



In 1900, the El Paso & Northeastern Railroad formed the El Paso & Rock Island Railway to build from the EP&NE end-of-track at Carrizozo to Santa Rosa, New Mexico. The line was completed in February 1902 and met the Chicago, Rock & El Paso Railway, which marked the opening of a new transcontinental route. In 1905, the EP&NE properties were merged into the El Paso & Southwestern Railroad.

The Santa Fe Central Railway started as the Santa Fe Albuquerque & Pacific Railroad with grand plans to reach the west coast. The name was changed to SFC once the plans became more realistic, which was to connect Santa Fe to the El Paso & Rock Island at Torrance. The SFC was completed in 1903 and a few years later changed its name to New Mexico Central. In 1926, the AT&SF purchased the road and abandoned it in stages from 1928 to 1943.

The EP&RI built through the later location of Torrance, New Mexico, in 1901, and that is the line in this photo. The building is not occupied and is all that remains of Torrance. When I was poking around looking for the SFC grade, I was stopped by an at-first-upset cattle rancher who, it turned out, owned the land, and his grandparents had owned the Torrance store and served NMC passengers. He showed me the SFC (later NMC) grade.



The Torrance wye is preserved. The straight grade on the left is the SFC mainline, used now to support a utility pole as is often the case with old grades due to the soft digging. The SFC line goes northeast to the store, parallel to the EP&RI. The curved grade on the right is one arm of the wye where SFC, and later NMC, steam engines used to turn around to head back to Santa Fe. The other leg of the wye is barely discernable between the junipers in the distance.



Slightly different view of the Torrance wye; the SFC mainline is on the left and the curved wye is on the right.



The abandoned SFC grade involving a significant fill, and the parallel EP&RI (now UP) line behind it to the southeast.