

THE MESILLA FILES

CASE FILE NO. 9

The Lost Trains of the Old Desert

Case Number: MF-009

Classification: Historical Investigation

Status: Open

First Recorded: Late 1800s

Current Investigator: Dylan Carrillo

TRC Reference: CF-009

CASE SUMMARY

For more than a century, stories have circulated throughout southern New Mexico of **trains that entered the desert... but never reached their destination.**

Some accounts describe freight trains carrying valuable cargo.

Others speak of military transports.

A few insist passenger trains simply disappeared without leaving behind tracks, wreckage, or survivors.

No official railroad records confirm these stories.

Yet references continue to appear in journals, letters, and oral histories collected throughout The Mesilla Files.

THE MYSTERY

Unlike ordinary train wrecks, these reports share an unusual characteristic.

No one knows where the trains went.

No twisted rails.

No burned locomotives.

No abandoned cars.

Only unanswered questions.

Several witnesses claimed the trains entered remote stretches of desert shortly before vanishing from sight.

Others reported hearing whistles echoing across empty valleys long after the rail lines had fallen silent.

WHAT WE KNOW

After reviewing historical records, researchers have identified several recurring details.

- Most reports date between the late 1800s and the early 1900s.
- The disappearances are said to have occurred in isolated desert regions.
- Witnesses often described unusual weather immediately beforehand.
- Several reports mention a strange fog or shimmering horizon.
- Search parties reportedly found no evidence of derailment.
- The stories continued long after the railroad lines changed or disappeared.

No verified physical evidence has been recovered.

HISTORICAL RECORDS

1896

A railroad worker reportedly told Father Miguel Serrano that a freight train "simply vanished into the heat."

The incident was never officially investigated.

1908

Newspaper clippings referenced "an overdue supply train" that was later explained as a scheduling error.

Local residents disagreed with that explanation.

1936

Sheriff Tomas Ortega interviewed an elderly rancher who claimed to have watched a train disappear into a dust storm without ever emerging.

1956

Howard H. Hunter documented multiple accounts from retired railroad employees who refused to dismiss the old stories.

One reportedly said,

"Some places out there don't give things back."

1969

Theodore Ray Mercer collected several hand-drawn maps marking locations where trains were supposedly last seen.

Many of those locations overlap with other unexplained reports.

THEORIES

Researchers continue to examine several possibilities.

- Railroad folklore exaggerated over time.
- Misreported derailments.
- Navigation errors in early records.
- Mirages caused by desert conditions.
- Smuggling operations disguised as disappearances.
- Trains entering areas associated with the Mesilla Veil.
- Legends inspired by real but forgotten events.

None of these theories explains every reported incident.

RELATED CASES

Investigators continue exploring possible connections between the Lost Trains and:

- **Case File No. 2 – Symbols in the Sand**
- **Case File No. 3 – The Mesilla Veil**
- **Case File No. 4 – The Lost Expedition of Captain Elias Voss**
- **Case File No. 5 – The Enclosure**
- The TOX Archive
- Reports from the Old Desert

PERSONS OF INTEREST

- Father Miguel Serrano
- Sheriff Tomas Ortega
- Howard H. Hunter
- Theodore Ray Mercer
- Jeremiah "Jeb" Crow

Each documented references to unexplained train disappearances while investigating unrelated mysteries.

CURRENT INVESTIGATION

The TRC Research Center is comparing:

- Historic railroad maps
- Shipping records
- Newspaper archives
- Ranch journals
- Family letters
- TOX Archive documents

Researchers are attempting to determine whether multiple reports describe the same event—or several unexplained disappearances occurring over many decades.

Special attention is being given to locations where alleged train disappearances coincide with reports of unusual symbols, strange lights, or sightings connected to the Mesilla Veil.

DYLAN'S NOTES

"At first, I assumed the stories about the lost trains were just railroad folklore. But the deeper I dug into the archives, the more often they appeared. Different witnesses. Different decades. Yet many described the same strange pattern—a train entering a lonely stretch of desert and never being seen again. Maybe there's a simple explanation waiting to be found. Or maybe these stories are connected to something much larger hidden within The Mesilla Files. Either way, this mystery is still on track."

— Dylan Carrillo

CASE STATUS

OPEN

The TRC Research Center welcomes historical railroad photographs, employee journals, family stories, maps, newspaper clippings, or other documents relating to unexplained train disappearances in southern New Mexico.

Every submission is cataloged, preserved, and compared with existing archival records.

TRC Research Center

Collect Everything. Verify What You Can. Question Everything Else.

The records have been preserved. The investigation continues.