

Dispatcher

ISSUE 29

RAILWAY

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIF.

NOVEMBER 15, 1939

PERRIS AND ITS RAILROAD

by Richard V. Dodge



California Southern Railroad Station at Perris, California. The Santa Fe Route. About 1887.
(R. P. Middlebrook picture)

Tails! You lose!

The railroad officials left the decision of the choice of two routes to the toss of the coins. The coins were the amount of subsidies the town of Riverside and other communities, including the Temescal Tin Mines, could raise to warrant the building of the California Southern Rail Road from Laguna (Lake Elsinore) via Temescal Wash and Riverside to Colton. That route would be over seven miles longer than the proposed line via Box Springs.

As the sums subscribed were considered to be inadequate, Box Springs won. Chief Engineer J. O. Osgood received a telegram on December 1, 1881 to adopt the latter route.

Fred T. Perris, who was in charge of the surveying, and his party were withdrawn from the line location in Cajon Pass and set to work on the Box Springs route. Riverside residents bemoaned "Mr. Nickerson (of the

Santa Fe) wags the dog, head and tail, and locates the road three miles out on the barren plain (through Highgrove).

The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, controlled by Boston capitalists, was headed west. Its rails had reached Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 1880. It was being extended south towards El Paso. The company had formed a partnership with the St. Louis & San Francisco Railway to build the Atlantic & Pacific Railroad on the authorized 35th parallel of latitude route from a junction at the present town of Isleta west to the Colorado River and into California.

Subsidies offered by the towns of National City and San Diego to make San Diego Bay the "Pacific Coast Terminus of the Santa Fe Route" were accepted. The California Southern Rail Road was organized in 1880 to build from National City in a generally northeasterly direction to the town of San Bernardino and on to a connection

tion with the Atlantic & Pacific in California.

The California Southern was constructed from National City north to San Luis Rey, now Oceanside, by the end of 1881. Just north of Oceanside, the line curved to the right, following up the Santa Margarita River, to Fallbrook Station, in the valley about two miles north of the town of Fall Brook. Then it continued up through the rugged Temecula Canyon to the townsite of Temecula, 78 miles from National City. The track was laid up the valley to Elsinore Station, later called Elsinore Junction, near the south end of the lake, 93 miles from National City. There the rails curved to the right, up San Jacinto Canyon, generally known as Railroad Canyon.

At a point about 11½ miles, by rail, from Elsinore, the latter being about 1½ miles south of the townsite, a station was established named Píñacate, which, being translated, means "stink bug". This station served the nearby gold mines, the principal ones being the "Good Hope" and the "Virginia".

According to Southern California History book, the village consisted of: a railway station, with a post office, two stores, a blacksmith shop, a wagon shop and a photograph gallery.

Rail laying continued north until the supply of steel was exhausted at a "point of rocks" about 3½ miles north of Píñacate. Train service was established on May 1, 1882, leaving Point of Rocks at 11 a.m. and arriving at San Diego at 2:40 p.m. The fare was six cents a mile or \$6.10 one way.

About this time, settlements began to be established around a point a mile or so north of Píñacate. There was no Riverside County then. All the surrounding territory was the northerly part of San Diego County. The highest point in San Diego County was the top of Mt. San Jacinto, elevation 10,500 feet, and the lowest was on the "Colorado Desert, now Imperial Valley", around Salton Sink, 246 feet below sea level.

When more rails arrived, having come around Cape Horn on the bark "Sarah Scott", track laying was renewed over the mesa, down Box Springs Grade, "nestled in the eastern hills", to East Riverside, now Highgrove, and on to Colton. There connection was made with the Southern Pacific Railroad. The first train from National City arrived at Colton on August 15, 1882. The fare was then reduced to five cents a mile.

In November, J. O. Osgood resigned as Chief Engineer and Fred Perris was appointed to the position in the following year. After completing the road to San Bernardino on September 13, 1883, Perris again turned his attention to the task of conquering Cajon Pass.

In March of that year, a cloudburst in Railroad Canyon washed out 300 feet of track.

Then came the great floods in February 1884, the wettest season of record. Even dry San Diego received 25.97 inches and the rainfall at Fallbrook was over 40 inches. The California Southern's roadbed was mostly shambles. There was practically no track left in Temecula Canyon and scores of other sections, including bridges, were washed out. It was some time before concerted attempts to restore service were made. By September 18, 1884 trains could run from San Bernardino to Temecula. During the first week of January 1885, the line through Temecula Canyon was re-opened.

Píñacate Station! Some call it Perris. A new townsite was platted in 1885, named Perris, to honor the Chief Engineer of the California Southern Railroad.

Fred T. Perris was born in England about the year 1836. His family first moved to Australia and Fred came to the United States in 1852. He worked on the Union Pacific Railroad in the 60's, then settled in San Bernardino in 1874. He was chosen as a delegate in 1880 to the conference with Boston capitalists on the proposed building of the California Southern Railroad. He invited attention to the attractions of the San Bernardino area.

He surveyed all the lines in the Southern California network and equipped the shops.

In the 1889 History, Perris boasted: a brick school house, two good churches, two hotels, a large general supply store, a good grocery, a hardware store, a drug store, a good physician, two milling establishments, two blacksmiths, two livery stables, a meat market and a saloon. The outstanding feature was the railway depot.

Construction progressed on the line between San Bernardino and Barstow. The last spike was driven in the pass on November 9, 1885, joining the California Southern with the Atlantic & Pacific and all points east. Incidentally the Atlantic & Pacific operated over the Southern Pacific's track, under a deferred purchase agreement, between The Needles and Mojave, through Barstow.

The first passenger train with through cars from Kansas City left Barstow on Sunday, November 15, and an east-bound train departed from National City that night. Píñacate - Perris was now a station on a transcontinental main line, the Santa Fe Route, to the Pacific. In addition to the through trains daily, a mixed train daily except Sunday was operated.

A branch from Highgrove to Riverside was put in service in January 1886 and the rails were extended to Arlington.

J. N. Victor, Superintendent, officially announced that on April 1, 1886, Píñacate Station will be closed and a new station, 3/4ths of a mile north of the old one, named Perris, will be opened.

In 1887 Timetables, the train numbers were opposite to the present practice. East and North bound trains were assigned odd numbers, west and south bound, the even ones.

Train number 3, the Los Angeles Express, passed through Ferris at 11:52 p.m.; Train Number 4, the San Diego Express, at 12:33 p.m. Numbers 5 and 6, the Night Express, went through at 5:12 a.m. and 11:00 p.m., respectively all daily. In addition, there were second class trains numbers 30 and 31 - Through Freight and 32 and 33 - Way Freight.

The California Southern's charter did not provide for the construction of branch lines. Separate corporations were set up and the roads which were built were operated by the California Southern, at first.

The Riverside, Santa Ana & Los Angeles Railway took over the line from Highgrove to Arlington and built from there to the present station of Atwood, over the Olive District to Orange and Santa Ana by September 15, 1887 and from Orange to Redondo Junction August 12, 1888.

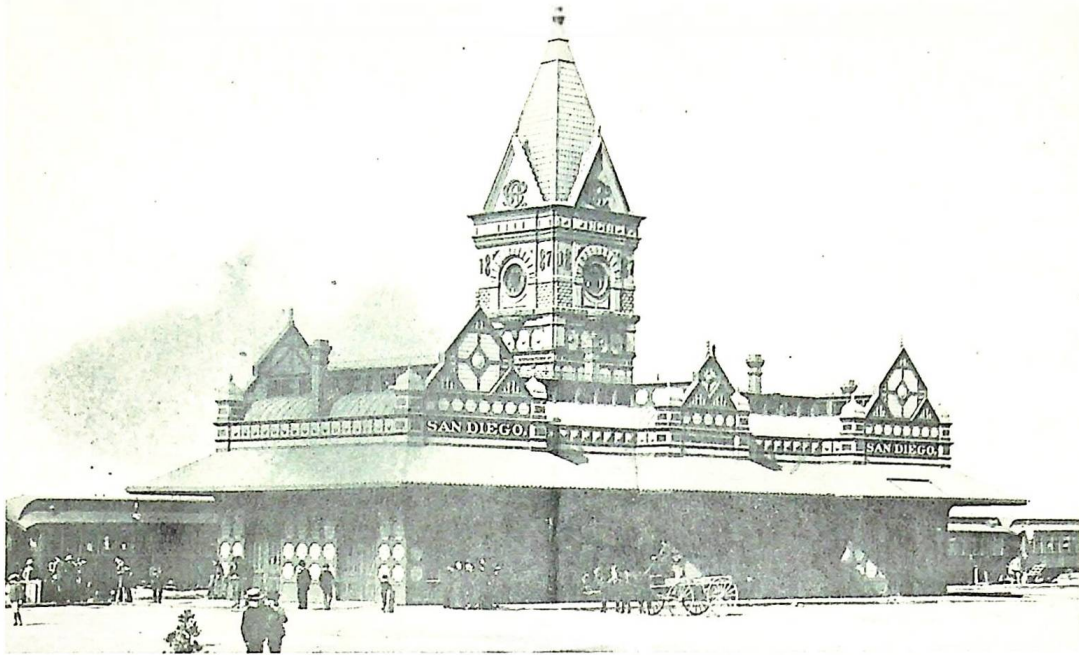
The San Bernardino and San Diego Railway completed the line from Santa Ana to Los Angeles Junction, now Fallbrook Junction, on the latter date. This formed the second route to Perris: California Southern from San Diego to Fallbrook Junction, 43.3 miles; San Bernardino & San Diego Railway to Santa Ana, 48.7 miles; Riverside, Santa Ana & Los Angeles Railway to Highgrove, 42.6 miles; and again on the California Southern Railroad south to Perris, 18.3 miles. (Mileages per 1959 Timetable)

A branch line had been projected from Perris through Winchester and Hemet to San Jacinto, 19.4 miles. This trackage was built by the San Jacinto Valley Railway and was opened to traffic on April 30, 1888.

These, except the California Southern Railroad, and the other corporations building the "branch" lines were merged into the California Central Railway Company in June 1887.

Stricter economies, forced by the collapse of the great Land Boom, resulted in the consolidation of the California Southern Railroad, the California Central Railway and the Redondo Beach Railway in 1889. The new corporation was named: Southern California Railway Company.

The completion of the "Surf Line", between Fallbrook Junction and Los Angeles, had pushed Perris, and also San Diego, off the main line. Southern California Railway Timetable number One, dated February 23, 1890,



California Southern Depot at San Diego, about 1887-88. (Historical Collection, Union Title Insurance Co., San Diego, California)

still listed two trains through Perris, but both daily except Sunday and marked "Accommodation". Number 5 from San Bernardino ran through Perris at 1:20 p.m. en route to Oceanside and Escondido; number 6, returning, arrived at 4:20 p.m. Number 10 left San Jacinto at 5:25 a.m.; Perris 6:45 a.m. and arrived at San Bernardino at 7:40 a.m. Southward, number 11 went through Perris at 7:55 p.m., arriving at San Jacinto at 9:10 p.m.

Kother Nature dealt another staggering blow in February 1891. "All railroads are washed out." About five miles of track in Cajon Pass were destroyed. Hardest hit, as usual, was Temecula Canyon. "The expense of rebuilding the Temecula branch is tremendous". An alternate route was investigated from Temecula to Vista and over to the Escondido branch but nothing was done about it. The portion of the railroad through Temecula Canyon to Fallbrook Station was officially abandoned January 28, 1892.

This cut off Perris, Elsinore and other communities in the northerly part of San Diego County from direct rail service to the county seat. There was compelling agitation to form a new county, taking over portions of San Bernardino and San Diego Counties. Riverside County came into being in March 1893.

The damage to the tracks in Railroad Canyon was repaired and the branch was again operated from Perris to Temecula.

In the following years, the water supply, furnished by the Bear Valley Water System, failed. This resulted in an exodus of farmers and ranchers, moving to Riverside and elsewhere. It took many years for Perris to recover from this loss.

A long spur had been constructed to Alberhill from Elsinore Station in July 1896, 7.76 miles, according to the Chronological Development table, and the latter station was renamed Elsinore Junction. This established rail service direct to the town of Elsinore.

Another spur, from Lake View Junction, 0.8 miles north of Perris, was built east to Lake View and was opened to operation November 1, 1898, 8.02 miles. It was abandoned in February 1937.

At intervals, propaganda for the restoration of the track connection through Temecula Canyon would flare up. In March 1902, for example, "Riverside gives publicity to

the report that the Santa Fe Railroad is about to commence the rebuilding of the Temecula Canyon line from Fallbrook to Temecula in Riverside County."

In June 1904 the Southern California Railway was leased to The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway and complete acquisition of the former was effected in January 1906.

In 1910 the train numbers were changed, using odd numbers from San Diego to Los Angeles, as at present. In that year, the cut-off was built from Atwood through Placentia to Fullerton, 5.1 miles.

When the construction of a dam in Railroad Canyon was proposed, the spur to Alberhill was extended to a junction with the now Third District at Porphyry, just east of Corona, 14.37 miles, including trackage at Porphyry, March 5, 1927. Then another section of the old main line of the California Southern was abandoned, from Perris, through Railroad Canyon, to Elsinore Junction. No longer is Perris a junction point but just a way station on the San Jacinto District.

The final section of the California Southern line to be abandoned, from Elsinore Junction to Temecula, succumbed in February 1935.

There is much arable land around Perris and it continues to be an important shipping point, especially during the annual "spud rush", when a diesel switcher is assigned to the Perris area.

But now Perris is renowned to many enthusiasts chiefly for its Railroad Museums, with exhibits of bygone eras in transportation, being assembled and maintained by the Orange Empire Traction Company, the Mt. Rubidoux Chapter of the Pacific Railroad Society and other groups, including the Railway Historical Society of San Diego, Incorporated, all non-profit organizations, near the old Pinacate Station.

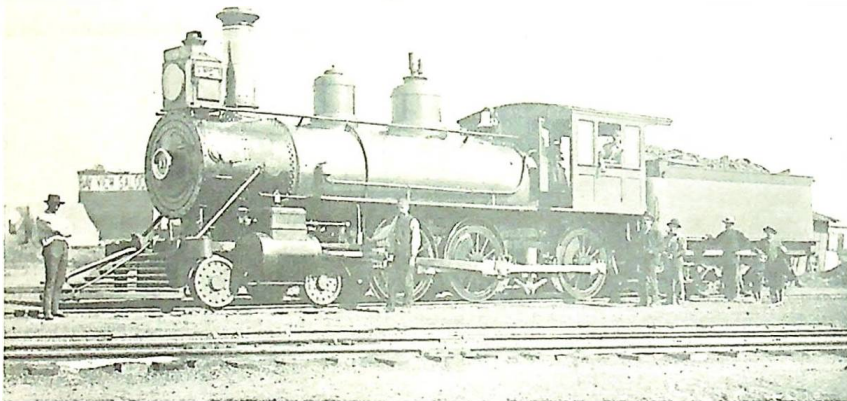
R. V. Dodge 10-5-59

AVAILABLE BACK ISSUES

#6	"San Diego's Impossible Railroad" (SD&AE)	25¢
#11	"South Bay Interurbans"	25¢
#19	"San Diego's Wheels On Steel" (Local)	25¢
#23	"Eagle Mountain Railroad" (Kaiser Steel)	20¢
#26	"Old Railroad Friends" (RHSofSD Exhibit)	25¢
#27	San Diego Area Horse Car Issue	20¢

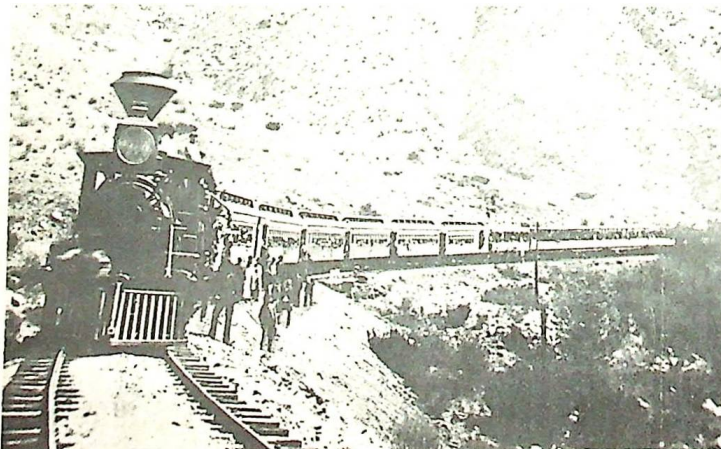


Southern California Railway Company station at Riverside, California, about 1890. Looking north. Locomotive #1 and combination coach is apparently the local train to Highgrove. (Jack Whitmeyer picture)



Picture to the left
California Southern locomotive #14,
at National City. About 1890.
(Historical Collection, Union Title
Insurance Co., San Diego, Calif.)

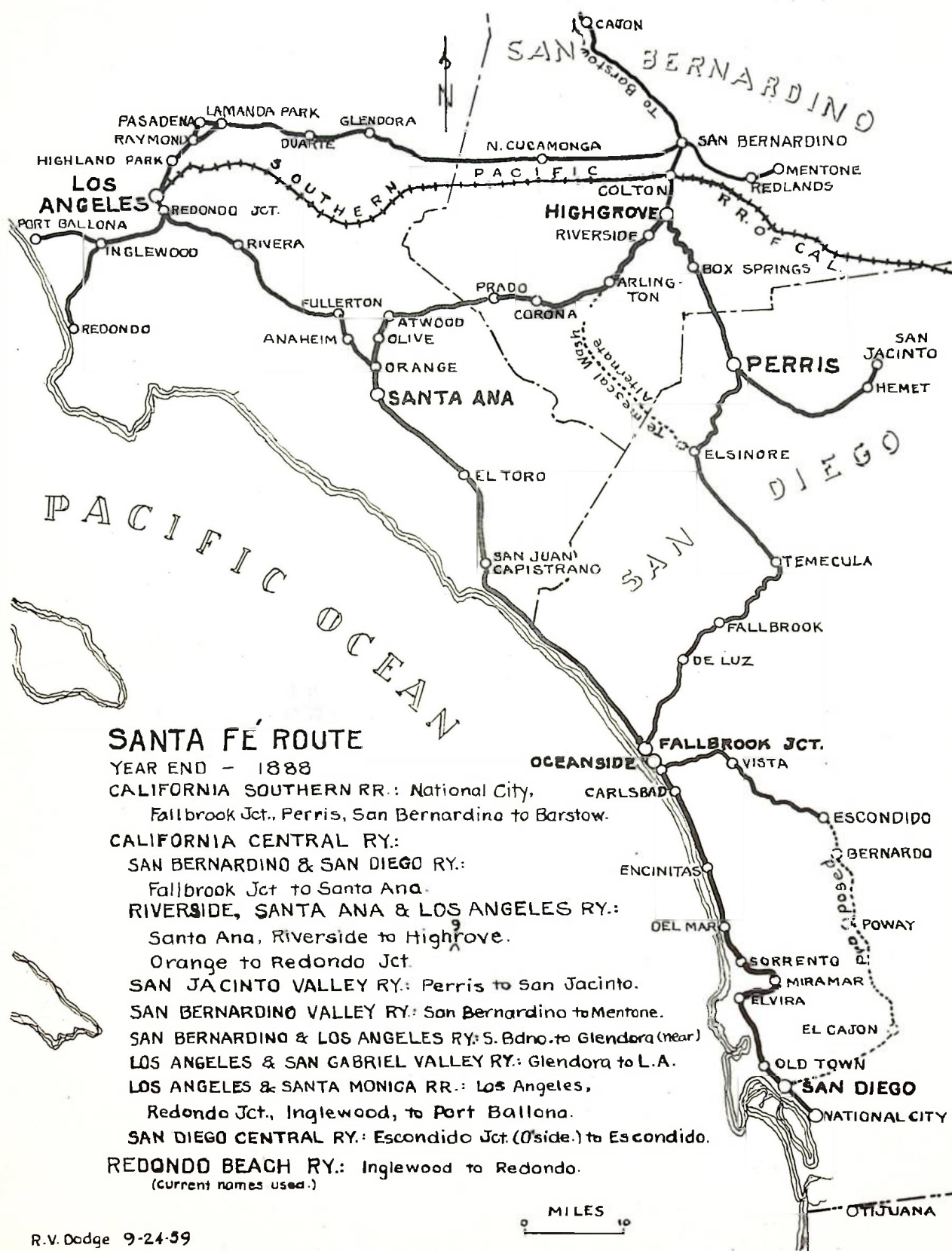
Picture, lower left
California Southern Railroad excursion
train on Box Springs grade,
1883. Probably Engine #12 with #2
following. (R. P. Middlebrook pic-
ture)



INTERESTED PERSONS ARE INVITED

to affiliate with the Rail-
way Historical Society of
San Diego, Inc. For fur-
ther information obtain a
bulletin at the Society's
Del Mar exhibit, or write
the Society Secretary, Box
9351, San Diego 9, Calif.

to subscribe to the Dispat-
cher. For current news as
well as stories of the past
mail your \$1 to the Dis-
patcher, 7861 Normal Ave.,
La Mesa, California. This
issue sells at 20¢ per copy.



T R I P L O G

29-6

M.P.	Station (or track)	Siding * (cars) (grade)
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FOURTH DISTRICT

267.5 San Diego YL FY 264.2 Old Town YL 263.4 Cudahy 262.1 Morena 260.3 Pacific Beach 257.1 Elvira 253.0 Miramar Y 5.5 Mi. Navy spur to Camp Mathews & Camp Elliott 249.1 Sorrento 244.0 Del Mar Y Home of RHS of SD Rail Exhibit 241.9 Solana Beach 239.8 Cardiff 236.1 Encinitas 234.2 Ponto 231.6 Farr 231.3 S.D.G. & E. Co. Spur 229.3 Carlsbad 227.2 Escondido Jct. Y 21.1 Mi. Branch to Vista & Escondido 226.2 Oceanside F 224.2 Fallbrook Jct. Y 16.9 mi. branch to Fallbrook. Once known as Los Angeles Junction 221.7 Stuart 218.7 Las Flores 213.8 Agra 209.4 San Onofre 203.7 San Clemente 202.7 Poche 199.8 Serra 197.2 San Juan Capistrano 192.6 Galivan 188.1 El Toro 183.9 Kathryn 183.1 Frances 182.9 Irvine 181.5 Tustin 180.8 Browning 180.1 Como 178.7 Venta Spur 178.5 Venta 175.5 Santa Ana 172.7 Orange	Yard 40.2 43 91 40.2 13 63.4 116.2 98 0.0 67 54.8 9 11 92 52.8 116 61.9 6 35 69 52.8 47.2 76 0.0 92 63.4 Once 50 86 65.4 97 65.4 91 6.1 33 0.0 54 0.0 98 13.9 87 60.5 98 67.6 88 66.0 24 36 119 0.0 25 35 54 6.8 mi. 93 21.6 125 37.0 122 32.1
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OLIVE DISTRICT

4th District extends NW to Fullerton & Los Angeles. Our train uses the "freight only" cut-off to Atwood.

5.8	Orange	62 42.2
2.4	Olive (SP Xing)	21 42.2
0.0	Atwood	Yard 42.2

M.P.	Station (or track)	Siding * (cars) (gr.)
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THIRD DISTRICT

Third District extends from Los Angeles to San Bernardino and is the route of freights and the "Grand Canyon." San Diego-San Bernardino freights reach this section by the use of the Olive District "cut-off."

40.6 Atwood Y 36.4 Esperanza 32.2 Gypsum 29.2 Prado Dam 24.1 Corona 22.8 Porphyry 21.9 mi. branch S to Elsinore 19.7 May (P.E. Xing) 18.5 La Sierra 16.4 Arlington 14.3 Prenda Spur (Prenda) 14.0 Casa Blanca 12.4 Pachappa 9.8 Riverside YL 9.2 Riverside Jct. (SF, UP Xing) 6.7 Highgrove	179 129 52.8 95 52.8 94 52.8 167 52.8 100 24.8 94 52.8 9 62 52.8 2.1 mi 99 26 52.8 52.8 17.2 52.8
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SAN JACINTO DISTRICT

Third District continues north to San Bernardino while the San Jacinto District goes south to Perris, Hemet & San Jacinto.

0.0 Highgrove (SP xing) YL 0.6 Lily Cup 2.7 Lemona 6.1 Box Springs Quarry 7.2 Box Springs YL 9.6 March Field YL 10.6 Alessandro YL 13.5 Val Verde 14.5 Granite Spur 15.9 Mayer Farms (17.5 Was Lake View Jct. 8.02 mile spur east to Lake View) 18.3 Perris YL	26 11 12 116.2 42 31 116.2 21.3 21.3 22 0.0 5000' 18 20 28.1
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NOTES

At Perris the old main line continues straight ahead (south) and then veers west to and through Railroad Canyon to Elsinore, Temecula and San Diego. The present San Jacinto branch veers SE to Hemet and San Jacinto. The trolley museum is located about one mile down the old "main line."

*Ruling grade (ft/mile) to station.

YL - yard limits Y wye; F fuel

Data: AT&SF Emp. TT. LA Div. #169.

THE DISPATCHER

A feature and news publication issued quarterly as an official publication of the Railway Historical Society of San Diego, Inc. Society officers are: L. W. McCleary, president; Jack Stodelle, first vice president; Charles Mann, second vice president; Bill Snyder, third vice president; Barbara Thomson, recording secretary; Corky Thomson, corresponding secretary; Fred Finke, treasurer; Richard Dodge, historian and Wally Duthie, excursion director. Librarian is Vernon Williams and directors are: Roland Anderson, Jerry Lee Pecht and Robert Henkel. Society mailing address is: Box 9351, San Diego 9, Calif. Corky Thomson is Newsletter editor.

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WELCOME ABOARD THE CALIFORNIA SOUTHERN FLYER

29-7

One definition of the word "excursion" is "a pleasure trip." It is under this definition that we welcome you aboard the "Santa Fe California Southern Flyer" and we sincerely hope that you do have a pleasure trip from the time of purchasing your ticket to the time of returning to point of origin. Our obligation is to provide the means for a pleasure trip. Your obligation is to use these means both fully and safely. If today is sunny and hot, get a little sun and heat but do not overdo it. If today is rainy and cold and you get a little wet and a little cool, don't overdo it. Whatever occurs, make the best of it, thank God that you live in these United States, and have a really good "pleasure trip."

L. W. McCleary
 President
 RHSofSD

Have fun! Send us your comments and suggestions, and join us in our next rail excursion. Glad to have you with us on the C.S. Flyer.

Wally Duthie
 Excursion Director

Trains We Might See and Picture Stops

RHSofSD	#77	#79		#70	#123	RHSofSD	#76
7:00am	4:00pm	7:00pm	<u>San Diego</u>	10:30am		8:00pm	8:30pm
7:25	4:31	7:30	<u>Del Mar</u>	9:48			7:50
7:45	5:05	7:50	<u>Oceanside</u>	9:23		↑	7:25
			(picture stop at Sta. Margarita River)				
8:45	5:23	8:08	<u>San Clemente</u>	8:58	to		7:03
9:15am	5:55pm	8:35pm	<u>Santa Ana</u>	8:30am	L.A.		6:35pm
	↓	↓	(picture stop at Prado Dam)	↑	↑		↑
	to	to	<u>Atwood</u>	from	11:12am		from
11:25	L.A.	L.A.	<u>Riverside</u>	L.A.	10:25	4:05	L.A.
			<u>Highgrove</u>		10:15am		
			(stop at Box Springs)		↑		
12:30pm			<u>Perris</u>		from East	3:30pm	

And at Perris! Entertainment in the form of a look at the motive power of the San Diego Horseless Carriage Club, a barbecue by the Nuevo Volunteer Fire Department and Orange Empire Traction, and the inspection of the rail museum of the Orange Empire Traction Museum. Look for the RHSofSD-owned San Francisco Municipal #171 and San Diego Transit System car #508 now owned by O.E.T.

Museum Preserves Past

29-8

Prepared for the Dispatcher
by James W. Walker, Jr.
OET Public Relations

The Orange Empire Trolley Museum might be termed a "Home For Old Trolleys", and indeed this would be an appropriate description.

For the museum has as its purpose the preservation and operation of streetcars and interurban cars that have been retired from cities all over the West and elsewhere.

LOCATED AT PERRIS

This non-profit group is building their museum just south of Perris, California (Riverside County), which is 17 miles south of Riverside on U.S. Highway 395. The member's weekends are spent helping to construct the museum's track and maintaining and restoring over 30 cars, preserved from many West Coast cities.

VARIED COLLECTION OF HISTORIC CARS

The museum has on display everything from a diminutive 26 foot "toonerville" single-truck car from Bakersfield to a huge 110 foot bridge train unit, which formerly ran across the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. Other cars include two "Big Red Cars" from the Pacific Electric, a wood interurban brought all the way from Vancouver, B.C. Canada, nine different types of the yellow passenger streetcars of the Los Angeles Railway, two cars from the Municipal Railway of San Francisco (one of which, number 171, was preserved by the Railway Historical Society of San Diego and placed on display at the museum), and various pieces of work equipment from the Los Angeles Railway and Pacific Electric. A modern PCC type streamlined car from San Diego contrasts with the older equipment.

In addition to the streetcars, three trucks (a 1922 Bulldog Mack with winch, a 1930 Model AA Ford, and a 1941 International tower truck) are very useful in the construction of the track and overhead.

One of the current goals of the museum is to make possible the operation of cars on weekends for the public. In fulfillment of this goal a diesel-electric generator was purchased this year.

BRIEF REVIEW OF MUSEUM ORGANIZATION

The museum was organized in 1956, and in three years has risen to be the third largest museum of its kind in the United States. All monies for acquisition and movement of the cars and for construction of track and overhead have come from donations. All work at the museum has been done by volunteer labor on weekends. During 1958 the museum acquired eight acres of land for car barns, shops, and other museum display; and a mile of former California Southern Railway right-of-way (formerly part of the main line between Chicago and San Diego) for its line. At present a thousand feet of track and overhead are being prepared for operation.

MEMBERSHIP OPEN TO ALL

Membership in the museum is open to all persons and organizations interested in its project. The museum has no work or attendance requirements. Dues are \$1.00 per month (and a donation of at least \$10, after which all other donations are strictly voluntary) for members. Membership privileges include voting, operating rights (when the cars are running) and the receipt of all publications. A monthly newsletter, the "Traction Gazette", reviews events at the museum. For those who may wish only to receive the museum's publications, an Associateship is available at \$2.00 per year.

THE ORANGE EMPIRE TROLLEY MUSEUM HOPES TO PRESERVE AS MUCH OF THE "TROLLEY ERA" AS POSSIBLE SO THAT FUTURE GENERATIONS MAY ENJOY A BIT OF THIS TIME GONE BY, AND IN ORDER THAT AN HISTORIC ERA SUCH AS THIS WILL NOT TOTALLY BE ERASED BY "PROGRESS".

The museum will gladly furnish additional information about its project. Write to:

POST OFFICE BOX 501
PERRIS, CALIFORNIA



A PARTIAL LINE-UP
OF THE MUSEUM'S
EQUIPMENT

(left to right)

A type "B" car
from San Francisco, blt. 1911.

A modern PCC
car from San Diego, blt. 1936.

Single-trucker
from Bakersfield,
built in 1900.

One of the famous "ten hundred" class Pacific Electric cars. The 1001 was blt. 1913.

The last car is a type "K" from San Francisco blt. 1923, and preserved by RHS of SD.