

# southwest corner

by John Hathaway

This month we're going to take a quick tour of a few of the more active locales for trainwatching in the Southern California area. All of these locations are within half a day's drive from San Diego and make good one day trips. Some of them are in fairly scenic areas.

**COLTON:** This major Southern Pacific yard is located just south of San Bernardino on Highway 395. It is here the Southern Pacific rail mainline east out of Los Angeles crosses Santa Fe's Third District line between LA and San Bernardino, and here also the Espee cutoff between Palmdale and Colton terminates. You can follow the Espee tracks east out of Colton to more scenic areas and watch the fairly rapid progression of trains. The yard and mainline pass directly under 395.

**SAN BERNARDINO:** Here Santa Fe's Third and Second Districts from LA come together. From the Santa Fe passenger depot here you can see that railroad's large engine repair facilities. Union Pacific trackage out of LA joins the Santa Fe line here for the trip over the rugged Cajon Mountains on joint trackage.

**CAJON PASS:** Espee's Colton-Palmdale cutoff and the Santa Fe-UP mainline both run through Cajon Pass out of Los Angeles. Out of San Bernardino the tracks can be followed by taking the Mount Vernon Avenue off ramp at the north end of the city and getting on Cajon Valley Road, which follows the tracks as far as the small settlement of Devore. After returning to Interstate 15 at Devore, you can rejoin the tracks at the town of Cajon. Take the Highway 138 off ramp, but instead of heading west on 138 turn east and follow Summit Valley Road. You can make your way via a paved road to the small railroad settlement of Summit located at the crest of Cajon Pass. Here both lines are within yards of each other and offer almost continuous activity for the railfan. If you're the adventurous type, there is a labyrinth of dirt service and fire roads throughout the entire area which go into isolated, and scenic, sections of both lines as they pass through the high desert area. You can also follow the Summit Valley Road to the flat area surrounding the desert community of Hesperia before returning to the freeway. Here you can see Santa Fe-UP trains picking up a good clip across the flatlands. The Espee route north of Summit turns westwardly towards Palmdale and is fairly inaccessible.

**BARSTOW:** A major division point on the Santa Fe as well as the site of a major locomotive terminus.

Santa Fe's Oakland route through the valley and the IA division come together at Barstow. If you're a diesel-electric fan, Barstow is the place. The huge repair facilities are constantly servicing all types, and any new equipment acquired by Santa Fe is seen almost immediately in Barstow.

**TEHACHAPI MOUNTAINS:** The rugged Tehachapis offer the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe, which share trackage through them, even more of a challenge than the Cajons. One result of the steep grades through this scenic, and very active, area is the famous Tehachapi Loop, where the mainline loops over itself in order to gain elevation. The loop can be reached from the offramp to Keene on Highway 58 following the waded county road about a mile back into the mountains. A roadside plaque commemorates the engineering feat.

All of these areas offer busy, heavy mainline railroading. For those of you more interested in large, active yards, Los Angeles is a good area to explore. We haven't had a chance to go looking around the IA area lately, but when we do, we'll let you know what's happening railroad-wise in a future edition of Southwest Corner.

## MISCELLANEA - A CORNER TO COLLECT TIDBITS

We plan in December to have only the Information Brochure instead of the Report. There may be a small ditto insert with late news.

Don't forget the Shay loco steamup on December 31 and January 1.

In future Report editions we'll have details of the January 18 installation banquet in the January issue, a feature traction article by your editor in February, and a full-length article by Jerry Windle on Northern California steam railroading in the near future. John Hathaway will be continuing his "Southwest Corner" reports, and of course our other regular features will still be here. Remember, feature articles by any member are always welcome. Part of the function of the Report is allowing members to share their common interests. If you've got an interesting insight into any facet of railroading write the editor, Thomas W. Matson, 4282 Taos Drive, San Diego, California 92117, or hphone him at (714) 273-8951.

Save February 19, March 5 and 19, and April 2, 1970 for the PSRMA Film Festival which Chop Kerr is managing. Four outstanding films ranging from the 1920's through the 1960's will be featured and all feature and railroad angle.