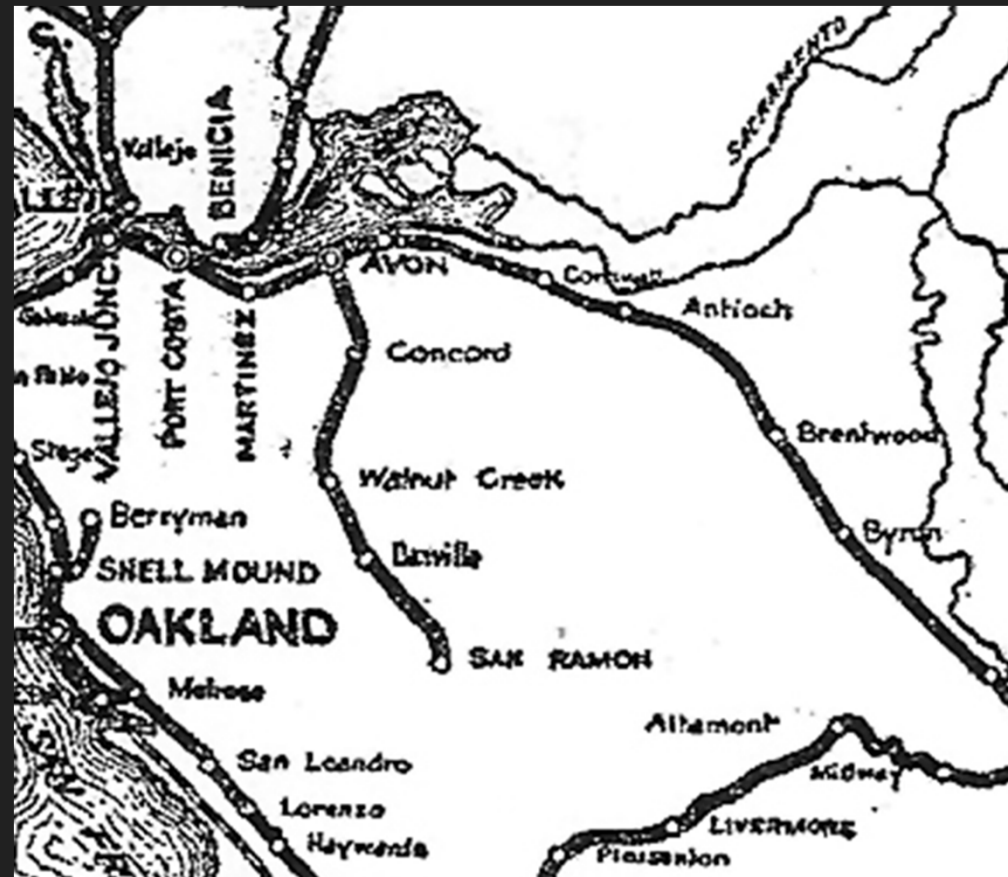
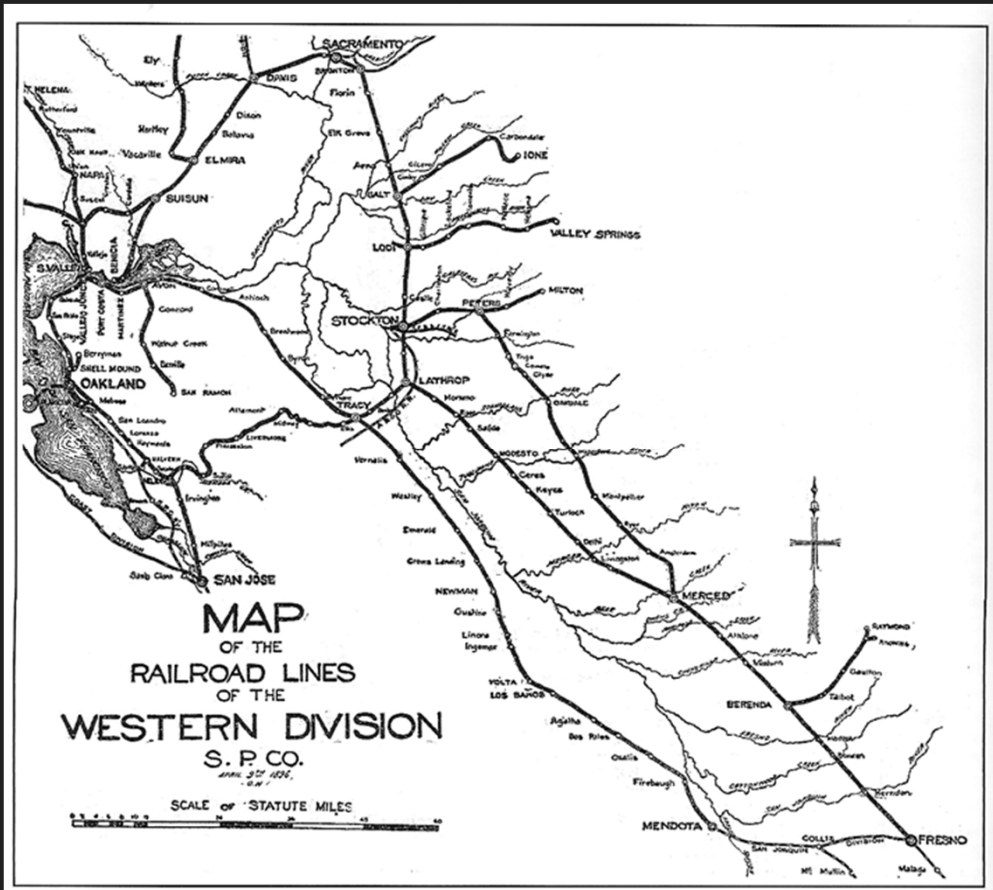


History and General Background

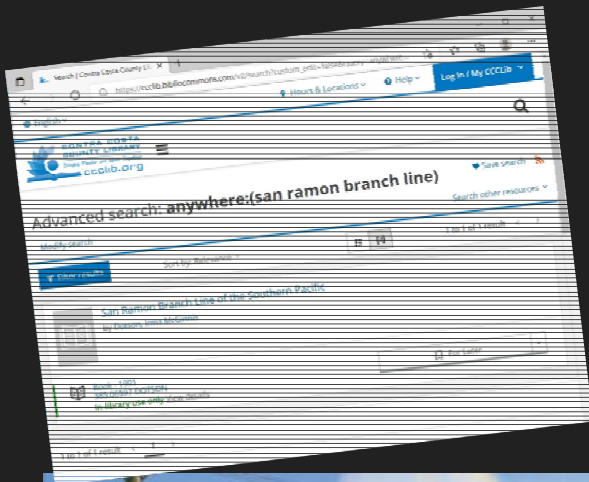
Dave Connery



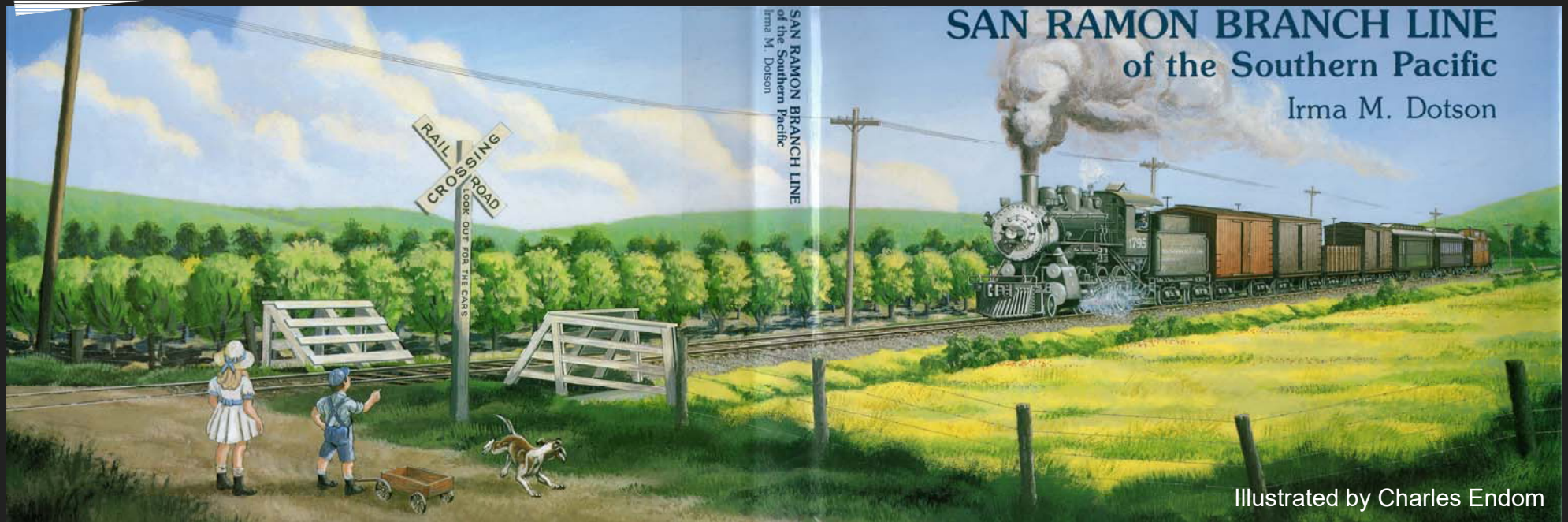
Prototype Info and Sources

Steve Lane

THE SAN RAMON VALLEY BRANCH
OF THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC



Public Library & Internet Searches - typically yield:



San Ramon Branch of the Southern Pacific by Irma Dotson

Illustrated by Charles Endom

2. Acquiring Right-of-Way for Southern Pacific Railroad

The Southern Pacific Railroad Company had been keeping an eye on the busy activities of their alleged competitor, Mr. Kye. Mr. C. P. Huntington promised to have someone look into the advisability of building a railroad through central Contra Costa County upon being visited by August Hemme, that energetic businessman and fruit grower from Alamo. Mr. Hemme had gone to see Mr. Huntington soon after he had succeeded Leland Stanford as President of SP in April 1890. So in May 1890, the Southern Pacific Railroad decided it was time to become active again. Mr. T. J. Field, their representative, met with land owners in the San Ramon Valley and said that work could begin in thirty days if the right-of-way was given free to them. He was empowered to accept deeds immediately to the land. His company would use somewhat the same route proposed by Mr. Kye. Since the land owners knew that Mr. Kye of the Contra Costa and Eastern Terminal Railroad had promised to pay for the right-of-way, they assumed that Southern Pacific Railroad would do the same. Not Mr. Field said the SP would not build the railroad if it had to pay for the right-of-way or any portion of it.

A railroad meeting was held in Danville on May 28

to discuss getting the railroad branch. Mr. August Hemme called the meeting to order and stated that the object of calling the citizens together was to learn their views of giving the right-of-way to SP. Mr. Hemme, who owned much of the flat land between Danville and Alamo, was willing for the railroad to pass through his land. He thought the benefit derived and the increase in the value of the land would more than compensate for the damage to the strip over which the railroad would pass. A spirited discussion opened up over giving and getting money for the right-of-way. R. O. Baldwin felt it to be a great benefit but did not see why he and others should suffer it going through their best land while others would receive equal benefits without having the tracks go through their land and splitting up their farms. Mr. James Foster was chosen Chairman and Mr. William Hemme, a nephew of August Hemme, became Secretary. Mr. Baldwin proposed that the meeting adjourn until the following Saturday to allow others to attend.

On Thursday, May 29 a meeting was held in Walnut Creek with James Foster being elected Chairman and C. C. Swain as Secretary. Mr. Field representing SP was present. The persons agreeing to giving the right of way land were Mr. Hemme and Captain Hazeltine, but the



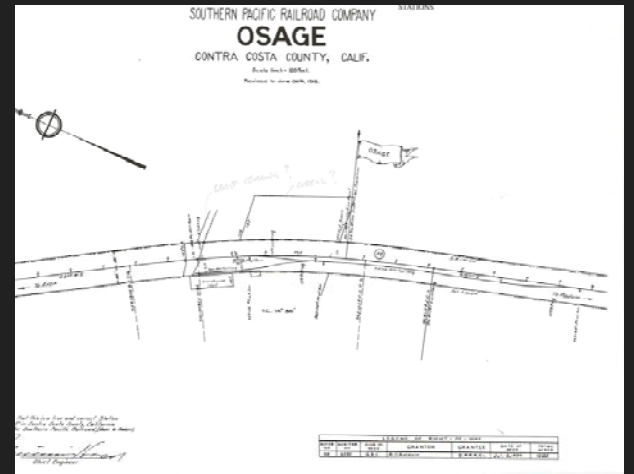
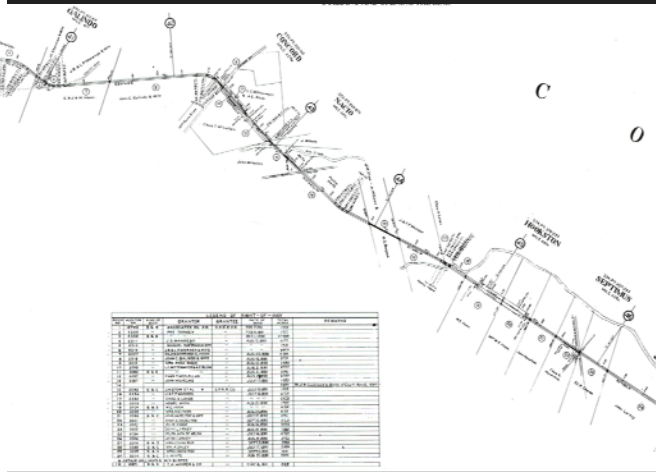
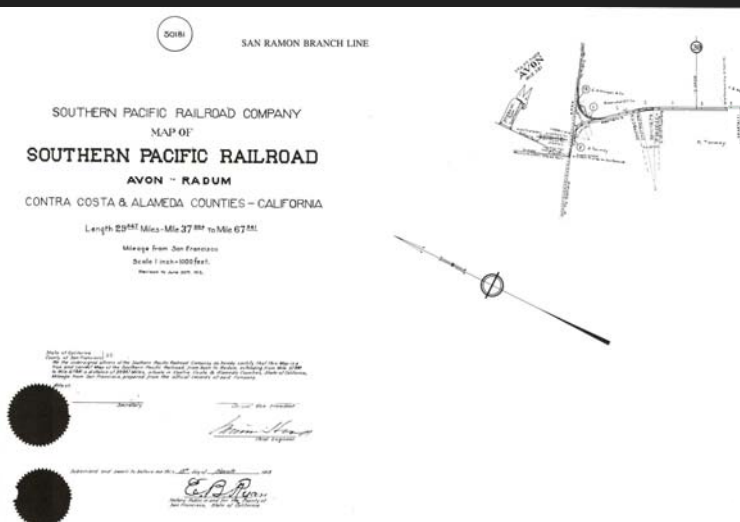
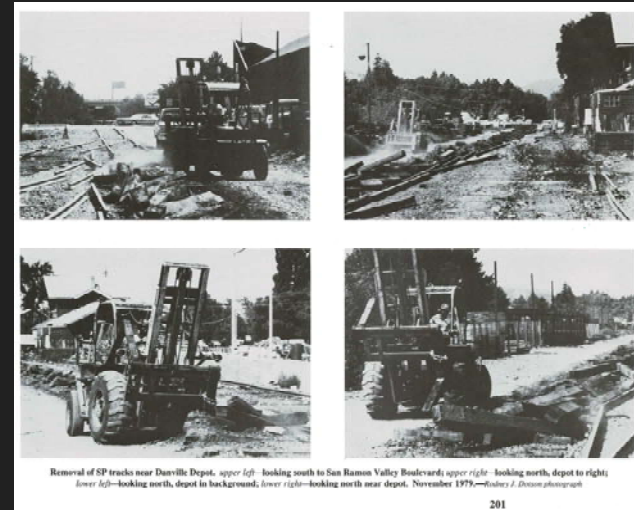
August Hemme. Hemme was born in Germany in 1833. On May 28, 1890 he called the first railroad meeting, which was held in Danville; afterwards he served on committees, called on officers of Southern Pacific Railroad and in general acted as a catalyst in acquiring the right-of-way. Author's collection

SAN RAMON BRANCH LINE

Milepost	Location	Adjacent the Track	County Road	Crossing Use
41B	between Avon & Concord	swamp, tules, willow, open	gravel	teams, light
42E	between Avon & Concord	orchard, open, house	gravel	teams, heavy
44F	between Concord & Walnut Creek	open, large gum grove	gravel	autos, 300 - 600/day
45. (near)	between Concord & Walnut Creek	winery, wise, shelter, open	dirt & gravel	teams, light
46A	between Concord & Walnut Creek	barley, grain, young orchard	dirt	teams, very light
46F	between Concord & Walnut Creek	orchard, alfalfa, open	dirt	teams, light
47E	Walnut Creek	Walnut Creek (stream)	gravel	teams, fairly heavy
49E	between Walnut Creek & Danville	hill, brush	gravel	teams, light
52F	between Walnut Creek & Danville	vineyard, grain, open, prune	gravel	autos, 100 - 200/day
54H	between Danville & San Ramon	open, grain, willows	gravel	teams, light
55	between Danville & San Ramon	open, grain, hay, willows	dirt	teams, light

Typical grade crossing on the San Ramon Branch Line—orchards, cattle-guard, no barriers, warning was whistle of approaching train.—University of California Berkeley. Bancroft Library collection (#214)

The grade crossing situation in 1977 had changed greatly. In 1977 between Pleasant Hill (from mileposts 44.6 to 46.5, an area earlier called Septimus, Larkey and Oxley) and Crow Canyon Road for a distance of twelve miles there were 32 intermediate public grade crossings and several private ones. It was found that five of these crossings had daily volumes ranging from 10,000 to 28,697 automobiles and, of course, no teams of horses.



Regional Railroad-specific Books and Websites:

THE SAN RAMON VALLEY BRANCH OF THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC



THE SAN RAMON VALLEY BRANCH from Avon to a junction with the Niles Subdivision near Pleasanton was the subject of many rumors of change. From the 1930s through the 1950s, it was often said to be scheduled for upgrading into a through freight connection that would take Coast Line reefers to Martinez, avoiding the climb over Altamont. But the decline of vegetable traffic intervened, and abandonment ultimately came, with the depot-restaurant at Walnut Creek as a monument. Rumors have continued since the closure in the late 1970s, the latest involving a light rail line connecting Danville with BART. In this 1949 view, one of the Moguls that served the branch backs south into Walnut Creek.

Source: *Northern California Railroads - The Silver Age, Volume II*, by Fred Matthews, First Printing, December 1984

South of Walnut Creek



Alamo Section

Danville Branch of the Oakland Antioch & Eastern Railway

BY IRMA M. DOTSON

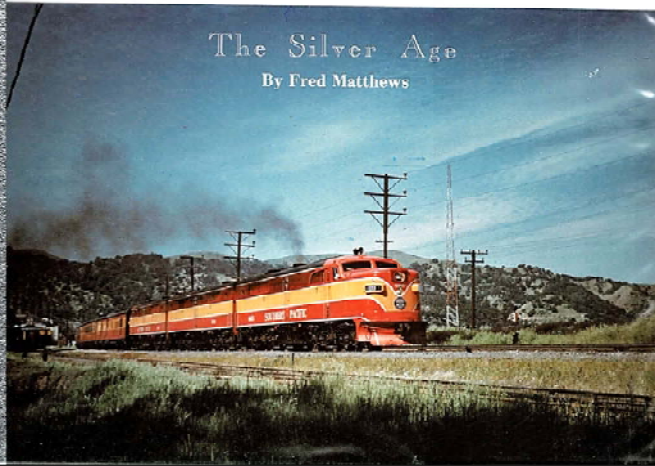
East Bay Hills Project:
eastbayhillsproject.org

"Tales of Trails"

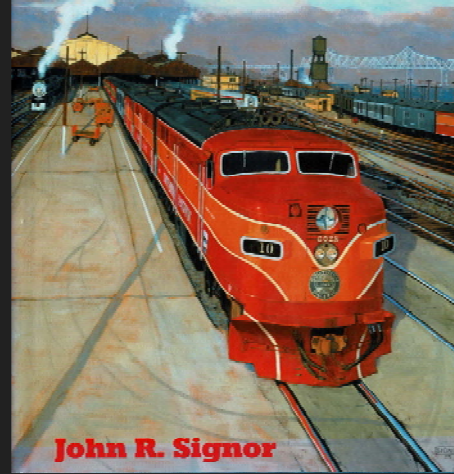


Home Description Mainline Landmarks History Photographers & Archivists Bulletin Board

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA RAILROADS



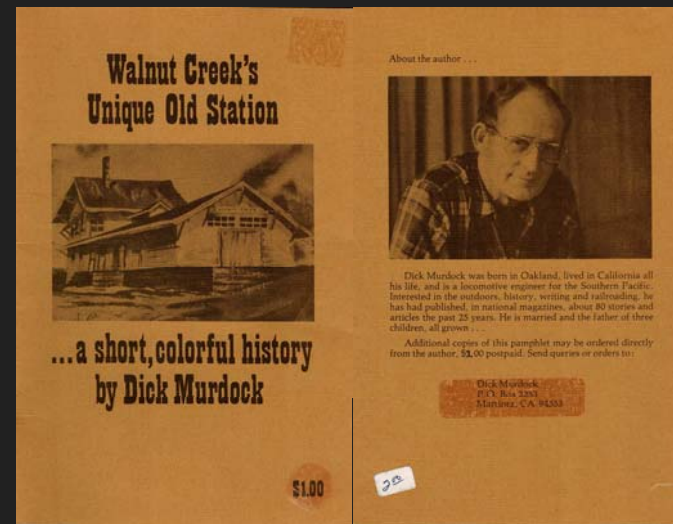
Southern Pacific's Western Division



John R. Signor

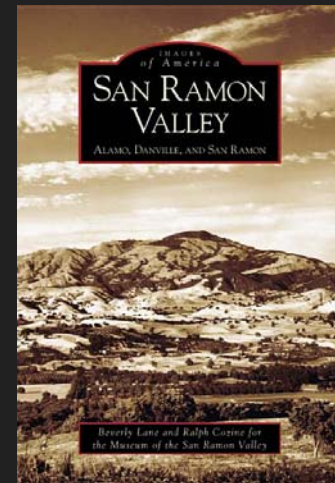
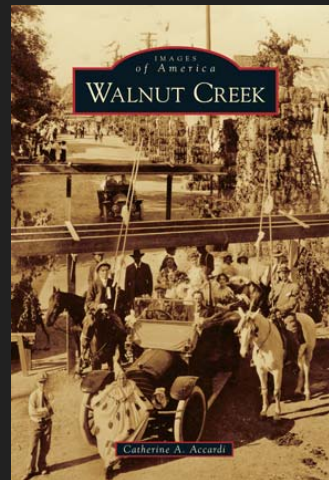
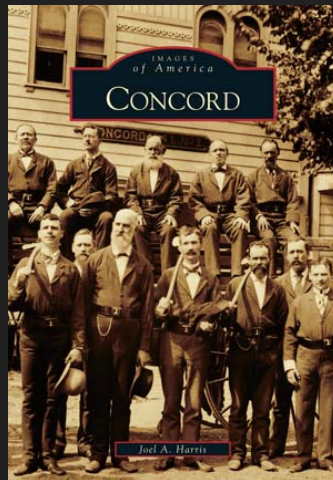
Additional Site-Specific Books
with SRVB Line Info and Photos:

Walnut Creek's Unique Old Station
... a short, colorful history
by Dick Murdock, 1974:



THE SAN RAMON VALLEY BRANCH
OF THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC

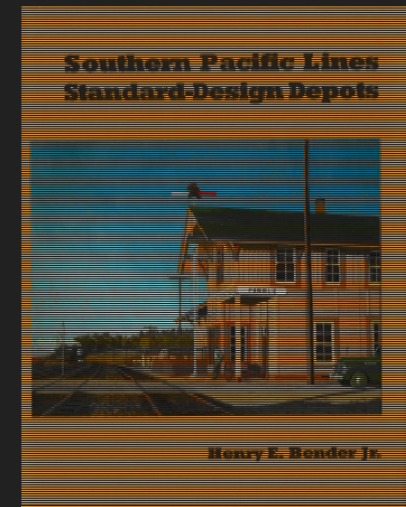
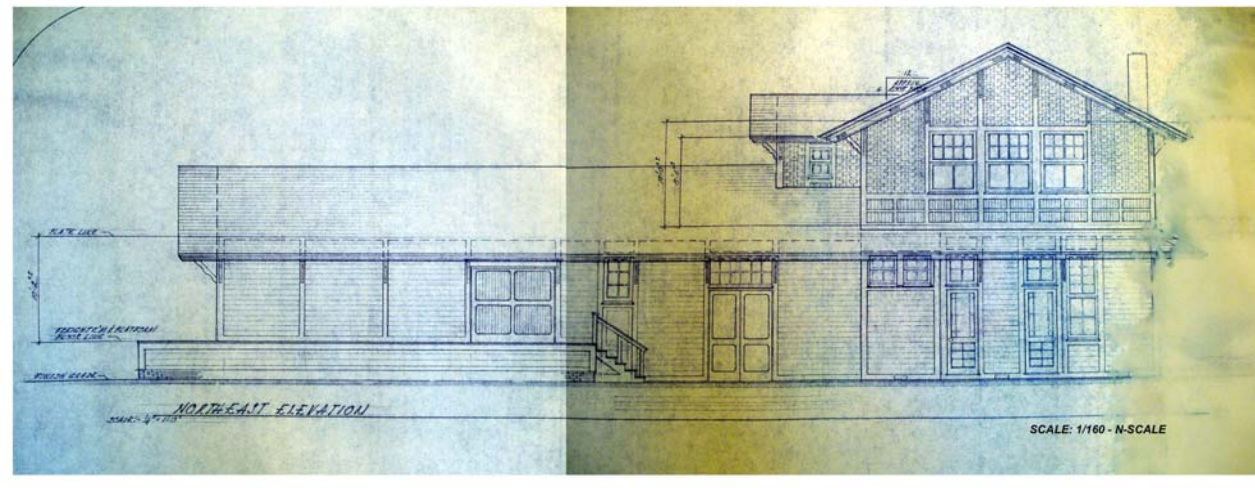
Images of America
Series:



Among Other Local History Books on Concord, Walnut Creek, Alamo, Danville, San Ramon . . .

Prototype Building - Museum of the San Ramon Valley, Danville, CA

THE SAN RAMON VALLEY BRANCH
OF THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC



SP Standard Depots
by Henry Bender



Restored SP Standard
Combination 18 Depot

Museum Houses a
Local History Book
Library, Exhibits, and
Gift Shop

THE SAN RAMON VALLEY BRANCH
OF THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC

SRVB Historic Photographs Library – Concord, Walnut Creek, Alamo, Danville, San Ramon:

