



The Southern Pacific built its Santa Barbara Branch in 1887, building westward from its 1876 mainline at Saugus along the Santa Clara River and across its rich agricultural floodplains, including this location at Fillmore, to the coast at Ventura, then up the coast to Santa Barbara. In 1901, the SP completed its coastal route and the SP Santa Barbara Branch (1887) immediately became the southern part of the SP's new coastal mainline. However, the importance of this line was short-lived, ending in 1904 when it was bypassed by a parallel route farther south, the SP (1904). Thus, in 1904, the coastal part of the SP Santa Barbara Branch (1887), from Ventura northward to Santa Barbara, remained part of the coastal mainline, but the segment east of Ventura along the Santa Clara River (including this location) was used only for local traffic. The SP continued to haul citrus from the Santa Clara Valley into the 1950's. In 1987, the segment from Piru east to Saugus was abandoned due to storm damage and the remaining tracks from Piru west to the junction with the SP (1904) near Ventura (including this location at Fillmore) became the SP Santa Paula Branch. In 1989, the SP's Santa Paula Branch was purchased by the Ventura County Transportation Commission. In 1991, Short Line Enterprises, a company that provided railcars for use in movie productions, came to Fillmore (this location) to use the rail line for filming and tourist excursions under the name Fillmore and Western Railway. Today, the F&W operates on track owned by the Ventura County Transportation Commission between Santa Paula (8 miles west of Fillmore) and Piru (7 miles east of Fillmore), but in recent years has operated only on the 8 miles of track between Santa Paula and Fillmore. The majority of F&W rolling stock was acquired from four major studios: 20th Century Fox, Paramount, Warner Bros, and MGM.

Eastward view of the SP Santa Barbara Branch (1887) at the Fillmore Depot. I could find no history on the depot, which could be a recent replica like the one 7 miles to the east in Piru. The vintage diesel locomotive is on the SP Santa Barbara Branch (1887) mainline, the other tracks are sidings, some of which were built by the F&W to support its operations.





Historic passenger cars stored at the F&W yard in Fillmore.





The F&W uses this operational steam locomotive in movies and to pull excursion trains. The F&W #14 is a 2-8-0 built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1913 for the Duluth & Northeastern Railroad.



The F&W yard includes a turntable.



Closer view of the F&W turntable.



Another view of the F&W turntable. This 80-ton turntable was originally installed in Capreol, Ontario, in 1906. In 2007, the Santa Clara River Valley Railroad Historical Society purchased the turntable from the Canadian National Railway and was installed it here. The turntable allows not only turning of F&W locomotives and cars but also access to facilities in the narrow yard area.





The other side of the F&W turntable.



Locomotives in various states of repair in the F&W yard in Fillmore.

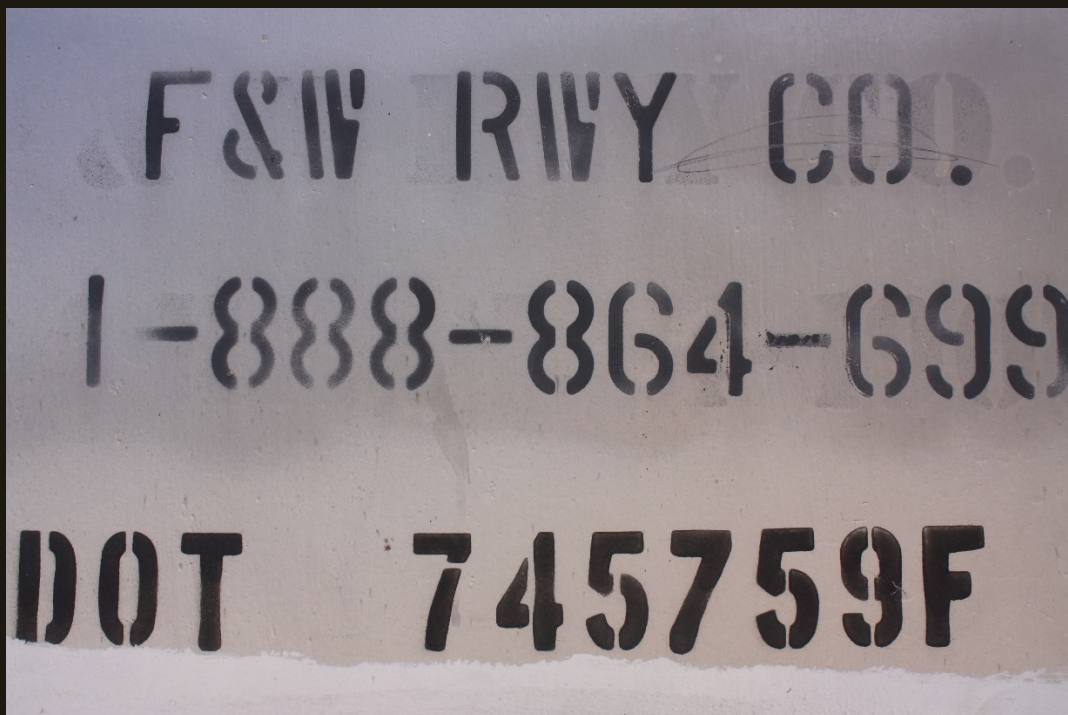




Eastward view of the F&W yard. The depot and diesel in the left distance are the same as in the first photo. All subsequent photos up to now were in the yard beyond the depot and diesel, now we're on the west side of the railroad property.



Eastward view at the western end of the F&W yard, a few steps west of the previous location where the track crosses Central Avenue. The same diesel is in the left distance and from here we can see that the diesel is on the mainline of the SP Santa Barbara Branch (1887), poised for an 8 mile run westward to Santa Paula. The building with columns to the right, with a nice lawn in front, is the Fillmore City Hall built in 1996 following significant damage to the prior building during the 1994 Northridge Earthquake.





Westward view of the SP Santa Barbara Branch (1887) a few steps west of the previous location. The right-of-way borders residences.