



On its push eastward from Los Angeles, California, to build out the southernmost of the five 1855 Pacific Railroad surveys, the Southern Pacific reached Yuma, Arizona, in November 1878, Tucson in March 1880, Steins, New Mexico (this location) later in 1880, and El Paso, Texas, in May 1881. The line was completed as a transcontinental route in 1883, when the route east of the map area through Texas to New Orleans was completed. This route came to be called the "Sunset Route."

Northward view of the SP Sunset Route (1881) at Steins, New Mexico. Steins is located at 4,400-foot Steins Pass in the Peloncillo Mountains, another of the north-south trending ranges of the Basin and Range geologic province. The fill grade that is in the foreground and curves to the right toward the SP mainline (now Union Pacific), is the abandoned east branch of a turning wye that once existed at Steins. The wye was removed prior to 1965, the date of the earliest topo map at a sufficiently large scale to show the wye if it were present, which it's not. The west branch of the wye is just out of view on the left.



Northward view of the SP Sunset Route (1881) 400 feet west of the previous location, with an Amtrak train speeding eastward. The culvert located just below the back of the second engine is on the west branch of the turning wye.



Northward view of the town of Steins, a few steps West of the previous location. The SP Sunset Route (1881) is visible on the far right behind the buildings.