



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 reached in the same year with its Mexico & Colorado Railroad, and 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 24 miles to this location and one more mile to a crossing with the EP&SW's M&C (1908) at Kelton, 4 miles east of Courtland. 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-mile line from Kelton (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 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 Gleeson (including this location) was profitable, the southern half of the line, between Kelton and its abrupt ending in the middle of nowhere, never saw a train. The active northern part of the former A&C became the SP the Gleeson Branch. Production of copper began declining in the 1920's and A&C and M&C were abandoned in the 1930's.

Northward view of the A&C (1909) grade, 1 mile north of the M&C (1908) crossing at Kelton.



Southward view of the A&C (1909) grade at the same location as previous. The M&C (1908) crossing at Kelton is one mile down the line on private property.



Southeastward view of the M&C (1908), one mile west of the previous location on the A&C (1909) and 4 miles southeast of Courtland.



Northwestward view of the M&C (1908), same location as previous: one mile west of the A&C (1909) and 4 miles shy of Courtland. Courtland is in the foothills of the Dragoon Mountains, which are visible in the distance.



Two miles southeast of Courtland the M&C branches. The mainline continues northeast, then makes two large curves to follow the drainage west into Courtland. The branch line heads southwest from a wye and makes three large curves around mountain slopes to approach Courtland from the south. This northward view shows the first of the large curves of the M&C branch line cut into the lower slope of the distant hill.



Eastward view of the M&C (1908) "main line" as it approaches Courtland. The Maid of Sunshine Mine, the primary mine at Courtland, was down this road and on the right, but I didn't explore that area.



Westward view of the M&C (1908), at the same location as previous, where a significant rock cut was required. The end of the line was less than a quarter mile up from here.



This was the only building I could find in Courtland, and my search for "Courtland" using Google Maps dropped a pin at this building. This building is 1,000 feet from the M&C (1908) mainline and even farther from the branch line; I'm not really sure where Courtland was and this building could be post-railroad.