



In 1870, one year after the completion of the Central Pacific-Union Pacific transcontinental line, the Central Pacific-owned California Pacific Railroad completed a line connecting the transcontinental end-of-track at Sacramento with the San Francisco Bay port of Vallejo. Also in 1870, the California Pacific completed a 35 mile branch line north from its main line at Davis to Yuba City. In the middle 1870's, the Northern Railway, another Central Pacific subsidiary, commenced construction of a line north from Woodland, 12 miles north of Davis on the California Pacific, through this location at Wyo around 1880, and finally reached Tehama in 1882, where the Northern Railway tracks joined another Central Pacific subsidiary, the California & Oregon Railroad (1872). By 1888, the California Pacific and Northern Railway came under the control of the Southern Pacific and became known as the SP's West Valley Line. Since 1993, the California Northern Railroad has operated over SP's former West Valley Line, including this stretch of track at Wyo, California.

In 1885, the town of Colusa, disappointed in being left off of the Northern Railway alignment, formed the Colusa Railroad Company. Records indicate that practically every citizen of Colusa subscribed for stock in the Colusa Railroad Company. By the end of 1885, the Colusa Railway opened a narrow gauge line running for 10 miles east from a Northern Railway connection at Colusa Junction to Colusa (not shown on map). Around 1906, the SP built an 11 mile branch line eastward from this photo location at Wyo to the new Speckels Sugar beet refinery at Hamilton (later called Hamilton City).

In 1917, as the agricultural output of the area continued to grow, the SP's Colusa & Hamilton Railroad completed a 61 mile line built northward from Harrington on the Northern Railway and through Colusa to Hamilton City, where it connected to the SP line from Wyo. The 72-mile line became known as the SP Colusa Branch, which remained until 1977, when the SP cut the 35-mile northern section between Colusa and Hamilton City. The remaining 11 mile line from Wyo (this location) to Hamilton City, the same line as the original 1906 branch to Hamilton, was renamed the Hamilton City Branch. In 1985, the 25 mile stretch south of Colusa to the C&H's starting point at Harrington on the Northern Railway was abandoned.

Only the 11 miles of track between Wyo (this location) and Hamilton City (Hamilton Branch) is all that's left of the 72-mile Colusa Branch. The branch is used to ship sugar beets in unit beet trains for processing at Hamilton City. Today the Hamilton City Branch and the West Valley Line are operated by the California Northern Railroad.

Southward view of the Northern Railway (now California Northern) in the foreground and the Hamilton Branch in the distance at Wyo, California. There is only one switch at this junction, seen here in the distance; the northern leg of the former wye was abandoned (next photo).



The gravel grade in partial shadow in the upper right of the photo is the abandoned northern leg of the former wye for the Hamilton Branch at Wyo. Note the curve to the right in this northward view, which once carried the east-west Hamilton Branch into alignment with the north-south Northern Railway.



Westward view of the Hamilton Branch at Wyo. The curve to the left is the switch to the Northern Railway (now California Northern). The abandoned northern leg of the former wye (previous photo) is to the right (north) of the curve (but not visible from here). Note the "railroad crossing" street sign in the upper right for a grade crossing with the Northern Railway.