



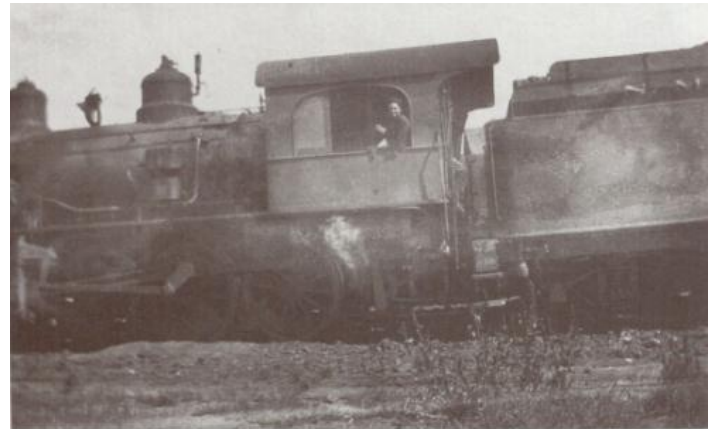
Railroads of the Llano: New Mexico Central Railroad (1903-1926)



The **New Mexico Central Railroad** was a standard-gauge railroad between Santa Fe and Torrance County nicknamed the “**Frijoles Line**.” The line struggled to compete with the Santa Fe line for freight and passenger traffic. It carried agricultural products north to Santa Fe and provided local passenger service to Stanley and Estancia as well as a long-distance connection via the Southern Pacific RR (along what is now US54) and the Rock Island Line to Chicago.

The line was operated as the **Santa Fe Central Railroad** from 1903-08. It was based in Estancia, but built a joint depot in the Santa Fe Railyard in 1904 with the **Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad**, the narrow-gauge line whose local “Santa Fe Branch” to Antonito, Colo., was also known as the “**Chili Line**” (see photo at right). That depot, known as Union Station, was located in the building currently housing Tomasita’s Restaurant. Because trains using the station and associated railyards were of two different gauges (widths), there were three rails to accommodate trains along each track.

All together, the New Mexico Central line was active to Santa Fe for only 23 years, until 1926, when it was purchased in full and retired in segments, starting in Santa Fe, by the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad. The railroad right-of-way between Santa Fe’ “West Railyard” (near Baca St.) and the junction with the AT&SF line at Kennedy, near Galisteo, was abandoned in 1929.

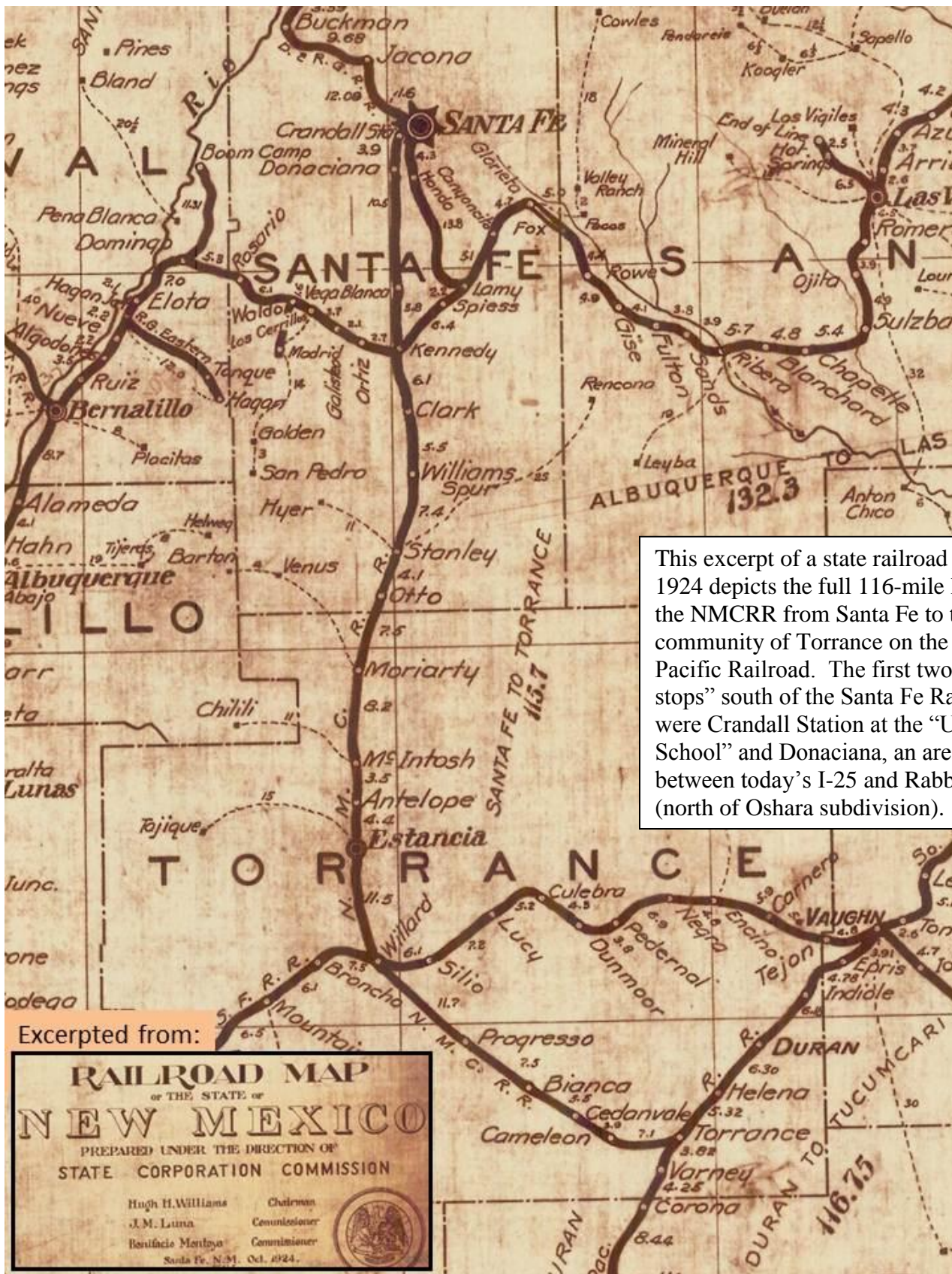


The New Mexico Central had a mixture of second-hand locomotives. This one, built for the El Paso and Northeastern by Baldwin, was acquired in 1919. The curved cab window confirms prior EP&NE ownership. Photograph H. J. Maxwell Collection.

Photo above of NMCRR locomotive, with caption, and photo below are both from Richard Dorman, *The Chili Line and Santa Fe the City Different* (Third Printing, 2000).



The “Chili Line,” Santa Fe’s better known abandoned railroad, ran north to Colorado from 1887 to 1941. It shared its station in the Santa Fe Railyard with the NMCRR between 1904-26. Shown here near Diablo Canyon, the Chili Line was in fact the Santa Fe Branch of the same narrow-gauge rail network that continues to run tourist trains between Chama, NM, and Antonito, Colo., and between Durango and Silverton, Colo.



This excerpt of a state railroad map from 1924 depicts the full 116-mile length of the NMCRR from Santa Fe to the community of Torrance on the Southern Pacific Railroad. The first two “whistle stops” south of the Santa Fe Rail yard were Crandall Station at the “U.S. Indian School” and Donaciana, an area located between today’s I-25 and Rabbit Rd. (north of Oshara subdivision).

Excerpted from:



Remnants of the grade of the New Mexico Central Railroad remain visible and accessible as part of the **Acequia Trail** north of the New Mexico School for the Deaf, Flagman Way in the West Railyard, and along the **“District Trail”** in Rancho Viejo.



The “Acequia Trail” behind the **New Mexico School for the Deaf** was built directly on top of the old NMCRR rail bed along the Acequia Madre, just west of St. Francis Dr. Thus trail users on bicycles, roller blades, and other rolling devices take advantage of careful engineering for wheels that was done over a century ago. (Photo by Tim Rogers, from Santa Fe Metropolitan Bicycle Master Plan, 2012)

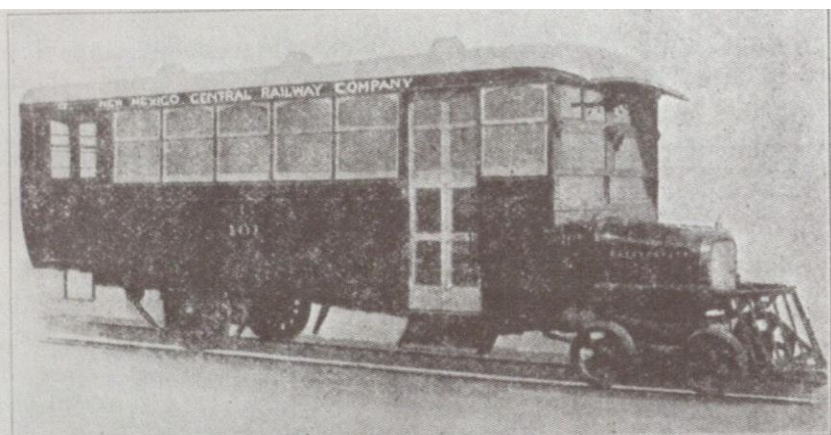


The “District Trail” through **Rancho Viejo**, south of Santa Fe, is part of a vision of a greater New Mexico Central Rail Trail that could run from Rabbit Rd. to Eldorado and beyond to Galisteo. Although heavily eroded, the old NMCRR rail bed is clearly visible to the right in this recent photo. (Photo by Tim Rogers, from Santa Fe Metropolitan Bicycle Master Plan, 2012)



9374 A.T.&S.F. depot at Kennedy, junction with the New Mexico Central, ca. 1915. By T. Harmon Parkhurst.

Having been removed from its original location west of Galisteo, the station shown in this photo is better known today as the “Eldorado Clubhouse.” Photo by T. Harmon Parkhurst from Vernon Glover, “The Railroad Collection, Volume 1” (Museum of New Mexico, 1977), available at the reference desk at LaFarge Library.



Type of Gasoline Cars used between Torrance and Santa Fe, New Mexico



45178 New Mexico Central motor car used in passenger and mail service, 1921-1926. Seen at Santa Fe. By George Law.

Two images of the gas-powered “Mack Railbus” that used to ply the “New Mexico Central Railway,” as it was called during its final years. Bottom photo by George Law from Vernon Glover, “The Railroad Collection, Volume 1” (Museum of New Mexico, 1977), available at the reference desk at LaFarge Library.

Santa Fe County is currently taking steps to extend a public trail alignment along the old New Mexico Central rail bed 2.5 miles south to Eldorado. The Santa Fe Metropolitan Bicycle Master Plan, approved in April 2012, envisions a greater, five-mile **New Mexico Central Rail Trail** to include existing trails in Rancho Viejo and on the campus of Santa Fe Community College, the extension south to Eldorado, and a planned extension north along the NMCRRA railbed through Oshara to Rabbit Rd.

The **Northeast Branch of Arroyo de los Pinos** appears to have been realigned onto its current route between Hopewell St. and the SFUAD campus along the abandoned railbed of the New Mexico Central Railroad in conjunction with the construction of the Brunn Hospital in the early 1940s. This straightened stretch of the ditch was subsequently covered over in the development of retail areas around St. Michael’s Dr. in the 1970s-80s **Re-Mike** is reviving the Northeast Branch as a transportation alignment through the creation of a temporary “**Arroyo de los Pinos Trail**” straddling St. Michael’s Dr. between Hopewell St. and Siringo Rd. The trail uses the signalized crosswalk at Llano St. to patch the one-time “llano” area back together again, creating unprecedented connectivity for bicyclists and pedestrians between the residential areas, retail services, and academic campuses surrounding St. Michael’s Village West.



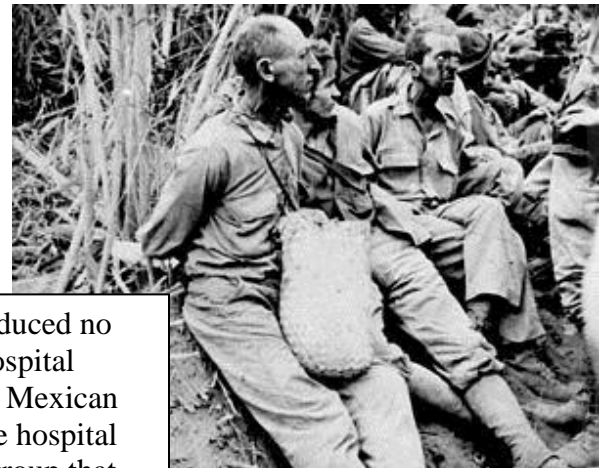
Railroads of the Llano: Brunn Army Hospital Rail Line



The Brunn Army Hospital Rail Line was built by the U.S. Army in about 1942 to provide rail access to the new Brunn Hospital, now the campus of the Santa Fe University of Art and Design, from the main Santa Fe rail line. It carried New Mexican soldiers to and from posts during World War II and its aftermath, including hospital patients. Active until approximately 1946, the rail line was one of the last new rail spurs to be built before motor vehicle traffic overshadowed the use of trains for local transportation in our area.



One of many “barrack” buildings remaining on the SFUAD campus that date back to the early 1940s as part of the Brunn Army Hospital. This one is located next to the Santa Fe Art Institute. These buildings were not meant to last this long but despite long-standing plans for imminent destruction, they still stand (Photo by Tim Rogers).



Initial research has produced no photos of the Brunn Hospital Army Line nor of New Mexican soldiers returning to the hospital from World War II, a group that including Bataan Death March survivors (photo above right from May 1942, National Archives).

Some arrivals to the Brunn Hospital were not New Mexicans but soldiers from elsewhere in the country that were suffering from tuberculosis and sent to our Rocky Mountain desert climate for recovery. The guard in the upper left of the photo at left appears to be the author's uncle, William Dannemiller, who served at the Nuremburg Trials in Germany in late 1945. Bill Dannemiller died of TB at Brunn Army Hospital on April 26, 1946 at age 22. His possessions were returned to his family in Ohio by a nurse whose last name was Baca. (Excerpt of a famous photo of the Nuremburg trials that appeared in NY Times, 11/12/1995, p. 37)



Left: The Brunn Army Hospital Railroad Line just west of the Rail Trail, with Arroyo de los Pinos at far right. This stretch was once well-known as part of the informal Rail Trail along the Santa Fe Southern line, and it remains a popular route for walkers and bikers. A trail connection is planned to the cul-de-sac at left (Calle Sombra) but the remainder of the railbed may soon be lost to development (see photo below, from 5th St.)



The Brunn Hospital line featured a triangular junction with the Santa Fe Southern line at the Arroyo de los Pinos that is still visible today just south of St. Michael's Dr. The remaining railroad grades provide fun and useful informal trail connections from today's Rail Trail to Calle Sombra, Camino Lado, and Fifth St.

Santa Fe Southern Railroad

The **Santa Fe Southern Railroad**, also known as the Santa Fe spur of the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, is an 18-mile-long active line that skirts the foothills of the southernmost Rocky Mountains in our area, along the eastern edge of the "llano" between Santa Fe and the Galisteo Basin. The line was established in 1880 through contributions by private citizens after it had become clear that the main line of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad was going to simply bypass Santa Fe. Today, the rail line carries the Santa Fe Southern excursion train to Lamy as well as the NM Rail Runner commuter train to Albuquerque, via new rail alignment diverging from the Santa FE Southern within the median of I-25.



The Santa Fe Southern excursion train rounds a bend on its 18-mile route to Lamy (Photo from Santa Fe Southern Railroad, www.sfsr.com).

The Santa Fe Southern alignment includes a ¾-mile stretch of paved multi-use trail from the Santa Fe Railyard to Pen Rd. and a 3.6-mile stretch from Alta Vista St. to Rabbit Rd. South of Rabbit Rd. is the County's 11.6-mile, soft-surface Rail Trail providing access to Arroyo Hondo, the Spur Trail to SFCC, Eldorado, Galisteo Basin Preserve Trails, and Lamy.

Pasó por acá...

New Mexico Central Railroad

...ran here,

1903 –
1926

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information, come to

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Type of Gasoline Cars used between Torrance and Santa Fe, New Mexico

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Pasó por acá...

Brunn Army Hospital Rail Line

...ran here, c. 1942-46

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Brunn Hospital
(SFUAD)

Future Site of
LaFarge
Library 

Brunn Hospital Line

AT&SF RR
(SF Southern)



Roads of the Llano



St. Michael's Dr. (NM466)

St. Michael's Dr. is an arterial state highway that spans 2.3 miles from Cerrillos Rd. to Old Pecos Trail. It features six travel lanes, a median with left-turn bays, and wide sidewalks, typically with a buffer zone, west of Pacheco St. East of Galisteo St., St. Michael's Dr. has four travel lanes, a median with left-turn bays, bike lanes interspersed with right-turn bays, and sidewalks. In between Pacheco and Galisteo is the expansive grade-separated interchange with St. Francis Dr.



St. Michael's Dr. was built across the undeveloped "llano" south of Santa Fe in the mid-1950s as a two-lane road tying in to Cerrillos Rd. just northeast of the College of Santa Fe at Osage Ave., the main thoroughfare of the brand-new Casa Alegre subdivision to the north. St. Michael's Dr. was widened in the 1960s and the highway's major interchange was added when St. Francis Dr. was constructed.

Today, wide sidewalks extend the length of the highway on either side of St. Michael's Dr. except at the interchange with St. Francis Dr. As a state highway, St. Michael's Dr. joins Old Pecos Trail under the designation of "NM466" to create a four-mile facility that connects southeast to Old Las Vegas Highway, I-25, and Rabbit Rd.

Roughly 15-20,000 motor vehicles travel along St. Michael's Dr. in each direction every day at the signalized intersection with Llano St., according to estimates for 2006 by the New Mexico Dept. of Transportation.



Roads South through the Llano



Cerrillos Rd. (NM14) has long served as a major route from downtown Santa Fe to points southwest, including Cerrillos as well as Albuquerque. After taking over the function of the old Camino Real from the south, it became part of U.S. Route 66 from 1926 to 1937. It was subsequently designated as NM14. Although Cerrillos Rd. remains a state highway, the City of Santa Fe has taken on considerable responsibilities in the operation and maintenance of the road

Llano St. originally connected Cerrillos Rd. – then known as U.S. Route 66 – to Santa Fe’s first municipal airport just south of the Arroyo de los Chamisos, in the current location of Ragle Park. The road was severed by the widening of St. Michael’s Dr. in the 1960s, and re-aligned into two separate intersections with the state highway. Llano St. was also re-aligned to the east at Siringo Rd., where it no longer lines up with its apparent historic alignment along Yucca St.



Getting’ Fixed on Route 66:

Route 66 through Santa Fe in 1926-37 spanned Old Pecos Trail to the plaza and out Cerrillos Rd. It was not the smooth highway to get your Kicks on, as in the Bobby Troup hit, but rather the dirt road of the dustbowl refugees that were the subjects of John Steinbeck’s “Grapes of Wrath” and countless Woody Guthrie songs. Photo: “Drought refugee family from McAlester, Oklahoma. Arrived in California October,” photographed by Dorothea Lange (Library of Congress).

Road to Galisteo. Pieces of the old road from downtown Santa Fe to Galisteo can still be traveled as Galisteo St. north of Siringo Rd., Galisteo Rd. south of W. Zia St., and Old Galisteo Rd. and Old Galisteo Way in Santa Fe County, south of Rabbit Rd. Well before the road alignment was severed in several places by the construction of St. Francis Dr. and I-25 in the late 1960s, the preferred route for motor vehicle traffic to the Galisteo area was to head southeast from Santa Fe, as is done today via I-25 and US285. Remains of the old paved road can be found north of the Arroyo de los Chamisos and the Rail Trail, just west of St. Francis Dr. south of Siringo Rd.

St. Francis Dr. (US84/285) is a major arterial state highway that was built around 1970 in order to provide Santa Fe with a major north-south through route between the city's main route north and routes east and southwest via I-25. Today, most of the alignment has six travel lanes and sidewalks, but no bike lanes. The **St. Francis Dr. Trail**, completed in 2012, follows the east side of the state highway between W. Zia Rd. and St. Michael's Dr., providing connections to Galisteo St. and the Rail Trail, via the Gail Ryba Trail underpass, that effectively re-establish the local alignment of the "Old Road to Galisteo" for bicyclists and pedestrians.



The Gail Ryba Trail's St. Francis Dr. underpass (above), completed earlier in 2012, combines with the St. Francis Dr. Trail and the Rail Trail to effectively re-create the old Galisteo Rd. alignment for bicyclists and pedestrians. (Photo by Tim Rogers)