

Touring The Eastern Loop Of The Kite Shaped Track



No Scene Twice Seen

By Mark Landis

The famous “Kite-Shaped Track” railroad excursion was born on the heels of Southern California’s great land boom of the 1880’s and became one of the finest tourist attractions in the west.

Toward the close of the 1800’s, the country was entering an era of newfound mobility and tourism and the railroads were seizing the opportunity to expand their business.

In January of 1892, the Southern California Railroad (which later became part of the Santa Fe) began operating this unique figure-eight shaped route to entice tourists and promote the development of their properties along the way.

In a stroke of promotional genius or fantastic luck, the railroad stitched together the 166-mile long route from existing lines that ran through some of the most picturesque and scenic areas of Southern California. The “Kite” name came from a figure-eight style horse racing track that was popular during the era.

The figure-eight route laid horizontally across Southern California extending from Los Angeles to the San Bernardino Valley. The smaller end of the figure-eight circled the citrus belt of the San Bernardino Valley and became known as “the eastern loop,” or simply “the loop.” The eastern loop was sometimes called “the tail of the kite” because of its smaller size and position.

Relief map from the Santa Fe Railroad showing the route of the Kite-Shaped Track excursion in Southern California. For more detail on the eastern loop, see the map on page 36.



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Stations and Towns Along The Eastern Loop

The following are descriptions of the stations along the eastern loop along with a brief history of the communities they served. The term “station” simply refers to a place designated on a railroad timetable by a name. A station would not necessarily have a depot or any other buildings and could consist only of a siding or a flagstop.

Each site will begin with the station name followed by the railroad mile post marking on the route, and the current location in the San Bernardino County Thomas Guide (noted as SBC page # and grid).

San Bernardino

MP 0.0

SBC 606 E1



This huge wood and brick depot building was built by Santa Fe in 1886. San Bernardino quickly became a major hub of transportation in the west.

The city of San Bernardino was founded by Mormon settlers who came to the area in 1851 by wagon train from Salt Lake City. San Bernardino County was officially formed in 1853 and the city was incorporated in 1854.

The first passenger train steamed into San Bernardino on September 13th, 1883. The railroad’s arrival signaled the completion of a line connecting San Bernardino with Los Angeles and the transcontinental railroad.