

Santa Fe Railroad Built Empire

This is another in a series of exclusive Herald-Express articles dealing with the past history of Los Angeles and Southern California, linking it with the present. The first great boom in Southland population came in the 1880's and was caused primarily by the coming of the railroads—including the Santa Fe. This is the story behind that great railroad system.

By TED HILGENSTUHLER

THEY ALL laughed when Col. C. K. Holliday said his railway would go all the way to Santa Fe.

The founder and first president of the famed Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway made the boastful prediction on a bleak October day in 1868 at Topeka, Kan.

Mounted on the seat of a livery hack, Colonel Cyrus dug the first shovelful of earth which eventually linked Topeka with Atchison, Kansas, 50.46 miles of track away.

Even after this line was completed, and after 10 years of struggling with financial problems and scowling skeptics, the Colonel still had his eyes focused on far-distant western horizons.

Santa Fe was as much legend as fact in those days. True, it was a town in New Mexico. More than that, however, Santa Fe was the name of an historic foot-trodden, wagon-wheeled trail which zig-zagged across endless prairies and twisted through towering mountain ranges clear to the Pacific Ocean.

"Yes, I mean Santa Fe in New Mexico," the determined Holliday reiterated to the snickering crowd. "And I mean the Santa Fe Trail, too. Because, before I'm through you'll all be able to board a train right here in Kansas and ride on it clear to California!"

Nobody's laughing now at those remarks. Least of all the stockholders in the company.

14 Original Stockholders

The original capitalization of Santa Fe was supplied by 14 incorporators who put up \$5200 in cash.

For the year of 1958, E. S. Marsh, president and chief executive officer of the company, reported a net income of \$67,235,272, an increase of 8.5 per cent over the preceding year. Net current assets totaled \$129,352,136 and the gross operating revenue amounted to over \$600 million.

Through its subsidiary organization, the Western Improvement Co., the railway has further interests in timber, real estate, mining, oil and other enterprises.

The system, which is the only railroad under one management between Chicago and California, is first in mileage in the nation and included among the Big Four of the American railroads.

In addition to these convincing financial figures, the fame of the Santa Fe has been recorded in fact and fiction, on screen and stage, and even in song and dance.

Outstanding among these are James Marshall's book, "Santa Fe," upon which a Hollywood motion picture was based; "Steel Trails to Santa Fe," by L. L. Waters; and probably the most memorable of all (especially to those with a tuneful ear), songwriter Johnny Mercer's version of "The Atchison, Topeka & the Santa Fe," in the musical film of "The Harvey Girls."

Build So. Cal. 'Missing Link'

Although the Santa Fe was not the first railroad to come to the Southland (the Southern Pacific arrived in 1881), by August, 1883, its trans-continental track reached as far as Needles, Calif. By the following summer the line extended from Needles to Mojave and eventually led north to San Francisco.

Meanwhile, a railroad had also been constructed from National City (just south of San Diego) to San Bernardino and late in 1885 the "missing link" was supplied by connecting San Bernardino with Barstow (part of the Needles-Mojave line).

The first through train left San Diego for the East from the old D st. depot on the evening of Nov. 16, 1885. Fireworks, brass bands, speeches and a barbecue greeted the passengers in San Bernardino when they arrived the next day.

The occasion marked the start, to quote the San Diego Union, of "a period of moderate expansion in Southern California." An understatement, to be sure.

Eleven "baby" roads were built connecting the City of the Angels with San Bernardino and finally combined into one. The Santa Fe officially reached Los Angeles on May 31, 1887.

In addition, a new direct line via Riverside, Orange and Redondo was opened between Los Angeles and San Diego on Aug. 12, 1888. The new track gave the Santa

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New Towns Grow Up Along Tracks

(From Second Front Page)

Fe two coast terminals and is still in use.

Waged Terrific Rate War

At about this time, a fierce rate war started between the Santa Fe and its competition. The transcontinental rate for one person during the late 1880's was \$15—guaranteeing passage from the banks of the Missouri to the shores of the Pacific.

Santa Fe officials, anxious to have people fill the great spaces which they had now traversed by train, reduced the fare to \$10. Another railroad went even lower—to \$5.

For one day, at the climax of the cutthroat competition, the rate reached an all-time low of \$1.

(You can't get a taxi to take you downtown for a dollar today; but in 1886, you could have gone over 3000 miles for that fee.)

A coast-to-coast commuter commented at the time, as he bought a \$2 round-trip ticket: "At these prices, I can't afford NOT to take the ride!"

Southern California's great single boom, except for the post-war expansion which is still going on in the Southland, occurred during the late 1880's when the railroad literally opened up California to the world.

Creates Dozens of Towns

Thirteen new townsites sprang up between San Bernardino and Los Angeles along the Santa Fe tracks within a three-month period in the spring of '87. By fall, there were 25 cities in 36 miles—or one townsite for every 2600 yards of track.

By 1889 the boom ended. Enough people had migrated to this area, however, to insure its survival and future prosperity. And the Santa Fe, often called "the railroad that built an empire," was largely responsible for it.

The towns of Riverside, Corona, Santa Ana, Rivera, and dozens of other Southland communities, owe their existence to the railroad.

Today you can see them all from the window as you sit in the luxurious comfort of a great train like the Chief or the Super Chief or the El Capitan.

All along the Santa Fe Trail, from Chicago to California, as if by magic, historic landmarks pass before the passengers' eyes.

Historic and Scenic Views

Over the same paths where slow-moving oxen once pulled the covered wagons of westbound pioneers, the latest Diesel locomotives roll smoothly along at 50 or 70 miles an hour.

Where once endless herds of buffalo roamed, now rich farmlands come into view. And across a snowy white tablecloth in the dining room, you can look at the same hills and rocks where war-painted Indians once stood.

The whole history of western America passes before your eyes—through the windows of a single railroad—the Santa Fe. As James Marshall so fittingly remarked in his book (copyright, 1945, by Random House, Inc.):

"It started as a little prairie project in a Kansas frontier town. It fought for its life against the things the settler battled, and, like most of them, it won.

"It planted towns on the plains and in the hills and peopled them with pioneers with the will to fight and live.

Played Vital Role in War

"It lugged the necessities and the small luxuries of life to the grangers, and hauled their wheat, corn and cattle back to market.

"When the war (World War II) came, it transformed itself overnight into a great steel shuttle between the rivers and the lakes, the West Coast and the Texas shore, highballing ever-mounting tonnages at ever-increasing speed.

While it did this, it managed, somehow, to build for itself and the nation a better, more efficient transportation machine so that no matter how tonnage figures mounted, no matter how many new thousands of people poured into its trains, there always was just a little leeway between what it had to do and what it could do."

After the 1500-odd-mile trip across the wide prairies and over the steep mountains, the Santa Fe train still makes its way, ultimately, down the long winding grade of the valley of San Bernardino. On the last lap, it heads for Pasadena near the end of the line.

"The chime of the whistle sings in triumph as she goes drifting down to the golden beaches and the Pacific's heave of blue at the end of the long trail, the old trail," as Marshall described

This is the same Santa Fe Trail which is more alive and active today than at any time in its paralleled past.

Santa Fe Came to Arroyo Seco



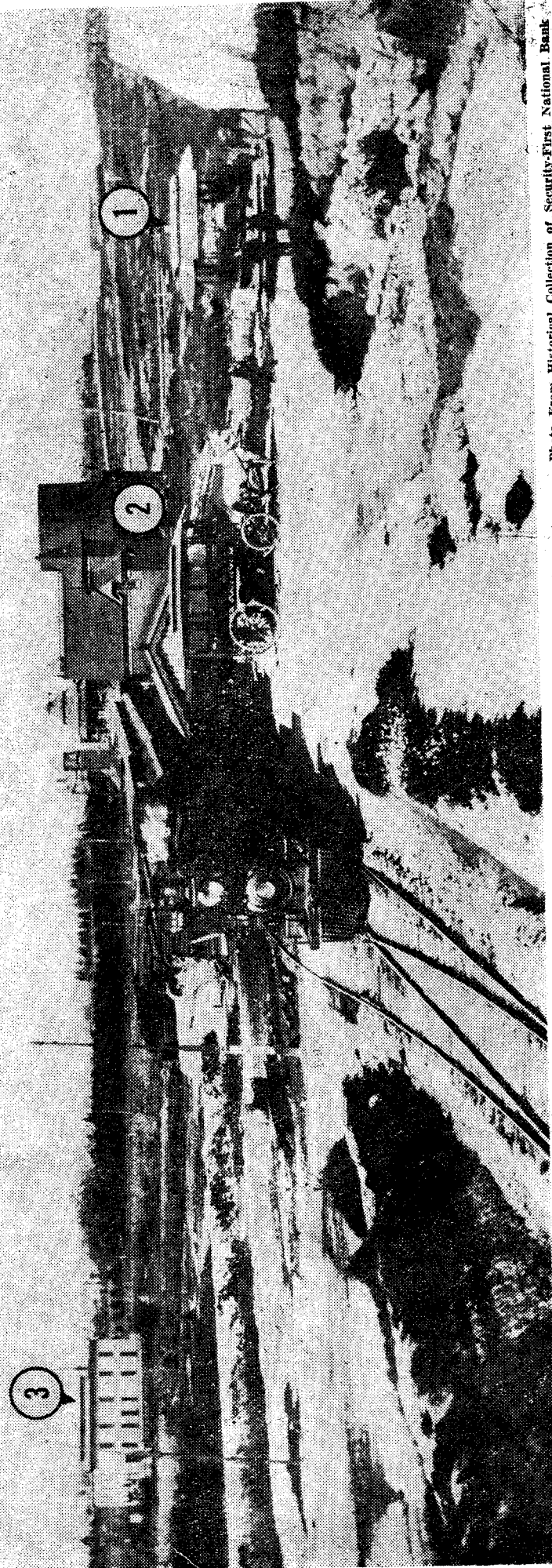
—Photo From Historical Collection of Security-First National Bank

This picture, taken in 1886, shows the laying of rails in South Pasadena for Los Angeles and San Gabriel Railway. Later, Santa Fe took over the line.



—Photo From Historical Collection of Security-First National Bank

This photo shows the first Santa Fe station in Fullerton. Many of the Southland communities owe their existence to the railroad.

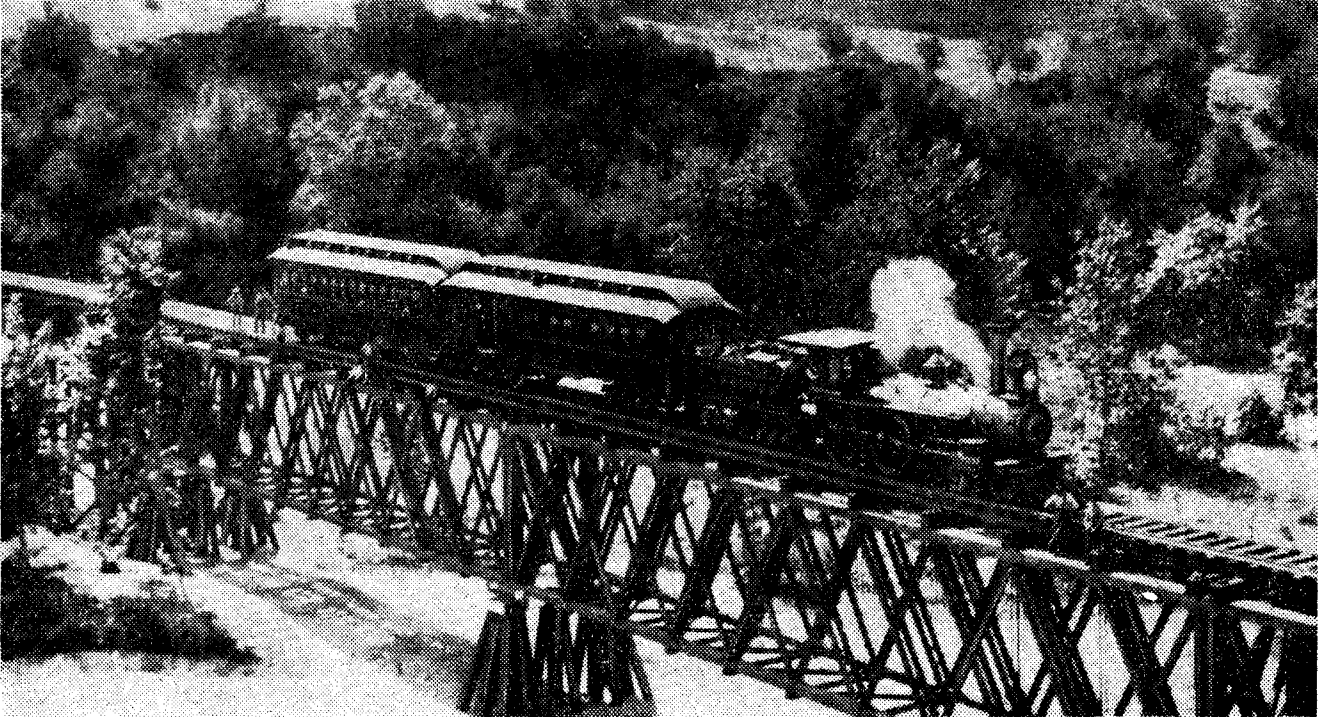


—Photo From Historical Collection of Security-First National Bank
Arrival of Santa Fe Railroad brought the historic boom of 1880s to San Gabriel Valley. Photo shows Santa Fe's Raymond station in South Pasadena. Identified are (1) horse-drawn car; (2) Raymond Hotel and stage coach station; (3) Pasadena Fruit Co.



—Santa Fe Railway Photo

The old Le Grande station of Santa Fe Railway was located on Santa Fe ave. between First and Third sts. At the time of construction, 1893, it was considered "the finest station west of Chicago." Most of it was torn down in 1940.



—Photo From Historical Collection of Security-First National Bank

A Santa Fe train is shown crossing Arroyo Seco between Pasadena and Los Angeles in 1887. Santa Fe brought such a boom to the South-

land that 13 new townsites sprang up between San Bernardino and Los Angeles along the Santa Fe tracks in the spring of 1887.

Raymond's American Excursions

ALL TRAVELLING EXPENSES INCLUDED.

TWO TRAVELLING PARTIES WILL LEAVE

BOSTON, MASS., U. S. A.,

THURSDAY, APRIL 23, and THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 1885,

For a Tour of 59 Days,

ACROSS THE AMERICAN CONTINENT,

WITH HALTS BY THE WAY, AND SIDE-TRIPS IN

COLORADO, NEW MEXICO, CALIFORNIA, UTAH, ETC.,

Including a detour of 1000 Miles amid the Great Scenic Wonders of the ROCKY MOUNTAINS. Incidental Trips to the Yosemite Valley and the Big Tree Groves; the Yellowstone National Park; Alaska, etc.

In connection with the excursion of April 30, 1885, a Tour of 73 Days will also include

Oregon, Washington Territory, Victoria, (Capital of British Columbia,) Idaho, Etc.

SEND FOR DESCRIPTIVE CIRCULARS.

S. NUGENT TOWNSHEND, 62 Holborn Viaduct, London, E. C.

English Agent for the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, and European Agent for Raymond's American Excursions.

—Photo From Historical Collection of Security-First National Bank

Agent in Boston for Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad put on this advertisement publicizing "a tour of 59 days across the American

continent." The year was 1885. The famed Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway was founded by Col. C. K. Holliday in 1868.

Building of a Railroad Empire



Passengers aboard a Santa Fe train were welcomed by a band upon arrival in Arroyo Seco area. The picture was taken

around 1887-89. Santa Fe, often called "the railroad that built an empire," was responsible for the birth of many town-

—Photo From Historical Collection of Security-First National Bank

sites. In the fall of 1887, there were 25 cities in 36 miles—or one townsite for every 2600 yards of Santa Fe track.