



In September 1868, while the Central Pacific was building its part of the first transcontinental railroad in Nevada and Utah, the CP owners (known as the Big Four: Charles Crocker, Leland Stanford, Mark Hopkins, and C. P. Huntington) purchased the Southern Pacific Railroad (which was only a charter, no construction had started). However, to build the southernmost of the Pacific Railroad surveys 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. On December 31, 1869, the SP commenced its first construction project at a new junction with the newly completed Western Pacific Railroad (1869); the junction was dubbed Lathrop, and the SP built southward through this location at Ripon and completed the line to Los Angeles in 1876. From LA the SP kept going to El Paso and points east, thus dominating Southwest railroading for more than a century.

Northwestward view of the SP (1876) at Ripon, California, 10 miles southwest of Lathrop. The SP built through here in 1870, at which time the mighty SP had but 10 miles of track under its belt. Four short (few hundred-foot) spurs branch off the Ripon siding, three of which are visible in this view.



One of the Ripon spurs.