



In 1907 John D. Spreckels, co-founder of Spreckels Sugar, broke ground at San Diego, California, for a railroad that would give the city a direct route east. Financial backing for the San Diego & Arizona Railway came from Spreckels and from E. H. Harriman of the Southern Pacific Railroad, which sought to break the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway's monopoly there. The route of the railroad was south across the Mexican border to Tijuana, east to Tecate via the subsidiary Tijuana & Tecate Railway, back to the U.S. and north over the Tecate Divide through Carrizo Gorge to a connection with SP at El Centro, California. In spite of revolution in Mexico and a ban on new construction during World War I, the last spike was driven in 1919. The railroad was one of the most expensive ever built in the U.S., costing almost \$19 million in 1919. In the Carrizo Gorge, the railroad crosses 14 trestles and goes through 21 tunnels in only 11 miles. From San Diego to El Centro, the railroad rises and falls over 3,700 feet.

The most difficult part of the the SD&A route was the steep slope formed by normal faulting on the west side of the Salton Trough. The normal faulting is active and postdates and cuts the gentler, older topography around the Tecate Divide. The rugged topography between the Tecate Divide and Salton Trough was a formidable barrier to all forms of travel, including Native American foot travel, the 1774 Spanish expedition of Juan Bautista de Anza, the 1850's Butterfield Stagecoach Trail, and 1920's U.S. Highway 80; even Interstate 8 must separate its two lanes of for about 5 miles to negotiate this slope. The lesser of all evils (route-wise) for a railroad was Carrizo Gorge, which runs north-south and provides a corridor for the SD&A to change elevation. The Carrizo Gorge is so rugged that still the only way to it is to take the train, which doesn't run anymore, or walk. This eastward view of trestles and one of the 21 tunnels on the SD&A Carrizo Gorge route was taken from Sacatone Overlook, which is at the end of a four-wheel drive road.



This water tank and siding are the remains of the site of Dos Cabezas, the first SD&A station at the lower end of Carrizo Gorge in the flat topography of Imperial Valley (Salton Trough).





A trestle to carry the SD&A over a wash at Dos Cabezas.





The water tower and trestle at Dos Cabezas, which is at the end of a four-wheel drive road.





Westward view of the SD&A at Dos Cabezas.





Another westward view of the SD&A at Dos Cabezas, where the grade begins its ascent up Carrizo Gorge and further exploration would be by foot.





Eastward view of the SD&A at Ocotillo, about 8 miles east of Dos Cabezas and well onto the flatlands. Although the tracks are still in place along the entire SD&A route, the only active trackage is a few miles around the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum at Campo (just west of Tacate Divide) and the eastern end of the route between the SD&A eastern terminus at El Centro and Plaster City (junction of the Imperial Gypsum narrow gauge).