



One of the most famous railroad “wars” occurred in 1878-1879 between the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway and the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad for access to Raton Pass and thus to Santa Fe, the Rio Grande, and ultimately El Paso, Texas, and Mexico. The AT&SF got Raton Pass, which it ultimately leveraged to access California as well as Mexico. In exchange, the D&RG got the Royal Gorge (Arkansas River) route and became the mountain railroad. The AT&SF built over Raton Pass and entered New Mexico under the name New Mexico & Southern Pacific Railroad, which reached this point near Lamy, New Mexico, in 1880, and met the Southern Pacific at Deming, New Mexico, in 1881. After 1908, the Eastern Railway of New Mexico, together with the AT&SF’s Atlantic & Pacific Railroad, became the AT&SF’s (now BNSF’s) primary transcontinental route. In 2006, the State of New Mexico purchased the segment of the 1881 AT&SF/NM&SP line between Raton Pass and Belen, where the ERNM mainline crosses the line, with the BNSF retaining operating rights. Amtrak leases passenger service over the line for its Southwest Chief trains between Chicago and Los Angeles.

The Raton Pass route is still bolted (not welded) rail, as seen here near Lamy. When an Amtrak train comes through, it makes the clink-clink clink-clink clink-clink of bolted rails and of a bygone era.





The first Lamy Depot was a two-story frame structure built in 1881, which in 1909 was replaced by the current Mission Style building to match the Santa Fe Depot. A tower was removed in 1933 and the building was remodeled in 1941.







Another view of the Lamy Depot.





Famously, the AT&SF main line never reached to Santa Fe. Instead, an 18-mile branch was built from Galisteo Junction (later re-named Lamy) north to Santa Fe, where the rails arrived on February 9, 1880. In this southwestward view of the rail yard at Lamy, the far track that curves to the right is the branch line to Santa Fe.





Closer view of the branch line to Santa Fe. In 1992, the AT&SF sold the branch line to the Santa Fe Southern Railway. The engine in the upper right pulls excursion trains of the Santa Fe Southern Railway, which makes the 18-mile run between Lamy and Santa Fe. Note that this branch of the Lamy wye is no longer usable.





The branch line to Santa Fe just outside Lamy hasn't seen recent use, and in 2015 when this photo was taken, the Santa Fe Southern Railway web page said the line is not operating. In 2008, 128 years after it was first built, the northern 4 miles of the 18-mile branch line became part of the New Mexico Rail Runner Express commuter rail corridor between Santa Fe and Albuquerque and was upgraded to welded rail with concrete ties.