



In 1858, asphalt deposits were noticed by a land survey party west of Bakersfield at the future site of the Sunset Oil Field. The Buena Vista Oil Company incorporated in 1864 and began refinery operations near modern McKittrick and produced over 4,000 gallons of kerosene by 1867. The field continued to grow, and in 1892-1893 the McKittrick Sunset Railroad was built from the SP mainline at Kern Junction in Bakersfield west to McKittrick to service the oil industry as well as agricultural traffic.

In 1901, the Sunset Western Railroad built 30 miles southwestward from a junction with the MS at Gosford, through this location at Connor, to the town of Sunset (now called Hazelton) in the oil-rich area south of McKittrick. A portion of the line was built atop the existing grade of a former narrow-gauge line, the Buena Vista Reservoir Railroad (not shown separately on map). In 1904, the track was extended 2.5 miles from Hazelton (end of track) to Maricopa. In 1909, the SW built a 17 mile branch north from a point 2 miles east of Hazelton through Taft to Shale and Fellows, thereby completing the final extent of the line. The western half of the line was subsequently abandoned to a point just west of Levee Spur, and the eastern half is still in use by the San Joaquin Valley Railroad, a subsidiary of RailAmerica.

The first 8 miles of the SW run straight south across the flat valley from the MS at Gosford to this location, called Connor, then turns 90 degrees to the west for another 8 miles of straight grade, which begins with the track to the left in this northeastward view of the "Connor 90" on the SW. Note the endless flat agricultural lands of this world class bread basket.



Westward view of sidings and loading facilities on the SW, which built through here in 1901, just west of the Connor 90. Note piled cotton in right foreground.



Another westward view of sidings and loading facilities on the SW just west of the Connor 90. Note piled cotton, ready for transport over the RailAmerica-owned San Joaquin Valley Railroad, which plies the remaining western half of the SW (1909).



Loading cotton for rail transport at the Connor siding, same location as previous.