



The Sierra Railway Company of California was founded in 1897 to connect the California Central Valley to the Gold Country foothills of the Sierra Nevada. Its western terminus is in Oakdale at a junction with the San Francisco & San Joaquin Valley Railroad, which had been completed in 1896 with backing from the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe to compete with the Southern Pacific in the San Joaquin Valley. The first SR rails were laid in the grain fields just east of Oakdale, and on November 8, 1897, reached Jamestown, California, where a station and facilities were constructed for the line. The line was extended 16 miles to Tuolumne City in 1900, and only the last few miles have since been abandoned.

In 1971, the SR used its vintage steam locomotives and facilities open "Rail Town 1897" as a tourist attraction. In 1979, The Crocker Association, which was the sole owner of the railroad at that time, closed Rail Town and put both the Sierra Railroad and the Jamestown complex with equipment up for sale. In 1982, the California Department of Parks and Recreation purchased the Jamestown facilities and reopened the site as Railtown 1897 State Historic Park, which contains historic rolling stock and runs excursion trains.

The Jamestown station serves as headquarters for the SR and the historic park.



The Jamestown facilities include a turntable and roundhouse.



Jamestown maintenance facilities.



This old Shay likely was used to haul lumber from the Sierra Nevada.



Railtown 1897 State Historic Park in Jamestown features vintage diesel as well as steam traction.



The SR grade traverses oak grasslands of the Sierra Nevada foothills. The SR has been featured in many movies due to its scenic route; SR's 1891-vintage #3 is often called the "Movie Star Locomotive" because it has appeared in more motion pictures, documentaries, and television productions than any other locomotive.