



During the 1880's, the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad rushed to compete with the Southern Pacific for southern California traffic. The AT&SF's first objective was to reach a Pacific Coast port, when the SP was already in Los Angeles and the Central Pacific was already in the San Francisco Bay Area. The AT&SF first reached tidewater at Guaymas, Sonora, Mexico, in 1882, via its New Mexico & Arizona and Sonora railroads. But the AT&SF lost no time continuing toward the only major California port without rail service, San Diego. The AT&SF formed the California Southern Railroad to build north from San Diego up Temecula Canyon and over Cajon Pass to reach the SP-built, AT&SF-leased mainline at Barstow. AT&SF trains first arrived in San Diego in 1885, and by 1888 the difficult Temecula Canyon portion of the CS line, which was subject to repeated washouts, was circumvented by the AT&SF's coastal route to San Diego, built by the Riverside, Santa Ana & Los Angeles and the San Bernardino & San Diego railroads.

San Jacinto Railway was incorporated in 1887, but this company had not started any work when it was purchased by the California Central Railway. The CC started rail work in 1887 from a junction with the California Southern at Perris, California, and reached the end of the line in the agricultural area of San Jacinto in 1888. The CS mainline through Temecula Canyon suffered continual washouts and was abandoned in 1891, replaced by the AS&SF coastal route, and was abandoned in stages northward to Perris by 1927. After 1927, the remaining CS route from Riverside southward to Perris and continuing east on the CC to San Jacinto became the San Jacinto Branch of the AT&SF.

The old Perris Station at the 1888 junction between the CS and CC San Jacinto Branch is now a museum.



In Perris, the CS tracks remain in place for about a mile south of the junction with the CC San Jacinto Branch and are used by the Orange Empire Railway Museum. This photo shows the end-of-track in south Perris; by 1927 the CS Temecula Canyon route had been abandoned to this point.



The Orange Empire Railway Museum is the premier railroad museum with steam and diesel excursions.



In April 2015, the CS line CC San Jacinto Branch at Perris were being reconstructed for the new Metrolink Perris Valley Line from Riverside (original Riverside, Santa Ana & Los Angeles route) south on the CS grade to south Perris, a few miles south of this point in downtown Perris. The line is expected to open to riders by late 2015.

In this southward view, the end-of-track in the upper right is the north end of the CS line and the Orange Empire Railway Museum was isolated between this point and the southern end of track (shown in a previous photo). The Metrolink portion is under active reconstruction with welded rails, concrete ties, and new ballast. I expect the construction plans call for a new switch at this location so Orange Empire Railway excursions can operate on the new line.



Northward view at the same location as previous. Note the old Perris Station in the distance; a new Metrolink station is under construction across the track from the old station.