



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 and up Temecula Canyon, through this location near Riverside, California, 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.

Northward view of the CS route near Riverside and 5 miles south of Highgrove, California, which was the starting point of the RSA&LA (to be explored below). Note the recently upgraded track, fresh ballast, and concrete ties installed for running Metrolink commuter trains. The line winds its way through the Box Springs Mountains down toward Highgrove; the mountains in the distant haze are the 10,000+ foot San Gabriel Mountains, which form the northern boundary of the LA Basin.



Southward view of the CS (1885), 3.5 miles north of the previous location and 1.5 miles south of Highgrove. The line on the left is the CS (1885). The track on the right, heading southwest, is a 1 mile industrial spur. This spur was originally a Southern Pacific branch line to Riverside, built around 1900, and later was part of the former Pacific Electric Railway (not shown separately on map). In the 1920's, the PE, also known as the Red Car system, was the largest electric railway system in the world, but is now completely abandoned. The SP/PE tracks once crossed the CS/AT&SF line at this location, but has been re-aligned to connect to the CS (now BNSF/Metrolink) tracks (see below).





Northward view of the CS/AT&SF, same location as previous and 1.5 miles south of Highgrove. The line on the foreground is the CS (1885). The track on the left is a 1 mile spur, a re-use of a part a former SP branch (which, along with hundreds of miles of connectors, local railroads, and commuter railroads in the LA basin, are not shown on the map). The orange overhang just beyond and to the left of the switch is the Riverside-Hunter Park Metrolink Station.



Southwestward view of the CS (1885) line, a few steps east of the previous location. The line just beyond the yellow gate is the CS (1885), with Metrolink concrete ties and welded rail. The SP/PE tracks once extended from the immediate foreground, through the yellow gate, across the then-AT&SF (former CS) tracks, and onto the track alignment visible in the distance just right of center (now an industrial spur). So the straight track in the distance once continued straight toward the viewer, and the curved track that now connects it to the CS alignment (previous photo) was built when the rest of the SP/PE line was abandoned.





Northeastward view of the abandoned SE/PE, same location as the previous photo but looking in the opposite direction. The line curves to the left (north), and parallels the CS alignment for 5 miles to a (former) connection with the SP Sunset Route (1881) in Colton.





Northward view of the SP/PE, 1,000 feet north of the previous location.





Now we are in Highgrove looking south. The line to the left is the CS (1885) and the switch in the foreground is the original connection, or at least the earliest remaining connection, for the starting point of the AT&SF-controlled Riverside, Santa Ana & Los Angeles Railroad (1888). This railroad, together with AT&SF's San Bernardino & San Diego Railroad (1888), circumvented the difficult to Temecula Canyon portion of the original CS route to San Diego. The track to the right with a speeding container train is a re-alignment of this junction and is now part of the BNSF's Southern Transcon.





Northward view at the same location as previous in Highgrove. The multiple tracks with concrete ties are on the CS (1885) alignment; the southbound train is approaching the junction with the RSA&LA (1888) to continue on BNSF's Southern Transcon. The siding connects to the southern continuation of the CS (1885) alignment (previous photos).





Northward view a few steps west of the previous location. The multiple tracks with concrete ties are on the CS (1885) alignment and the siding on the right connects to the southern continuation of the CS (1885) alignment. The three massive bridges in the distance carry the BNSF Southern Transcon over the I-215 Freeway.





Northward view of the abandoned SP (circa 1900; not shown on map) branch line, in Highgrove 800 feet east of the CS/RSA&LA junction at the previous location.