



In 1887, the Prescott & Arizona Central Railroad was the first railroad to reach Prescott, the territorial capital of Arizona and a major mining center. The P&AC ran southeastward from the Atlantic & Pacific (AT&SF) mainline at Seligman to Paulden, very near (within a mile) of the location of this photo, then southward to Prescott. The P&AC only lasted several years, in part because of poor construction; the road was so poorly constructed that there is virtually no evidence of its existence today (except for the section in Railroad Canyon just south of Seligman) and I found trace of the P&AC around Paulden.

The P&AC was completely obsolete by 1893, after only 6 years of service, when the southward-building, AT&SF-controlled Santa Fe, Prescott & Phoenix Railroad arrived in Prescott from a junction with the A&P at Ash Fork. The SFP&P continued on through to Phoenix, where it arrived in 1895. The SFP&P was known as the "Peavine" railroad because of its winding route. The SFP&P route ran south from Ash Fork and met the PA&C at Paulden, near this location, then continued south to Prescott running parallel and just east of the P&AC alignment. In the above northeastward view at Paulden, the 1895 SFP&P route is represented by the bolted track in the foreground and continues northeastward with upgraded welded track.

The welded track to the left (northwest) is on a new grade built in 1962, when the AT&SF re-routed the SFP&P around Prescott. The junction in the distance is the north end of the circumvented trackage, shown in the foreground. Beyond the junction to the northeast, the bolted track continues as a siding for a mile and a half. The remaining trackage south to Prescott was abandoned in 1984, leaving the bolted tracks in the foreground and tracks on the Granite Creek Bridge in Prescott as the only remaining SFP&P trackage I could find on the circumvented route.



Same northeastward view as previous, but from the opposite side of the tracks. The welded track to the left (northwest) is on the new grade built in 1962, when the AT&SF re-routed the SFP&P around Prescott. The junction is the north end of the circumvented trackage, seen on the left. Beyond the junction to the northeast, the bolted 1893 track continues as a siding for a mile and half, then goes to a single track on the SFP&P grade to the AT&SF (now BNSF) mainline at Ash Fork.



Southwestward view at same location as previous. The welded track that curves to the right (west) is the 1962 grade. The bolted track to the left is the northern end of the SFP&P route that was circumvented in 1962.



Northward view a few hundred feet west of the previous location. The welded track in the distance is the 1962 grade. The near bolted track is the part of the SFP&P route that was circumvented in 1962.



The circumvented SFP&P (1895) tracks were removed up to this point in 1984. The welded track in the distance is the new 1962 grade.



Same location as previous; the black basalt ballast is all that remains of the original SFP&P route that was circumvented in 1962. The welded track to the right is the 1962 grade.



SFP&P grade at Paulden, a quarter mile south of the end of track (previous photo). These ties are probably SFP&P ties pulled up from this grade in 1984.



The SFP&P crosses the Verde River on this bridge 2 miles south of Paulden (previous photo).





Northward view of the SFP&P crossing of the Verde River 2 miles south of Paulden (same bridge as previous photo). Note the juniper forest, typical of the 4,000-foot elevation of this location.



SFP&P crossing of the Verde River, same location as previous looking east (downstream). The river cuts into thick basalt flows that underlie much of the valley.



Same view as previous looking over the side of the bridge. Note the potholes eroded into the hard basalt by the Verde River during stronger flows.



SFP&P crossing of the Verde River, same location as previous looking west (upstream) to a low dam and Sullivan Lake. The concrete bridge is Arizona Highway 89.



The fill grade in the middle distance is the abandoned SFP&P grade 5 miles south of Paulden (3 miles south of previous photo).



Another view of the SFP&P fill grade 5 miles south of Paulden (same location as previous photo).