), same location as previous, where the line crosses California Highway 88. Both the highway and railroad head east to Martell.





Eastward view of the AC (1904), a half mile east of previous location.





Westward view of the AC (1904), 2 miles east of previous location.



A new business park pays homage to the AC.





Eastward view of the AC (1904), 2 miles east of previous location. The end of track is just out of sight in the distance.





Southwestward view of the AC (1904) end of track, 600 feet east of previous location.





Eastward view of the AC (1904) end of track, same location as previous. The line was cut here after 2004, when the short-lived Amador Foothills Railroad ceased lumber transport on the AC (1904). The cut line removed the crossing of California Highway 88. The eastward continuation of the alignment to Martell can be seen across the street (just to the right of the second building from the left).





Southwestward view of the AC (1904) end of the line at Martell, 1.5 miles east of previous location where the track currently ends. The tracks are removed except for those in the road crossing. The road where the car is parked on the left is Depot Road.





Northeastward view of the AC (1904) end of the line at Martell, same location as previous (note the same rails left in the pavement). The track fanned out into spurs here; the track on the right went straight into the gravel area and probably the depot and the track on the left led to an engine house that is still standing.





Close-up of the engine house at Martell. There is no evidence of a turning wye at Martell, but the Abandoned Rails website says there is or was a turntable. I could find no evidence of the turntable.