



In September 1868, while the Central Pacific Railroad was building its part of the first transcontinental line, the CP owners (known as the Big Four: Charles Crocker, Leland Stanford, Mark Hopkins, and C. P. Huntington) purchased the Southern Pacific Railroad. However, to build the southern transcontinental survey from southern California to El Paso, Texas, the SP did not bring supplies to southern California by ship and build the line east from there (as the CP was doing for the central transcontinental survey). Instead, the SP first built the Tehachapi Pass route to southern California, which was completed to Los Angeles in 1876, then kept going to El Paso and points east, thus dominating Southwest railroading for more than a century.

Early in the SP saga, 1871 to be exact, the SP reached this location in the flat and agriculturally rich San Joaquin Valley and established a depot called Kings River Switch. The first building was a wooden shed 12 by 16 feet and the town was briefly called Draperville and Wheatville before settling on Kingsburg in December 1875. The current Kingsburg Depot was built in 1876, when the business of the railroad was mainly cattle and wheat shipping, but with the development of refrigerator cars in the later 1800's, the area's produce was shipped nationwide and the valley boomed. In 2005, the Union Pacific Railroad (SP successor) donated the "Benicia-style" building to the Friends of the Historic Kingsburg Depot, which is restoring the depot.





Street side of the Kingsburg Depot.