



The Mexico & Colorado Railroad was built in 1908 in order to provide parent company El Paso & Southwestern Railroad access to the copper mines in and around Courtland, Arizona, about 15 miles east of Tombstone. This line also served as a strategic move by the EP&SW against the Southern Pacific, which was seeking to build a line from their transcontinental Sunset Route (1881) at Cochise, Arizona, southward to Mexico. The SP's line from Cochise was built as the Arizona & Colorado Railroad, which in 1909 stopped construction one mile shy of the would-be crossing of the EP&SW and 2 miles shy of the Mexican border. If completed, the A&C/SP line would have been devastating to the EP&SW, which had no competition along the Mexican border. The EP&SW built its M&C line from their yards in Douglas to Courtland via Kelton, where the M&C (1908) crossed the A&C (1909). The copper mines at Courtland began declining in the late 1920's and the SP, having leased the entire EP&SW in 1924, abandoned the M&C in 1932. The town of Courtland, prosperous during the mining boom, is now a ghost town.

Northeastward view of the M&C (1908) 12 miles northwest of Douglas. Note the abrupt front of the Swissheim Mountains in the distance. The very flat topography of the Sulphur Springs Valley is indicative of an ancient lakebed. Note also the black ballast, which is broken up slag from mines along the EP&SW route.



Eastward view of a fill grade on the M&C (1908) 10 miles northwest of Douglas. The low hills are the Swissheim Mountains and the snowcapped peaks beyond are the Chiricahua Mountains.



Northeastward view of a fill grade, overgrown with mesquite, on the M&C (1908) 8 miles northwest of Douglas.