



In the late 1870's and first years of the 1880's, the Southern Pacific focused its resources on completing its transcontinental route through southern Arizona and New Mexico to El Paso and beyond. The SP was in no rush to build east from Mojave, California, until 1880, when the St. Louis & San Francisco Railway came to an agreement with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad to jointly control the Atlantic & Pacific Railroad. The A&P would build west from the AT&SF mainline at Isleta, New Mexico, to meet the SP at Needles, California. A&P construction reached Kingman, Arizona, in 1882, which prompted the SP to begin building its branch from Mojave to Needles; the SP built through this location at Cadiz, California, and met the A&P on August 9, 1883, at Needles (on the west bank of the Colorado River) thus completing the northern of the two "Southern Pacific" transcontinental routes identified by the 1855 "Pacific Railroad" surveys. The AT&SF-controlled A&P leased the SP's new Needles Branch (including the prominent east-west line in this photo), and in 1885 the AT&SF-owned California Southern Railroad completed its line from San Diego over Cajon Pass to the AT&SF/A&P-leased SP Needles Branch at Barstow, giving the AT&SF access to the southern California coast.

In the early 1900's, the AT&SF built the Arizona & California Railway to provide the AT&SF with a shorter route from Los Angeles to Phoenix, compared to its Santa Fe, Prescott & Phoenix route via its original Atlantic & Pacific mainline. The A&C was constructed westward from a junction with the SFP&P at Matthie, Arizona, and reached Parker, Arizona, on the Colorado River, in June 1907, and reached the (SP-built) AT&SF mainline at Cadiz, California, in 1910 (this location).

In this satellite image of Cadiz, the prominent east-west line is the SP-built AT&SF (now BNSF) main line. This line, the "Southern Transcon," is double tracked from LA to New Mexico and points east and is the busiest railroad in the southwest. The asymmetric wye just right of center and heading to the southeast from the AT&SF/BNSF line is the A&C (1910). The abandoned turning wye to the left of center is the actual location of Cadiz, named in 1883 by Lewis Kingman, a locating engineer for the A&P; Cadiz is the third in a string of alphabetically named railroad stations in the Mojave Desert. I assume the turning wye was abandoned when the A&C built its wye just to the east in 1910, but I could find no record of this wye and I did not recognize the abandoned wye when I visited Cadiz, discovering it only after viewing the above image.



We will explore Cadiz from west to east. Here we are west of the satellite image and about a quarter mile west of the abandoned wye and Cadiz, with a BNSF container train speeding on the double tracked main line. The siding to the right is the first siding approaching the Cadiz yard in this eastward view. Out of view to the left (north) of the tracks is an old siding that extends a mile west of this location.





Westward view just west of the satellite image, from left (south) to right (north): the same siding seen in the previous photo; the two tracks of the BNSF main line; and the old siding that extends a mile west with a switch to a second "old" siding.





Westward view at the same location as the previous photo, with the old siding and switch to a second old siding in the foreground; the latter is physically disconnected from the line, as seen here, and extends only about 300 feet to the east.



Westward view just west of the previous photo, with the same “new” siding seen in the previous photo. The switch in the foreground is the first switch for the Cadiz yard.





Northwestward view a few steps east of the previous location, with the first switch for the Cadiz yard left of center and several switches for the yard in the foreground.





Eastward view of the Cadiz yard, with stored oil tank cars in the yard and a speeding container train on the main line. The abandon wye is to the right of the image, the original location of Cadiz is to the left.



Northward view of desert landscape.





Scrap spikes and plates at the Cadiz yard. Note that the sidings are beginning to converge at the right (east) end of the Cadiz yard.





Eastward view at the east end of the Cadiz yard. The switch in the distance is the west branch of the A&C (1910) wye. The cars beyond are stored on the east branch of the wye.





Westward view of the east end of the Cadiz yard (left distance); the switch for the west branch of the A&C (1910) wye is just behind the viewer.





Eastward view of the double-tracked west branch of the A&C (1910) wye. The cars beyond to the right are on the east branch of the wye. The stored oil tank cars and other cars on the left are on a AT&SF/BNSF siding.





Southeastward view of the double-tracked west branch of the A&C (1910) wye. The stored oil tank cars and other cars are on the AT&SF/BNSF siding.





Same location as previous, northwestward view of the double-tracked west branch of the A&C (1910) wye.





Northward view of the southern tip of the A&C wye. The double-tracked west branch of the A&C (1910) wye merges with the single-tracked east branch, used for car storage.



Northwestward view of the southern tip of the A&C wye, same location as previous. The double-tracked west branch of the A&C (1910) wye merges with the single-tracked east branch, used for car storage.





Northwestward view south of the tip of the A&C wye, several hundred feet south of the previous location, where the double-tracked A&C (1910) goes to a single track.





Same switch as previous. I do not know why there is a mailbox at the south end of the Cadiz wye.





Southeastward view of the A&C (1910), same location as previous, as it heads across the desert to Arizona.





Westward view of the A&C (1910), same location as previous, with a dust storm brewing in the distance.





Westward view of the east branch of the A&C (1910) wye, used for car storage, where it merges with the siding; the center and right-hand tracks are the double-tracked BNSF Southern Transcon (SP (1883) Needles Branch).





Now we are east of the A&C wye and east of the satellite image (first photo) as yet another BNSF container train speeds by, this time headed east on the northern of the two main line tracks. The closest of the three tracks is the one siding that extends this far east of Cadiz.





Eastward view at same location as previous. Note that the siding (far right track) merges onto the BNSF main line in the distance. East of that point the double track heads east to New Mexico and beyond.