



In 1908, the Southern Pacific Railroad began construction of the Arizona & Colorado Railroad to access the copper mines in and around Courtland, Arizona, which competitor El Paso & Southwestern accessed in the same year with its Mexico & Colorado Railroad, and also for the SP to reach Mexico (this was 2 years before the SP built its Tucson & Nogales line to Mexico). Construction on the A&C started at Cochise, on the SP's Sunset Route (1881), and headed south. The line reached a connection with the EP&SW's M&C (1908), later known as the EP&SW Courtland Branch, at a crossing named Kelton, 4 miles east of Courtland and 25 miles south of Cochise. Instead of building into Courtland, which the EP&SW's M&C had already accomplished, the A&C built to Gleeson, another mining center, via an 8 rail-miles line from Kelton to just south of Courtland and into Gleeson (not shown separately on the map). A&C construction continued southward in 1909, but before reaching Mexico, the president of the SP, E. H. Harriman, died. Progress on the line came to a halt a mere one mile shy of the would-be crossing of the EP&SW and 2 miles shy of the Mexican border. In 1910, the A&C became part of the SP subsidiary Arizona Eastern Railroad. While the northern half of the line between Cochise and Kelton/Gleeson was profitable, the southern half of the line, between Kelton and its abrupt ending in the middle of nowhere, never saw a train. After the 1924 consolidation by the SP, the active northern part of the former A&C became SP the Gleeson Branch. Production of copper began declining in the 1920's and was over by 1931 and the SP abandoned of the line soon after.

Westward view of the A&C (1909), 2 miles north of its southern terminus. The grade is hard to find, not surprisingly since the southern half of the A&C never saw service, and is visible here only because of the significant fill grade.