



The Arizona & South Eastern Railroad was built in 1888-1889 by Phelps-Dodge to connect its copper mines at Bisbee, Arizona (in the distant hills), with the national rail network via the AT&SF-controlled New Mexico & Arizona Railroad (1882) at a junction called Fairbank. The A&SE expanded northward in 1894 to bypass the AT&SF/NM&A line and join directly with the SP Sunset Route (1881) at Benson. In early 1901, the A&SE built a branch line from Corta Junction (located 3 miles south of Bisbee) 20 miles east through this location to its new smelter at Douglas. Later in 1901, the A&SE was renamed the El Paso & Southwestern Railroad, which in 1901-1902 built eastward from Douglas to El Paso (this line and the 20 mile A&SE line from Corta Junction to Douglas, including this location, are labeled EP&SW (1902) on the SWRRH map). In 1904, the EP&SW realigned the former A&SE track southwest of Bisbee to circumvent the Mule Mountains; the new alignment ran 3 miles south of Corta Junction and joined the 1901 A&SE alignment about halfway between Corta Junction and Douglas.

The worldwide collapse of copper prices after World War I severely affected the mines and the EP&SW, and in 1924 the SP leased the entire EP&SW. The SP re-configured the EP&SW trackage to supplement its Sunset Route (1881), which became the SP's North Line between Tucson and El Paso and the EP&SW became the SP South Line. The SP purchased the EP&SW from Phelps-Dodge in 1955. In the early 1960's, the SP abandoned most of the South Line, leaving the trackage from Benson to Bisbee and Douglas (this location). Around 1993, the SP sold the remaining trackage to the short line San Pedro & Southwestern Railroad, which operated freight and excursions for a while but in the early 2000's abandoned the line almost all the way back to Benson.

Westward view of the EP&SW (1902), built in 1901 by the A&SE, at the west end of the Douglas yard. The hills in the distance are the Mule Mountains, which harbor Bisbee and its mines. We will explore Douglas from west to east and in chronological order, starting at this location where the EP&SW construction crews commenced their eastward push to El Paso in late 1901.



Another view of the EP&SW trestle over a tributary of Whitewater Draw at the west end of the Douglas yard.



Eastward view of the EP&SW trestle at the west end of the Douglas yard. Note that the black ballast widens just beyond the trestle to what was once the Douglas rail yard. The masonry building in the center distance is the EP&SW's Douglas Depot.



Westward view of the EP&SW (1902) at the west end of the Douglas yard.





Southwestward view at the south end of the EP&SW (1902) Douglas yard. The black ballast in the center that curves to left is a rail spur to the former Phelps-Dodge smelter. The hills in the distance are the southern continuation of the Mule Mountains in Mexico. The continuous line of black between the bushes and the Mule Mountains is the smelter slag pile, which is a mile across.



Southwestward view of old foundations in the EP&SW (1902) Douglas yard. The size of the slag pile can be appreciated in this view.



Eastward view of old foundations in the EP&SW (1902) Douglas yard as we approach the Douglas Depot.



More foundations in the Douglas yard.



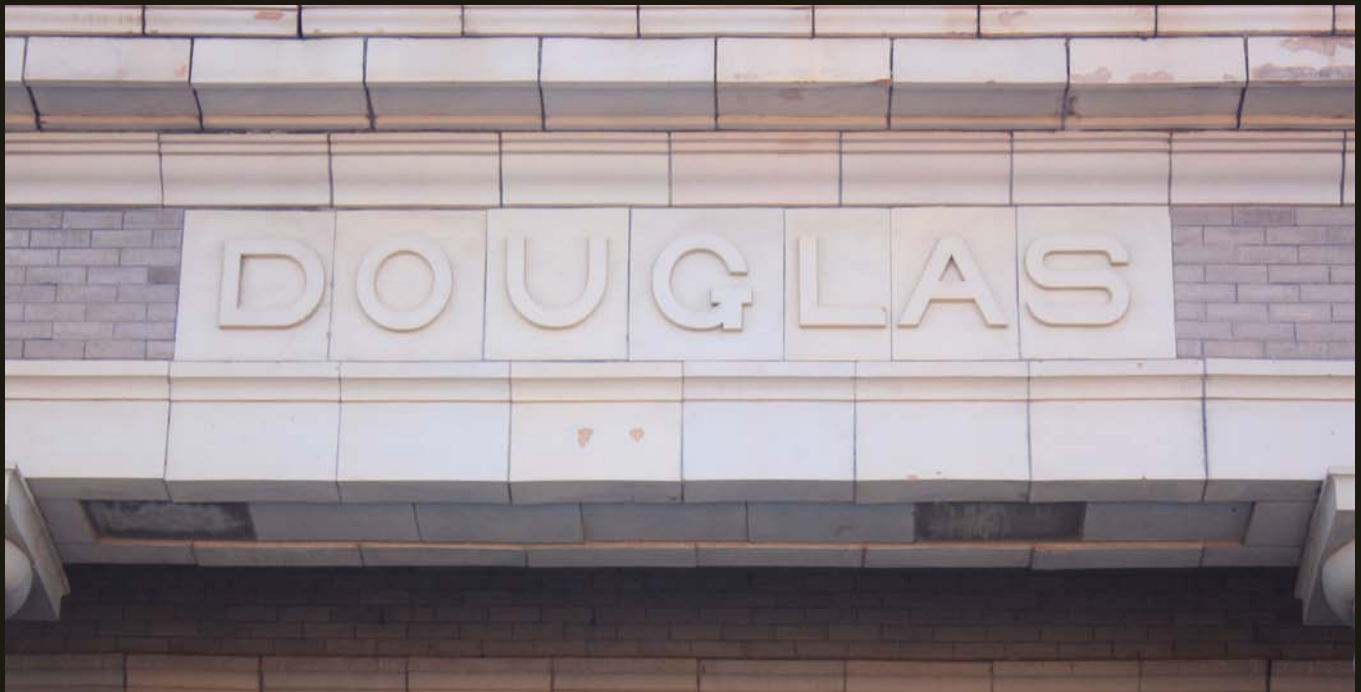


The beautiful EP&SW Passenger Depot, built around 1910, became an SP South Line depot after 1924. Today the building houses city offices.



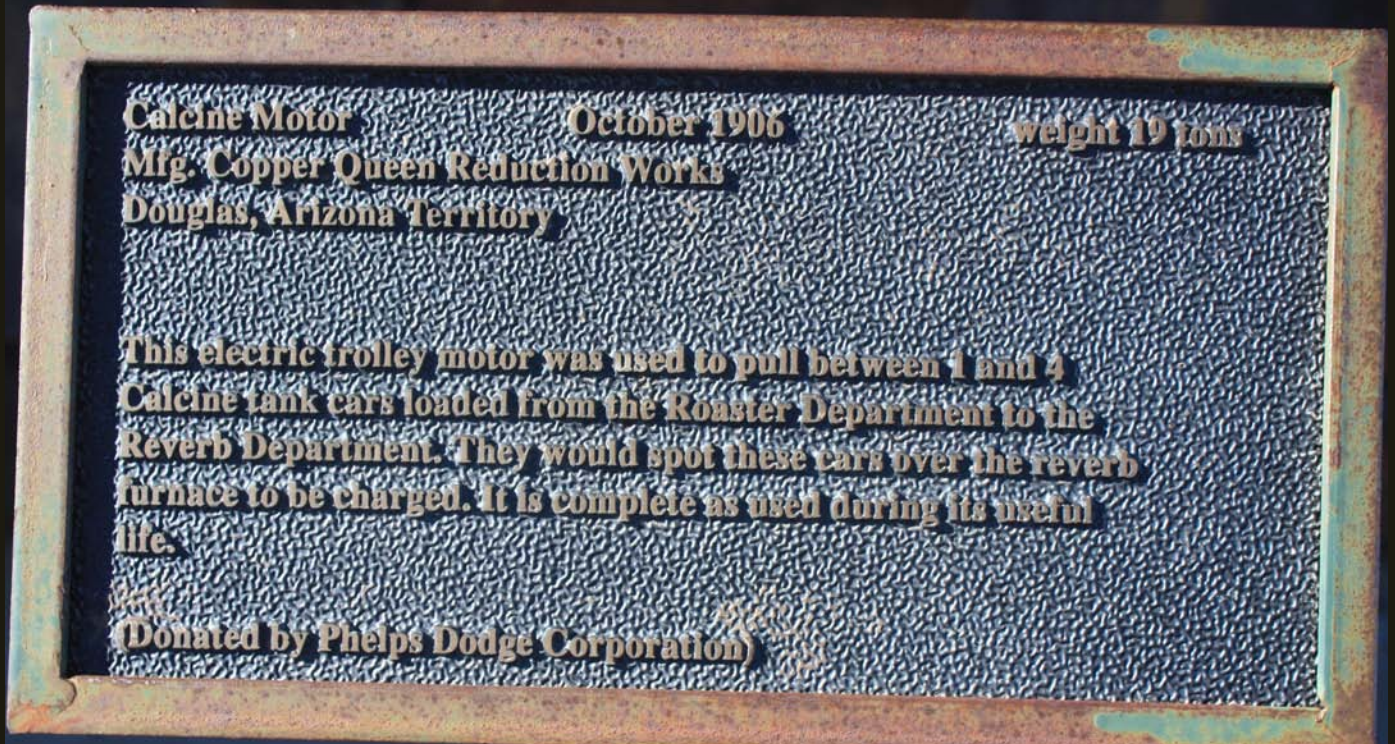


This is the back side of the depot; the tracks once ran through the paved area and passengers boarded where the cars are parked.



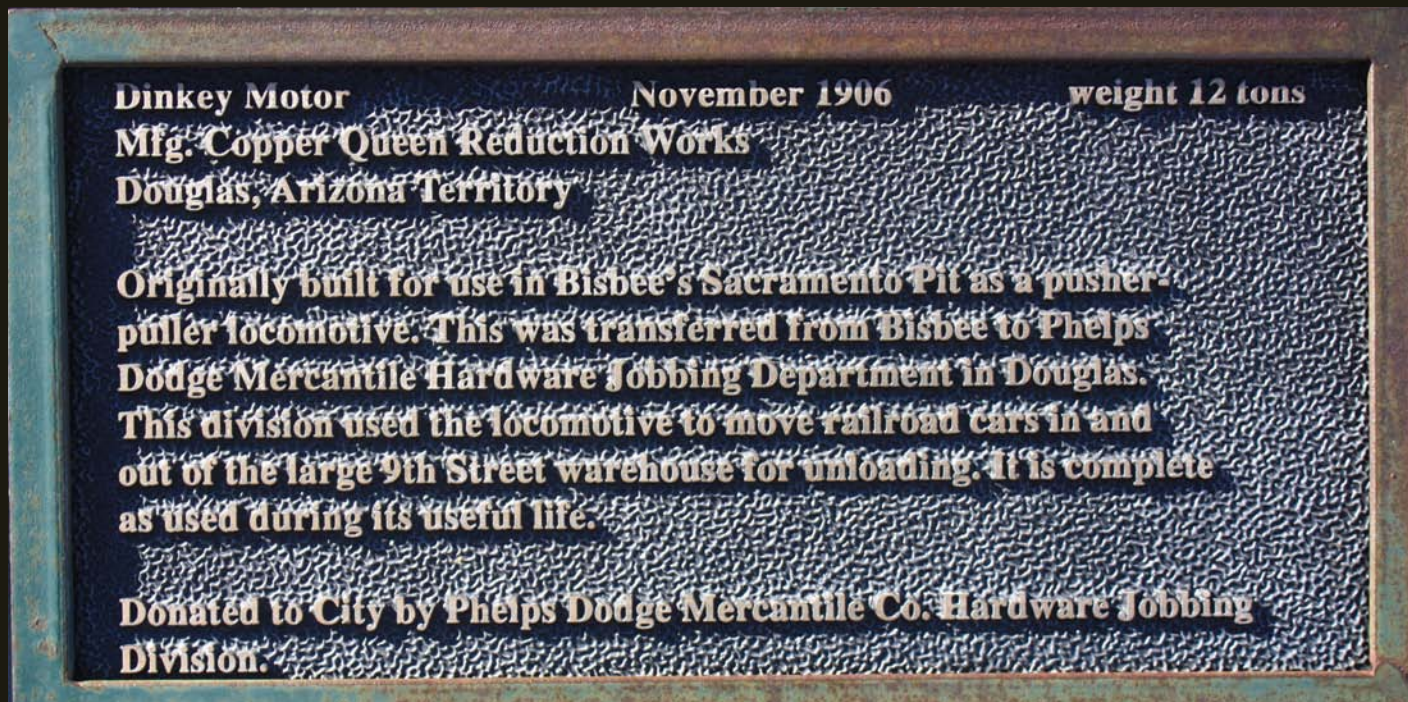


The Douglas depot has old equipment on display (1 of 4).



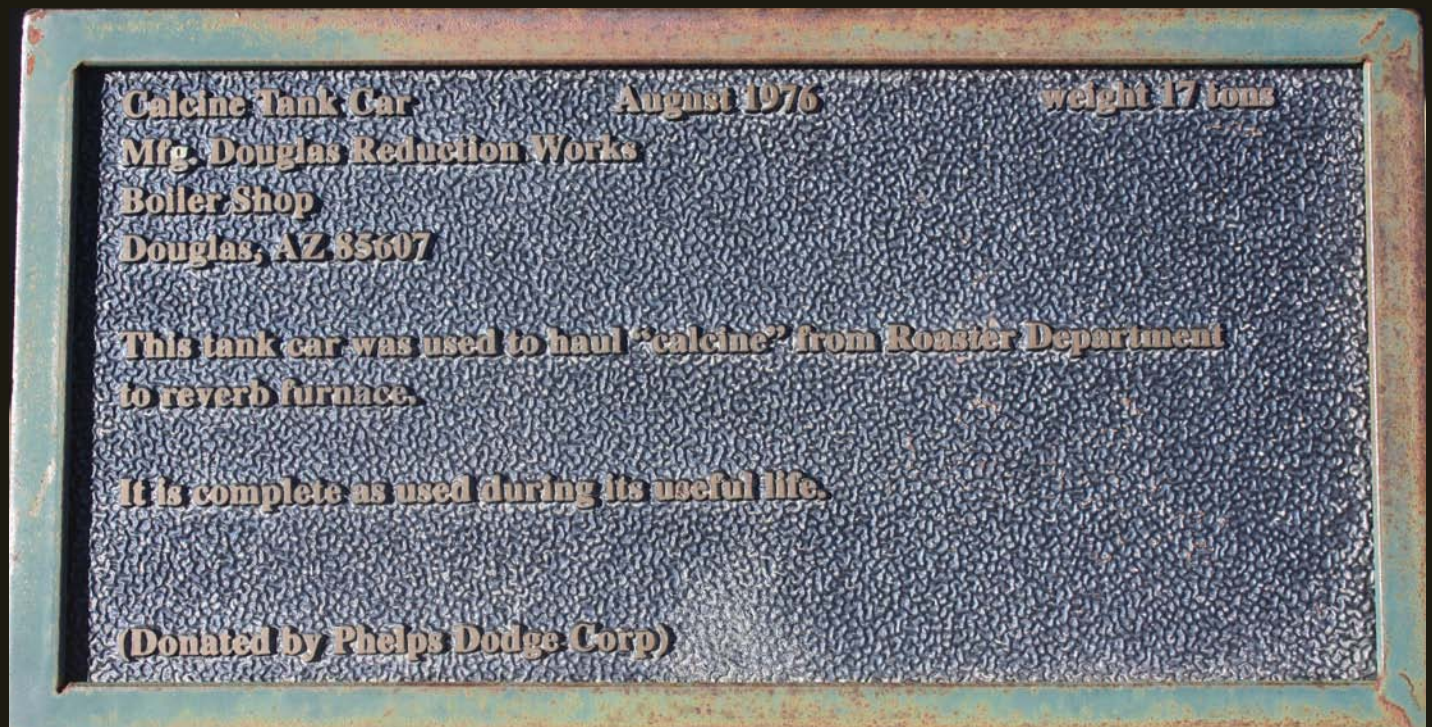


The Douglas depot has old equipment on display (2 of 4).





The Douglas depot has old equipment on display (3 of 4).





The Douglas depot has old equipment on display (4 of 4).

**Baldwin Electric Trolley Motor - Ser. No. 49858 - Sept. 1918 weight 19 tons  
Mfg. Westinghouse Electric Company  
Pittsburgh, PA**

**This locomotive was originally used in the Jerome - Clarkdale mining operation. When Jerome shut down it was transferred to the Douglas Reduction Works. This locomotive was used on the HI-line at D.R.W. to spot ore cars over bins for unloading. It is complete as used during its useful life.**

**(Donated by Phelps Dodge Corp.)**



Southwestward view of an empty lot in Douglas. The tower in the center distance is at the Depot; note that some of the historical equipment (previous four photos) is visible across the street. At the depot, the EP&SW alignment curves from an east-west orientation to head northeastward toward the viewer. The empty lot was once the wye for the Nacozari Railroad (1902).



Northeastward view of the same empty lot as previous. In 1902, the EP&SW built the 77-mile-long Nacozari Railroad due south from this location in Douglas to the Sonoran town of Nacozari de García, where the Moctezuma Copper Company (owned by Phelps-Dodge interests) operated mines.

From here we will first head south and explore the Nacozari (1902), then head northeast to explore the EP&SW and its connection with the Mexico & Colorado (1908).





Northward view of the abandoned Nacozari (1902) a half mile south of the previous location. The grade is now a rail-to-trail that follows the railroad grade from the Douglas Depot to the Mexican border. The building was built in 1905 by the EP&SW as a recreation facility for its employees and now is the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad YMCA.



Northwestward view of a small trestle for the abandoned Nacozari (1902) a mile south of the Douglas Depot. The grade is now a rail-to-trail that connects the Douglas Depot with the Mexican border, which is 1,000 feet farther south.



Southward view of the small trestle for the abandoned Nacozari (1902) a mile south of the Douglas Depot. The small trestle is the only sign that the rail-to-trail ever had a railroad. The border crossing facilities are visible in the distance. Tracks are still present on the Mexican side, but no longer extend all the way to Nacozari de García. One mile south of the border at Agua Prieta, Sonora, a line connects with the Nacozari (1902) and runs directly west along the border to a connection with the Naco-Cananea (1902) at Naco, Sonora. I could find no information about the history of this connecting railroad, but today it is part of Ferromex and may have been built when the EP&SW line between Douglas and Naco, Arizona, was abandoned around 2000.



Now we are a quarter mile northeast of the Douglas Depot and 500 feet north east of the empty lot junction with the Nacozari (1902), looking northeastward at the EP&SW (1902) grade. The grade crosses a small trestle over a tributary of Whitewater Draw, then widens out into a former rail yard. The foothills and snowcapped peaks of the Chiricahua Mountains are visible in the distance.



Westward view one mile northeast of the Douglas Depot and the junction with the Nacozari (1902). The EP&SW (1902) grade is the black ballast in the left part of the photo, extending toward the viewer from the woodpile in the upper left. The woodpile is right at the junction with the Mexico & Colorado (1908), which is the dirt road that extends from the woodpile to the right and out of view. The EP&SW built the M&C to access the copper mines in and around Courtland, Arizona. Construction on the M&C started at this location, called Pirtleville, where the alignment headed northeast, made a big 90 degree turn from northeast to northwest, then made the 40-mile straight shot across Sulfur Springs Valley to Courtland. Four miles shy of Courtland, the M&C crossed the SP's Arizona & Colorado (1909) at a location named Kelton. The M&C (1908) was later known as the EP&SW Courtland Branch. Production of copper declined in the 1920's and the SP (EP&SW successor) abandoned the Courtland Branch in 1932.



Southwestward view of the EP&SW (1902) – M&C (1908) junction. The junction is at the same woodpile and the EP&SW rail yard is visible beyond the woodpile. The EP&SW (1902) mainline extends to the left from the woodpile and is truncated at the far left by the embankment for North Leslie Canyon Road, and the M&C (1908) comes toward the viewer from the woodpile and it too is truncated by the road embankment.



Northeastward view of the EP&SW (1902) on the right and the M&C (1908) on the left. An old foundation is still present between the two.



Southwestward view of the junction at the woodpile. The EP&SW (1902) mainline is to the left and the M&C (1908) is on the right.





Southwestward view of the M&C (1908) showing detail of the roadbed.