



Famously, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe mainline, which in New Mexico was built under the name New Mexico & Southern Pacific, never reached Santa Fe. Instead, an 18-mile branch was built from Galisteo Junction (later re-named Lamy) north to Santa Fe (this location), where the rails arrived on February 9, 1880. In 1992, the AT&SF sold the branch line to the Santa Fe Southern Railway. In 2008, 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. As of 2015 when this photo was taken, the Santa Fe Southern Railway web page said the line is not operating. Since the Rail Runner came to Santa Fe in 2008, the Santa Fe Rail Yard District has become a trendy area, anchored by railroad passengers and rail enthusiasts and followed by shoppers and tourists drawn by the District's amenities.

This southward view shows the 1880 Santa Fe Branch near the end-of-track in the trendy the Santa Fe Rail Yard District. Around the bend toward Lamy starts the 2008 upgrade to welded rail with concrete ties, but the old bolted tracks are still present within in the Rail Yard District.



The AT&SF built the Santa Fe Depot as soon as the branch from Lamy arrived in 1880. The AT&SF ceased passenger train service to Santa Fe and replaced it with a motorcoach to take passengers to mainline trains at Lamy, which in turn was phased out in favor of busses and cars. In 1992, the Santa Fe Southern purchased the branch line and the depot, and passenger rail service was restored as a tourist operation (but temporarily closed as of 2015). Since 2008, the depot has served as the northern terminus of the Rail Runner line, which extends southward from this point to Belen. A Rail Runner train is visible on the far left.

A second depot was once located 100 feet southeast of the AT&SF Depot (to the right of this photo). This second station was shared by two railroads, the Denver & Rio Grande's narrow gauge Chili Line, which arrived from the north in 1886, and the standard gauge Santa Fe Central Railway, which arrived from the south in 1903. The Station was called Union Depot and was constructed in 1904, when the SFC arrived. The Union Depot featured a five-track yard with mostly dual gauge track. On the west side were some narrow gauge spurs and an interchange track to the AT&SF yard. Both of these railroads and their yards were dismantled in the 1940's and the depot found other uses. In the 1990's, a turntable shared by the Chili Line and the SFC was unearthed during a construction excavation.

The Union Depot is now Tomasita's Restaurant. It's web page states "Tomasita's resides in the 100 year old red brick building that was once home to the famous Chile Line ... its seven hour run from Antonito to Santa Fe through mountain, mesa, and river valley connected villages, pueblos, towns and cultures. The D&RG was the timekeeper, the newspaper, the friend of children, and the transporter of local goods – lumber, pinon, wool, chili and fruit. Due to the decline in the demand for lumber, track on the line was greatly reduced in the 30's. On September 1, 1941, the Chili Line left the Guadalupe Station on its last northbound run. Today the red-brick station house, constructed in 1904, still stands. It now houses Tomasita's!"





SFS rolling stock in the Santa Fe Rail Yard.



The active track is to the right, but notice the old track to the far left, a vestige of the once-expansive AT&SF-D&RG-SFC (and their successors') rail yard.



More old track in the Santa Fe Rail Yard District, left in place for decorative purposes.



A Rail Runner Express awaits passengers, a ritual that dates back to 1880 in the Santa Fe Rail Yard.



Northward view of the end of the NM&SP Santa Fe Branch (1880), 300 feet north of the Santa Fe Depot.



Now we have moved 4 miles south of the Santa Fe Rail Yard District and the NM&SP Santa Fe Branch (1880) end of track. We are looking northward at the NM&SP Santa Fe Branch (1880), where the multiple tracks, wooden ties and bolted rails in the District have given way to a single track upgraded to concrete ties and welded track for the New Mexico Rail Runner Express.





Southward view at the same location as previous. The single track in the right foreground is same track as in the previous photo: the NM&SP Santa Fe Branch (1880) upgraded to concrete ties and welded track for the New Mexico Rail Runner Express. Beyond the switch, the left branch is the non-upgraded NM&SP Santa Fe Branch (1880) to Lamy (on the NM&SP (1881) mainline) and the right branch is a new 2008 alignment for the New Mexico Rail Runner Express.



Closer southward view of the non-upgraded NM&SP Santa Fe Branch (1880) to Lamy (left/east) and the New Mexico Rail Runner Express (2008) (right/west).



Northward view 300 feet south of the previous location. The non-upgraded NM&SP Santa Fe Branch (1880) is in the foreground with wooden ties and bolted rails and the New Mexico Rail Runner Express (2008) is to its left with concrete ties and welded rail on a new (2008) grade.



Westward view at the same location as previous. The non-upgraded NM&SP Santa Fe Branch (1880) is in the foreground and the New Mexico Rail Runner Express (2008) is behind it.



Southward view at the same location as previous. The NM&SP Santa Fe Branch (1880) is in the left foreground, now owned by the Santa Fe Southern Railway, and the New Mexico Rail Runner Express (2008) is to its right.