



During 1905-1907, the Pacific Coast Borax Company constructed the Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad to transport borax from Death Valley, California, to coastal markets. The T&T reached neither the gold-mining boomtown of Tonopah, Nevada, nor ocean "tidewater." The T&T was a branch of the AT&SF, constructed northward from the SP-built AT&SF mainline (SP Mojave Branch [1883]) at Ludlow, California (this location), to the town of Gold Center, Nevada. From Gold Center the T&T reached Beatty, Rhyolite, and Goldfield, Nevada, via trackage rights with the Bullfrog Goldfield Railroad (1907). From 1908 to 1914, the Bullfrog Goldfield Railroad was combined into the T&T, and then combined again in 1918 after the demise of the Las Vegas & Tonopah Railroad (1907). The T&T owned and ran both lines from 1920 until 1928. Once the Tonopah boom ended, borax shipping accounted for the majority of T&T business, and when the borax operations were moved from Death Valley to Boron, California, in 1927, the line declined swiftly. After a flood in 1933, Ludlow (this location) was abandoned and operations ran north from Crucero, where the T&T crossed the San Pedro, Los Angeles & Salt Lake Railroad (1905), which by 1933 was called the LA&SL. By 1940 the entire line was out of service and the T&T tracks were salvaged in 1943.

Westward view of the SP Mojave Branch (1883) at Ludlow. Today, this line is BNSF's Southern Transcon, the busiest line in the Southwestern U.S. This high-end railroad has concrete ties and clips, even on sidings! Note the abandoned building across the tracks to the right.



Northwestward view of the SP Mojave Branch (1883) at Ludlow with a mixed train on today's BNSF's Southern Transcon. Note the same abandoned building as in previous photo. Switches and sidings for the T&T (1907) were once somewhere in this view but have been completely obliterated by AT&SF/BNSF work that occurred since 1933, when the southern terminus was moved north to Crucero on the LA&SL (SPLA&SL [1905]). The abandoned building and other ruins almost certainly date from T&T days.



Northward view of Crucero Road at the north end of Ludlow, a half mile north of the previous location. Crucero Road is not the T&T grade. Although the T&T grade is obliterated in Ludlow, the grade in the desert outside Ludlow is visible in satellite imagery. The grade is first visible just west of Ludlow, where the alignment is 500 feet north of the BNSF mainline and turns northwestward for 2 miles (out of sight to the left of this image), then turns to the northeast for 1.5 miles, crossing Crucero Road 1.3 miles in the distance. These curves lessened the grade compared to the straight alignment of Crucero Road. The slope is gentler after the road crossing and the T&T (1907) alignment curves northward to parallel Crucero Road to Crucero. The T&T runs north-south through several fault-bounded valleys of the Basin and Range Geologic Province and across several dry playas, including Broadwell Lake, visible in the distance and crossed by both Crucero Road and the T&T (1907).