



The Arizona & South Eastern Railroad was built in 1888-1889 by Phelps-Dodge to connect its copper mines at Bisbee, Arizona, with the national rail network via the AT&SF-controlled New Mexico & Arizona Railroad 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 1901, the A&SE was renamed the El Paso & Southwestern Railroad, which extended the line west from the A&SE (1889) line at Bisbee Junction, through this location near Animas, New Mexico, to El Paso, Texas, in 1902, and to Tucson in 1912 to bypass the SP entirely. 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 (including this location). The SP purchased the EP&SW from Phelps-Dodge in 1955. In the early 1960's, the SP abandoned the South Line between Douglas, Arizona, and El Paso (including this location), leaving the trackage from Benson to Douglas and Bisbee.

The best preserved EP&SW-built grades are in southeast Arizona and southwest New Mexico west of Hachita. East of Hachita, the grade is mostly under NM Highway 9. This culvert and fill grade carries the EP&SW grade over a wash near Animas.



This modern-looking bridge may have been built by the SP. The EP&SW grade, as well as the nearby SP grade, have the easiest and lowest crossings of the continental divide of any place in the U.S.