

The Railfan's Guide to Cajon Pass

By Al Bowen

Part 8: Victorville to Daggett

While this segment is part of the Cajon sub-division, many railfans consider Victorville "The End of the Line". We will cover this as an alternative for the Pass area itself. If the weather is foul in the Mountains, oft-times it is acceptable by the time you get 50 miles out into the desert.

Leaving Victorville Station, proceed west/north on old highway 66 (D Street), under the interstate. On your right will be SW Portland Cement. They have a spur line and small yard, used for the gathering of cars to ship their product. The Spur runs several miles northeast to a quarry where raw materials are mined for use in the mill. A short distance beyond the mill, the road crosses the Mojave River. Just before the bridge, a dirt driveway branches off to the right to enter the City of Victorville's Lower Narrows Park. This area contains picnic areas and shelter houses that over look the tracks as they cross the river and go through the rocky "narrows" formations. The backdrops here are really spectacular desert/rock scenes.

Get back on the highway 66 and continue north. In Oro Grande, there are a couple of places where the road and rail line are close, and photo opportunities are pretty good. Then, as the road continues along the river valley, the rail line comes in and out of view for several miles. At the 21 milepost in Helendale, you can see the station sign and the remains of the siding there, now a spur. At the 10 milepost, the Hinckley Rd. crosses the tracks at a rather deserted crossing that has an agricultural background of hayfields and a chicken farm.

As you approach Barstow, the new Highway 58 interchange crosses over the tracks where they meet the line coming in from Mojave and Tehachapi, and enter the West Barstow yard. This interchange is little used so far, and has a super view of the western end of Barstow. Scout around this area and you will see several locations where you can park and get some fine photos.

On the east side of town, the best place to shoot photos, is in Daggett, at the place where the UP line merges into the BNSF. To get to this point, get on I-40 at the east end of Barstow, and drive east to the Daggett/Yermo exit. When you get into the center of Daggett, follow the tracks east about 1/4 mile to the split. You can park alongside the tracks in the shade of large trees there.