



The Chili Line, officially known as the Santa Fe Branch, was a narrow gauge branch of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad. It ran 126 miles from Antonito, Colorado, south to Santa Fe, New Mexico, and was nicknamed for its freight of prominently New Mexico chili peppers. The D&RG began construction of the line in 1880 from Antonito, Colorado, and in the same year completed the line to Española, New Mexico, only 35 miles shy of Santa Fe. However, the D&RG could not build any farther because of an agreement with the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. Española was the end of the line until 1886, when the Texas, Santa Fe & Northern Railroad completed the line from Española to Santa Fe. The D&RG acquired the TSF&N in 1895. In 1903, the D&RGW and the standard gauge New Mexico Central Railway opened the Santa Fe Union Station on a site adjacent to the AT&SF depot. The D&RGW closed the Chili Line in 1941 and proposed reusing some of the line's infrastructure for use on a railroad along the Burma Road in Southeast Asia to support the World War II effort. The narrow gauge Chili Line/Santa Fe Branch was dismantled in 1942.

This water tower is on the D&RG Chili Line/Santa Fe Branch at Tres Piedras, New Mexico.



Closer view of the Tres Piedras water tower; the grade is not discernable in this view.



A cut grade filled with abandoned cars marks the D&RG Chili Line/Santa Fe grade next to the Tres Piedras water tower.