



The Arizona & South Eastern Railroad was built in 1888-1889 by Phelps-Dodge to connect its copper mines at Bisbee, Arizona (in the distant hills), with the national rail network via the AT&SF-controlled New Mexico & Arizona Railroad (1882) 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 early 1901, the A&SE built a branch line from Corta Junction (located 3 miles south of Bisbee and 2 miles down the line in the above photo) 20 miles east to its new smelter at Douglas. Later in 1901, the A&SE was renamed the El Paso & Southwestern Railroad, which in 1901-1902 built eastward from Douglas to El Paso (this line and the 20 mile A&SE line from Corta Junction to Douglas is labeled EP&SW (1902) on the SWRRH map). In 1904, the EP&SW realigned the former A&SE track southwest of Bisbee to circumvent the Mule Mountains; the new alignment ran 3 miles south of Corta Junction, so a new 3-mile branch (including this location) was built from the new Bisbee Junction to Corta Junction.

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. The 7 mile line from Bisbee Junction on the SP South Line to Bisbee, including this location, became the SP Bisbee Branch. The SP purchased the EP&SW from Phelps-Dodge in 1955. In the early 1960's, the SP abandoned most of the South Line, leaving the trackage from Benson to Bisbee and Douglas. Around 1993, the SP sold the remaining trackage to the short line San Pedro & Southwestern Railroad, which operated freight and excursions for a while but in the early 2000's abandoned the line almost all the way back to Benson.

Northward view of the EP&SW (1904) Bisbee Branch, 5 miles south of Bisbee, which is nestled in the Mule Mountains in the distance, and 2 miles north of Bisbee Junction.





Southward view of the EP&SW Bisbee Branch in (1904) at the same location as the previous photo.





Southward view at the north end of Bisbee Junction, 2 miles south of the previous location. The junction was configured as a typical wye for a branch line. The EP&SW (1904) mainline runs east-west just on the other side of the water tank.





Southwestward view of the west branch of the wye at Bisbee Junction. The mainline grade is visible in the right distance, and remnants of ties and other railroad debris are in the left foreground.





Eastward view of the abandoned yard in Bisbee Junction. The west branch of the wye is visible in the upper left. Same water tank as before and a useful reference point. Old pavement is still present in the yard.





Westward view from the west end of the abandoned yard at Bisbee Junction. This is on the EP&SW (1904) re-alignment.





Northward view of the abandoned yard is Bisbee Junction. Same water tank as before. Old curbs and covered vaults raise more questions than they answer.



Eastward view of the east end of the abandoned yard at Bisbee Junction. This is the point at which the EP&SW commenced its eastward construction to El Paso in 1901 and is likely when the wye was laid out. Note the bridge that separates the EP&SW (1904) railroad grade from that of South Bisbee Junction Road.





Northwestward view of the east branch of the wye at Bisbee Junction.





Some old foundations and the water tower at Bisbee Junction.