

Fallbrook Depot in Santa Margarita Canyon

Now located at the intersection of De Luz and Sandia Creek roads.

Asa Hebbert was the 1st agent when the Fallbrook station opened in April 1882. He also was the Wells Fargo Agent and in December took over as postmaster for the Howe Post Office located at the depot. People in De Luz had their mail picked up by Gramp Day starting as early as 1882. He hauled the mail with his buggy and horse Wanda. At first people of De Luz Canyon would leave their outgoing mail in the hollow of a big tree that grew near the hotel at Judson Mineral Springs. Gramp Day would take his buggy back and forth to the Howe Post office. Sometimes he would pick up groceries for people in the canyon.

Article and photographs from the Fallbrook Enterprise

Railroad Excursion,

SUNDAY,

April 26, '85,

Temecula Canyon

Corral De Luz,

Return the Same Day.

The Pioneer Brass Band has been engaged for the trip.

To spend a day in those beautiful live oak groves will more than pay for the entire trip.

Tickets, \$1.75

Children, Half Rates

No objectionable person to the undersigned committee will be admitted on the cars.

**J. A. COHN,
W. W. STEWART,
ED. WESCOTS,
JOHN GRAY,
J. VANDERVATE.**

Mineral Springs put De Luz on the Map

The area became a tourist attraction because of Judson's Warm Mineral springs, a resort founded by Lemon Judson in 1881.

He built a four-room house near De Luz Creek at Fern Canyon. The mineral springs had been enjoyed by the Luiseno Indians for many years before Europeans arrived.

Judson built a rock and concrete wall around the pool and springs. He turned his residence into what he called "a boarding house" for visitors to partake of the springs and enjoy the nearby woods and wildlife.

"The 80 to 90 degree water was enough of an attraction for the Southern California Railway to build a station in De Luz "according to an article in a 1989 *Times-Advocate* article.

After getting off the train at the Fallbrook Station, visitors rode in a buggy to the resort. A History of San Bernardino and San Diego Counties, published in 1883 by Wallace W. Elliot, boasted of "remarkable cures" offered by the waters for ailments, including rheumatism, neuralgia, deafness, and "all characters of humors."

Lemon Judson died in 1889, a day short of his 82nd birthday. The hotel was sold to Kate S. Regan and converted to a private home in 1910.



Hotel at Judson Warm Mineral Springs on De Luz Road

In 1880, the California Southern Rail Road was formed to build from National City north and eastward to San Bernardino, then on to a connection with the Atlantic & Pacific in California. No one knew where that point would be. With National City as the initial terminus, all equipment and materials had to be brought into San Diego Bay by ships. Ties came down the coast. Rails and fastenings were shipped in sailing vessels around Cape Horn from Belgium and Germany. The locomotives and some of the rolling stock came from eastern states either around the Horn or overland to San Francisco and transferred to a boat there. By January 1881, surveyors, locating and staking the line, had advanced up the coast to what is now Fallbrook Junction, then headed in a generally north-easterly direction up the Santa Margarita River, reaching Hayden's Ranch in April of that year. Fallbrook Depot and the Post Office there was known as Howe. Temecula Canyon presented formidable difficulties, both to railroad construction and operation. There were seven miles in the upper canyon through rock with almost perpendicular cliffs. A grade of over 140 feet per mile was required for three miles, the summit being at 970 feet elevation. Many low bridges had to be constructed, the line crossing and recrossing the river many times. Hundreds of Chinese coolies or laborers, were brought in to work on the preparation of the roadbed. It was hot, dusty and the wind would blow a gale. One of the Chinese commented: "All the same Hellee, you bet."

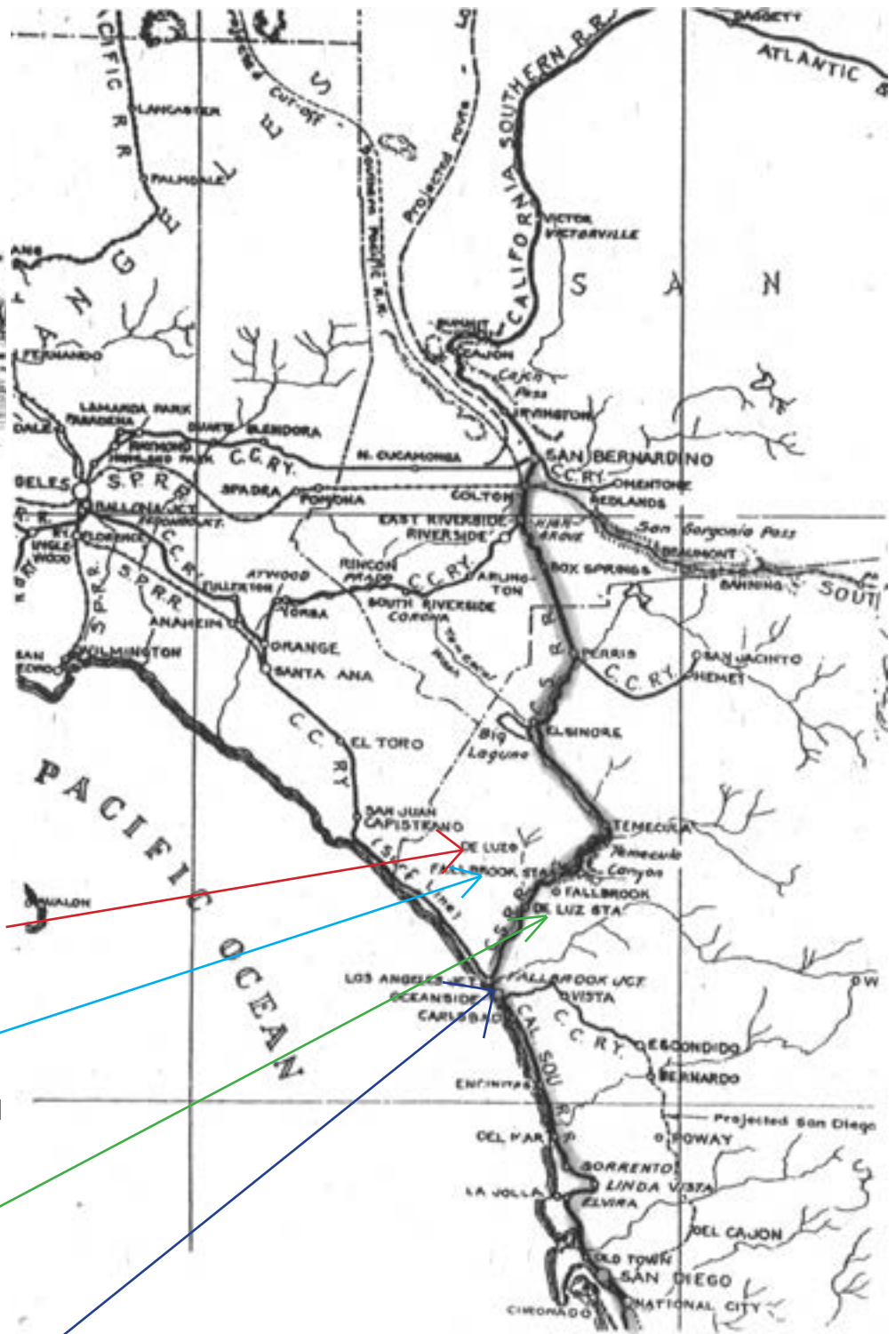


A Southern California railroad construction scene, c. 1880s, shows Chinese laborers removing earth in baskets.

"Fallbrook is a little Eden planted in the midst of inferno." Others were more favorably impressed. The National City Record opined: The person who would begrudge \$9 for a round trip ticket... might be compared with the Southern Pacific Railroad Company - without a soul. The scenery through Temecula Canyon alone is well worth the price of the trip." And tourist acclaimed that "the best and most cheerful railroad eating house is the celebrated tent at Fallbrook, a delightful nook in Temecula Canyon".

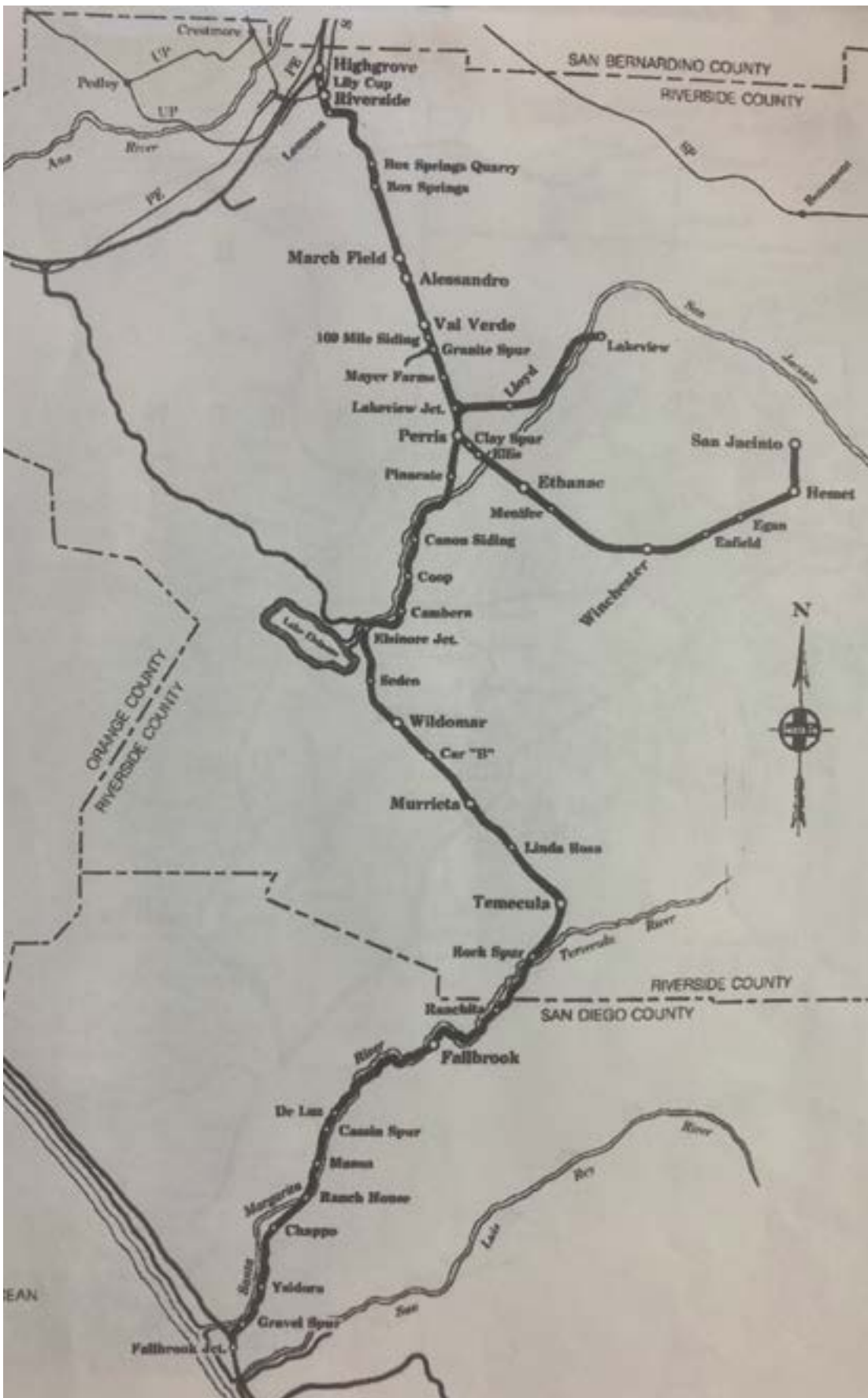


The map depicts a portion of the Southern California showing the proposed routes for all rail lines, California Southern Railway in particular. The Southern California Line ran from National City to Barstow and was a joint venture of Southern California and Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe.

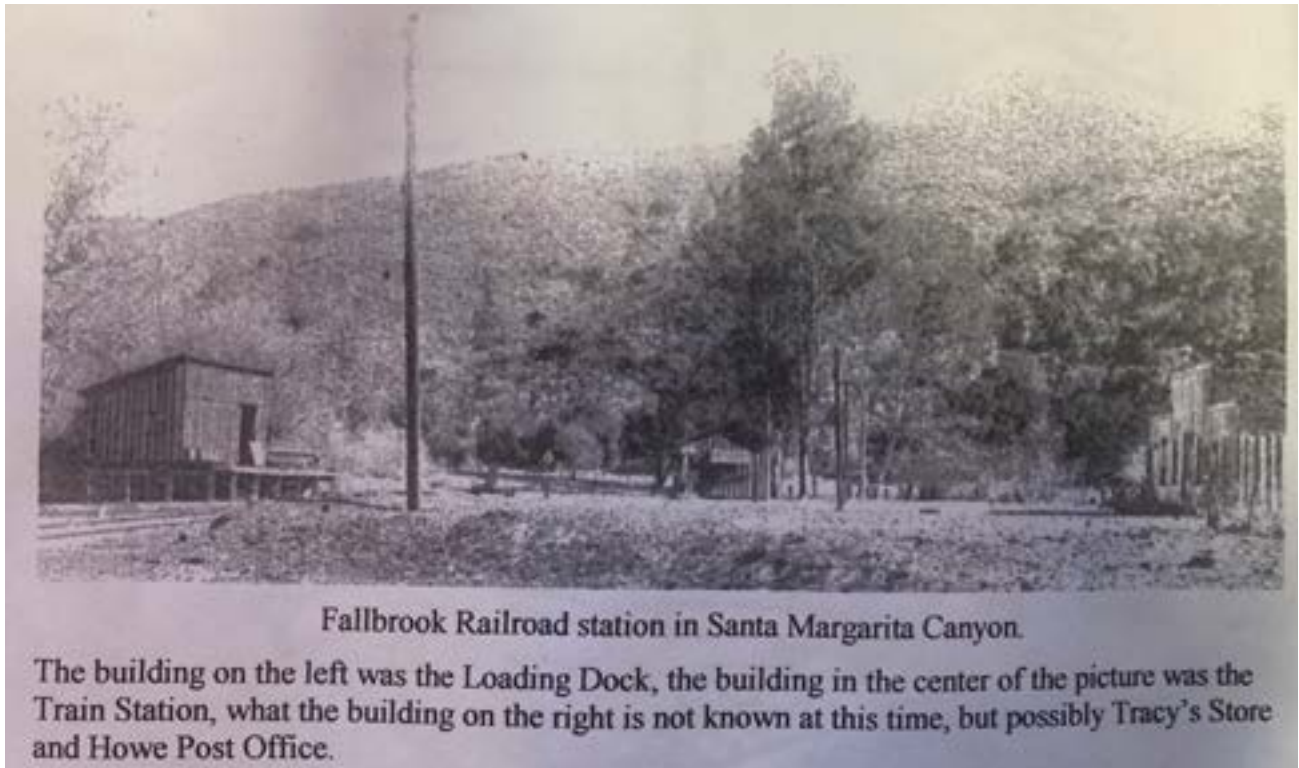


On the map De Luz is located at the Judson Warm Mineral Springs Hotel. Fallbrook Station includes the Howe Post Office and is at the Santa Margarita River and Sandia Creek Road. De Luz Station is at the confluence of De Luz Creek and Santa Margarita River (currently on Camp Pendleton). Fallbrook is the town of Fallbrook. Fallbrook Junction is where the train turns north from Oceanside.

The final route of the Southern California train



While the railroad was being built, there were small depots where supplies and building materials would be left. Building tracks would continue on. Later these small depots would have mail and other supplies dropped off from time to time but usually no buildings would be built. Gravel Depot, Ysidora, Ranch House, De Luz, and Ranchita were such depots. Thanks to Rod Stuart at the Fallbrook Historical Society for this and much more information.



Fallbrook Railroad station in Santa Margarita Canyon.

The building on the left was the Loading Dock, the building in the center of the picture was the Train Station, what the building on the right is not known at this time, but possibly Tracy's Store and Howe Post Office.

Between De Luz and Fallbrook Station the Santa Margarita River was crossed four times by means of "Floating Bridges." The first one was a quarter of a mile above the De Luz station. Two more were on a short horseshoe curve a mile farther on, and the fourth was near Fallbrook Station. These bridges lay flush with the river bottom, the track sloping down approaching them on a four or five percent grade, and leaving the river on the opposite side on the same gradient.

The two bridges on the horseshoe curve were 50 and 100 feet in length respectively, and were so close together that the track took on a roller coaster aspect. Extreme skill was required in both the use of the throttle and air brake in getting trains over this piece of track. Too heavy a brake application would result in the train stalling in the river bottom, and too light an application might result in derailment. Both engine and cars rocked alarmingly over these bridges.

As to the construction of the bridges, piling was driven in four rows across the river, flush with the sand. Large timbers or caps were laid across the tops of these piles. On top of these cross caps, stringers were placed parallel to the track, but not fastened to the caps. The rails were spiked directly to these stringers instead of ties. The track gauge was maintained by several three quarter inch, or larger, iron rods, threaded at both ends, and fastened with bolts and lock washers, through holes bored in the web of the rail.

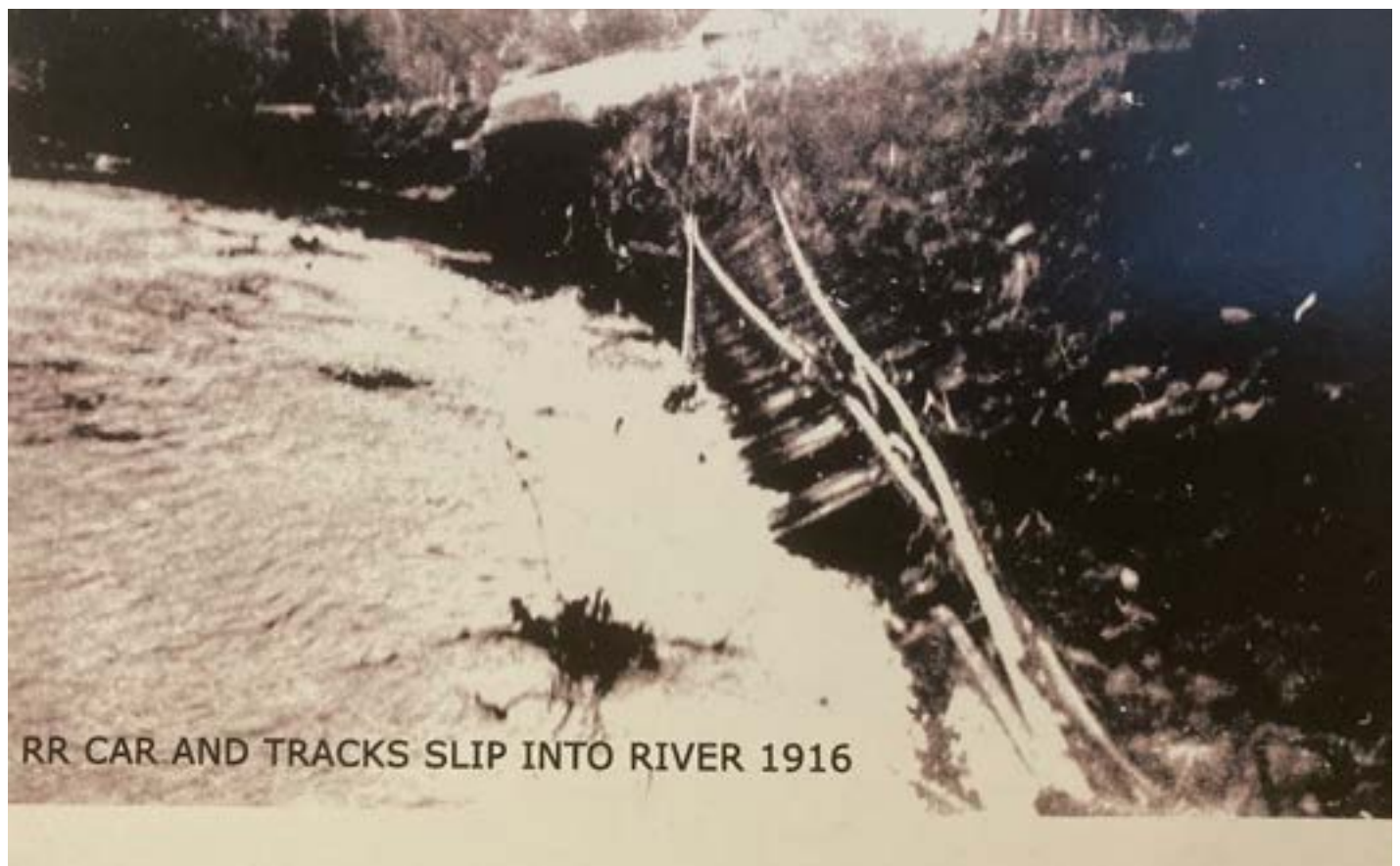
The idea was not so much to save the bridge, but their floating on the surface as the water rose, but more, that when debris piled up against them to form a dam, the rails on one side of the river would pull loose and allow them to swing down stream parallel with the river. When the water receded they could be pulled back into position. In event the whole bridge was lost down stream, there would be no great financial burden in replacing it.

During high water it was the custom to stop the train before crossing any of the bridges. The brakeman would don hop boots, take a long pole and cross ahead of the train, prodding to see if the stringers were still resting on the cross caps. If all were well the train would dive down into the river and follow him across.

But the Southern Pacific Railroad in those days was not a friendly railroad. In February 1884, it rained and rained. Floods poured down Temecula Canyon and dozens of other susceptible places. R. V. (Dick) Dodge was the engineer on the last passenger train out of National City. A point just down the stream from Fallbrook was reached when a bridge went out. An attempt was made to back the train to Oceanside, but the track had become impassable. The train was stranded. Six days later one passenger got back to San Diego, having walked most of the way. He reported that the railroad had made no effort to rescue the passengers or the mails. The crew remained with the train several days, subsisting, according to Victor Westfal of Fallbrook, on gophers and the like, then walked back.

Much of the California Southern's roadbed was a shamble, eight of the twelve miles through the canyon were completely washed out. Ties and bridge timbers were found floating out in the Pacific ocean. The railroad, as a separate corporation, was bankrupt. Assessments were levied on the stockholders and bondholders had to exchange their First Liens for income bonds.

In January 1916 after a prolonged drought, catastrophic flooding washed away the station and all the tracks. This was the end of train service in the Santa Margarita Canyon.



Santa Fe built a new line up on higher ground. From Oceanside, the railway ran across Rancho Santa Margarita (today's Camp Pendleton) to service Fallbrook's new olive and citrus packing houses. The train ran through the center of Fallbrook to the new Santa Fe station on Alvarado Street beginning in 1917 until it permanently ceased in 1982.

Photographs from the Fallbrook Historical Society

Before and after Flood

The Fallbrook train station in the Santa Margarita River bed at the bottom of De Luz Road before the "Big Flood" in the winter of 1916.



The same area following the disastrous flood which washed out the station. The freight house and the five train cars were washed away and never found.
Photographs from the Fallbrook Historical Society



1916



THE BIG FLOOD — In the winter of 1916 a torrent of water rushed down the Temecula Canyon and the Santa Margarita River and washed out the railroad track which ran from Oceanside through Fallbrook to Temecula. The water wash-

ed out the Fallbrook station at the bottom of the DeLuz Road about 2 miles north of town and many cars were lost. Following the washout, several cars still rested on the track but one passenger car, center, was twisted into ruin.



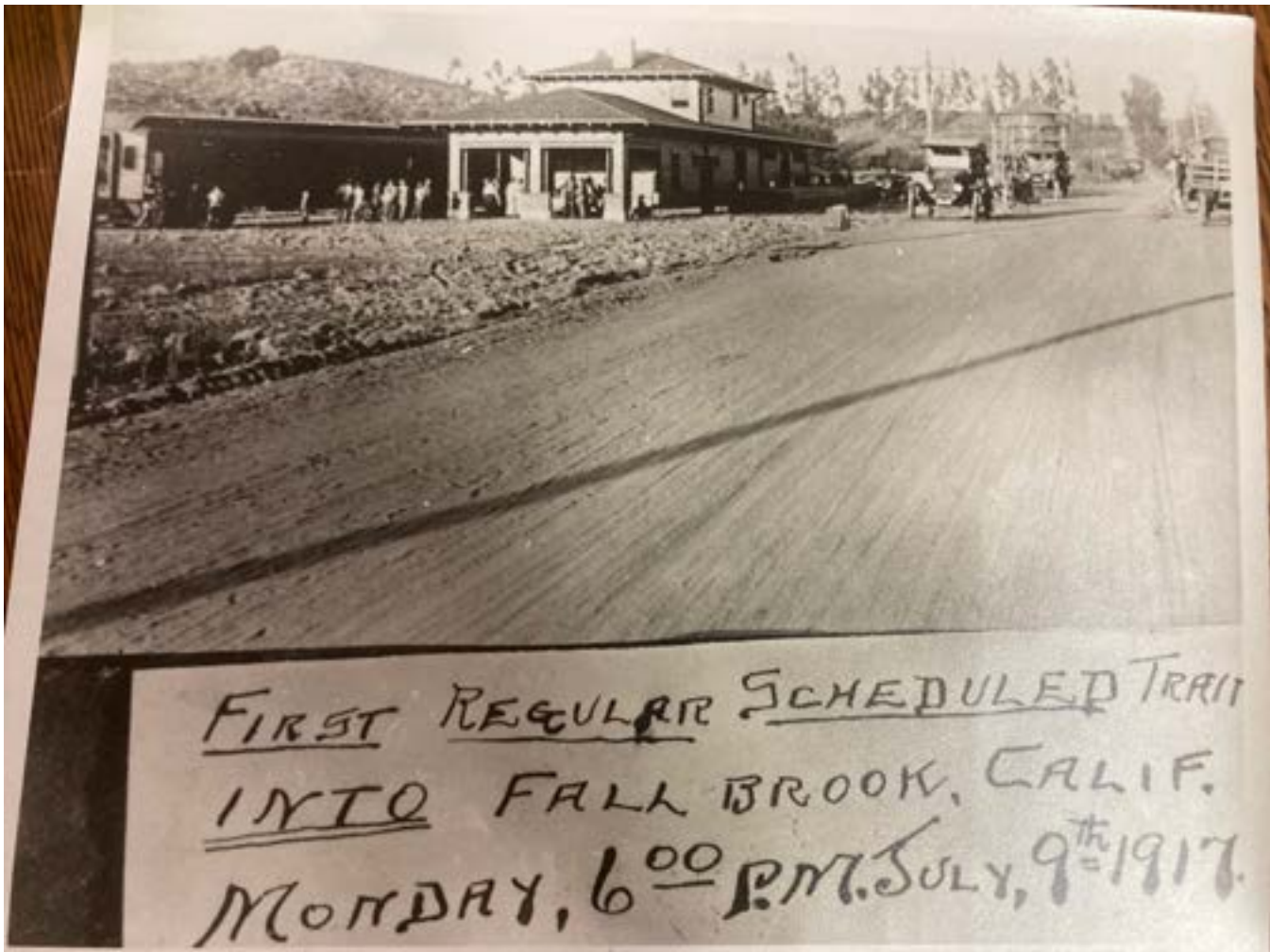
1917

Road Widening -- The De Luz Road, which led from downtown Fallbrook to the train station in the Santa Margarita River bottom, was widened to order to enable the train cars to be brought up from the river bottom to Fallbrook. A team of five men and four horses with the use of heavy equipment brought the engine and tender and ten cars up the road to a new station on Alvarado Street, the station was built in 1917.



NEW TRACK — In 1917 a new track was laid from Oceanside to Fallbrook through the present Camp Pendleton to a newly constructed train station on Alvarado Street. The track, above, crosses Main Street between Elder and Fig Streets. The pool room on the left was on the southwest corner of Main and Fig. In the background to the

left is the First Baptist Church. Main Street, a dirt road at the time of the picture, was paved several years later. The cars on the right are parked in front of the Fallbrook Hardware store, still standing at the southeast corner of Main and Alvarado.



Photograph from the Fallbrook Historical Society

For more information see The Train Through Santa Margarita Canyon in the 2022 Winter Edition of the Fallbrook Historian

<https://www.fallbrookhistoricalsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2022-T-Winte-Historian.pdf>

The Enterprise appreciates the efforts of the Fallbrook Historical Society and its members, especially director Elizabeth Yamaguchi, for making it possible to publish this article and others earmarked for publication during this Centennial year.

The California Southern Railroad began taking people to see Temecula Canyon even before the company had finished laying track through it.

This was San Diego's first railroad, and not only was the train ride a novelty, but the scenery was spectacular. For 14 miles through the mountains between Fallbrook and Temecula, the Santa Margarita River had carved a steep-walled canyon. The story of the California Southern Railroad in San Diego County is also the story of Fallbrook's beginnings, for the town was spawned by the railroad, as were Carlsbad, Oceanside, and Temecula.

Chartered by San Diego businessmen, the California Southern began building northward from San Diego early in 1881. In March, survey teams moved up both the Santa Margarita and the San Luis Rey Rivers, seeking the best route to Temecula and San Bernardino. Some of the men on the San Luis Rey team, surveying up Monserate Creek toward the Vallecito (Rainbow) pass, stayed at V.C. Reche's hotel, and attended the newly organized Methodist-Episcopal Sunday school in the Fallbrook schoolhouse (both hotel and school were near today's Live Oak Park).

If the San Luis Rey route were chosen, the railroad would traverse almost the entire eastern edge of Fallbrook District (as shown on F.E. Fox's map), increasing the value of many homesteaders' property. Instead, the Santa Margarita route was elected, crossing the mountains northeastern corner of Fallbrook District. John Forster's offer of 13 miles of right-of-way across the Santa

Margarita Ranch, and the fact that Temecula Canyon had few homesteaders from whom to purchase ROW, undoubtedly influenced the railroad's decision.

In the next few months, as roadbed construction inched its way toward the Santa Margarita River, all Fallbrook District farmers profited from the sale of produce needed to feed the hundreds of workers; mostly Chinese men from San Francisco; employed by the railroad.

Thus, many homesteaders were able to buy lumber, build homes, and make other improvements to meet the requirements for property ownership. Businesses in the area expanded and new ones began. Postmaster C.V. Reche built a new store to house the Fallbrook Post Office; a blacksmith shop was opened at Osgood (Bonsall); and the mill of the Sickler brothers was nearing completion at Pala.

Some Fallbrook District homesteaders, like Jose Francisco Ruiz and Henry Magee, located near the route of the railroad, wanted to obtain title to their land more quickly. They changed their Declarations of Intent to settle on government land from the Homestead Law, which required five years of residence and improvements, to the Pre-emption Law, which required only six months residence, improvements, and payment of \$1.25 per acre.

By August 1881, when a mail stage began running to the head of railroad construction in Temecula Canyon, the blasting could be heard by residents all over the district. The last seven miles of grade in the canyon (where some rocky walls towered 1,000 feet) required 80,000 pounds of blasting powder and the labor of 2,000 men. Local supplies were exhausted, and schooners from San Diego landed lumber and foodstuffs on the beach at the mouth of the Santa Margarita River.

Track-laying advanced toward the Canyon, and the railroad bought W.B. Hayden's ranch at the foot of the first grade leading

to Fallbrook District. Six locomotives were in-use by the end of the year, bringing up rails and telegraph poles. Trains also brought people seeking land, and carried back to San Diego markets the produce of district farmers: wheat, honey, and wool.

Newspaper correspondents from San Francisco and the East rode the line as it progressed, and publicized Fallbrook farms and people; in particular, old soldier and now wheat farmer, Henry Magee, and citrus rancher, John Mitchell, famous for raising oranges without irrigation.

In April, 1882, the Odd Fellows 63rd anniversary excursion train from San Diego to the end of the line in Temecula Canyon, carried passengers past the newly established Fallbrook Depot and telegraph office (formerly Hayden's ranch), where an engine house and turntable, and a boardinghouse for railroad employees were under construction. Daily trains transported carloads of stone and firewood from the Canyon to the railroad terminal south of San Diego at National City. By August 1882, when the first passenger trains began running through to San Bernardino's station at Colton, they made a daily lunch stop at Fallbrook Depot, where Howe Post Office and Wells Fargo Express were now providing services.

In 1883, the sale of excursion tickets, good for ten days brought more investors to Fallbrook to look over property available in the district. In the land boom which followed, H. Magee sold his farm to J.A. Pruitt, and moved to Pala. J.H. Bush opened a blacksmith shop, had business forms printed, and planned a "City of Fallbrook" on his property (in the area of today's business section from Fallbrook Street to the intersection of S. Mission and S. Main Sts.). W.E. Robinson, from his real estate office at Fallbrook Depot, sold 120 acres of G.H. Zeigler's property (on today's Live Oak Park Rd.) to

McWalters, a recent arrival from Europe. With rail transport available, and a good growing year, Scott and Tracy's warehouse at Fallbrook Depot was bulging with grain, and their store was the area's center for the collection of county taxes.

Disaster struck early in 1884, when a storm dropped 21 inches of rain, washing out miles of track along the Santa Margarita River.

In Temecula Canyon, young Charlie Howell was a hero when he signalled the train during the storm, and kept it from colliding with a landslide. Flooded out, and with trains no longer running, businessmen and homesteaders moved from the canyon to the hill above. Scott sold his interest in the store and warehouse to Tracy and Son, and entered a partnership with F.W. Bartlett. Bartlett had bought A.M. Hayward's homestead, at the top of the grade leading down to Fallbrook Depot, for \$5,500, and filed for the land under his own name.

Real estate dealer W.E. Robinson, who sold the Ormsby place (north of today's Bonsall) to E.J. Johnson for an ostrich farm, moved his office to the hill and added notary public to his services. Already established on the hill, Bush established partnership with G.C. Abbott in a blacksmith and livery business, and they began selling Milburn wagons and buggies.

Throughout 1884, Fallbrook District farmers again profited by selling produce to the railroad for the 100's of workers rebuilding the line. By December, repairs were nearly complete, and E.J. Johnson's parents arrived from Maine - the first all rail passengers on Santa Fe's new transcontinental route (finished except for Temecula Canyon). Johnson, with a team, met his parents at Temecula, and they drove to Fallbrook Depot, where they took the cars for San Diego.

By the time the excursion trains were running again through Temecula Canyon, there

(Continued from A-4)

were more businesses on the hill than around Fallbrook Depot, or in the vicinity of the Fallbrook Post Office (Reche-Live Oak Park), and in February, 1885, the town of West Fallbrook was born. Its proprietors, whose property was within the town site, were: partners Bartlett and Scott, partners Bush and Abbott, and John North, who contracted with the county surveyor to have the town surveyed and streets and town lots laid out.

West Fallbrook developed slowly throughout 1885 and 1886, but in 1887, development boomed. Seven additions were made to the original survey, expanding the limits of the town from Townsend St. (now Hillcrest Ln.) on the north, to today's Aviation Road on the south, and from Minnesota Street on the east, to the boundary of the Santa Margarita Ranch on the west. (However, there was much unplatted land within these limits.)

Two tracts of land outside the town were subdivided into residential and small farm lots, and Fallbrook (Reche-Live Oak Park) was platted into a town. The following year, reflecting a countywide and a national depression, only one addition was made to West Fallbrook: Fallbrook Cemetery (now Oddfellow's) was platted; and, in the District, another new town, Rainbow, was surveyed.

Railroad transportation of

people and freight had aided the development of Fallbrook District and its towns. Another depot, Ranchita, was established several miles up Temecula Canyon from Fallbrook, but Fallbrook Depot remained the lunch stop on the San Diego to San Bernardino run. Fallbrook people could ride the excursion trains passing through the canyon, and attend political conventions in Los Angeles, G.A.R. Encampments in San Diego, and horticultural shows and fairs in all the nearby towns. A new fast train had begun running between San Diego and Los Angeles by way of Colton, and 2,000 passengers were transported in one day by six locomotives and 25 coaches. The rate competition between Santa Fe and Southern Pacific Railroads in 1887, which had dropped passenger fares from Kansas to California to a low of \$1.00, brought many people through Fallbrook District.

By 1889 and 1890, when the depression was most severe, West Fallbrook was strong enough to survive, but neither Fallbrook nor Rainbow had the chance to develop as towns. West Fallbrook even survived the loss of through traffic on the railroad. By 1891, not only had Santa Fe taken over the California Southern, and moved the railroad terminal and yards from San Diego to San Bernardino, but there was a new line along the coast which threatened to take all the traffic from the San Diego to San Bernardino line.

When the storms of February, 1891 again washed out the tracks in upper Temecula Canyon, the railroad was not rebuilt. Fallbrook Depot became the last stop on a branch line of the Santa Fe Railroad.



Fallbrook Depot in Santa Margarita Canyon