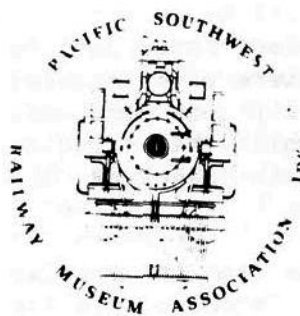




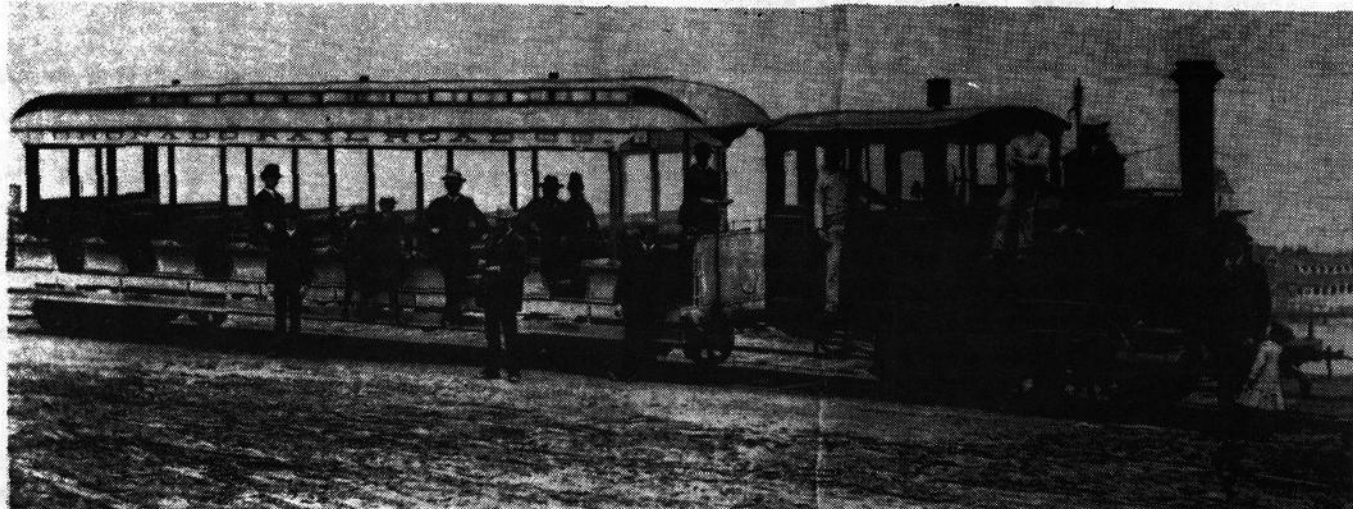
REPORT

ISSUE 77

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

APRIL, 1971

CORONADO RAILS: End of an Era



THIS IS A TYPICAL SCENE IN THE HEYDAY OF THE CORONADO BELT LINE. HERE A RESORT TRAIN OF THE "ISLAND" RAILROAD POSES NEAR THE HOTEL DEL CORONADO IN AN 1890 SCENE.

-Title Insurance and Trust Company Photo

GENERAL MEETING

The next PSRMA General Meeting will be held on Sunday, April 18th, in the House of Charm, Balboa Park. The La Sala Room, where the meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M., offers a much more comfortable setting than the Safety Room of the Santa Fe depot, where previous General Meetings have been held. There is also ample lighted parking facilities.

As usual, this meeting will offer an evening of railroad oriented entertainment as well as give all members an opportunity to find out all the latest developments concerning PSRMA. The House of Hospitality is on Laurel Street right in the middle of the park just east of the large horseman statue.

On March 24, 1971, a small PSRMA-sponsored ceremony commemorated the end of rail service to the community of Coronado which had begun almost 83 years before. A "first spike" was symbolically pulled from one of the old, weathered ties by Coronado Mayor Robin Goodenough, Miss Coronado Janet Clare, and PSRMA President H. Chalmers Kerr, Jr. The spike pulling followed a short historical speech by Dick Pennick, Chairman of the Board of PSRMA.

Complete scrapping of the line began a couple of weeks later by the firm of Walter H. Barber & Son of La Mesa. Wally Barber, incidentally, is a member of PSRMA, and he must have had mixed feelings as his crew began tearing up the old roadbed.

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Removal of railroad track in Coronado and on the Silver Strand closes an era of railroad history that began in 1888. That was the year the Coronado Railroad Company completed the Coronado Belt Line, a railroad which extended from 5th and L Streets in San Diego, through National City and Chula Vista around the south end of the bay, and up the Silver Strand to Coronado.

Originally owned by Elisha S. Babcock, Jr., H. L. Story, and associates, the Coronado Railroad Company was built as part of the Coronado Beach development. Previously, the developers has organized the Coronado Beach Company, a residential real estate development. The ferries of the San Diego & Coronado Ferry Company brought patrons to the Coronado side of the bay and the horse car, and later steam cars, of the Coronado Beach Railroad provided transportation across the "island." Construction of the Hotel del Coronado was started and a plunge and other facilities were built.

It was deemed necessary to build a railroad around the bay to help transport freight and passengers. Construction began early in 1888 and trains were running to Coronado in June of the same year.

John D. Spreckles soon acquired control of the Coronado Beach Company and all subsidiary companies, including the railroad.

Motive power for the railroad included four steam dummy-type locomotives purchased second hand from the New York elevated line.

In initial years the Coronado Railroad Company competed with the National City and Otay Railroad Company for "commuter" business between San Diego and National City. According to Richard V. Dodge in his book, Rails of the Silver Gate, engineers of both railroads tried to "get there first" and there was a near miss at 34th and Dalbergia Street where the two lines crossed. Soon after new operating rules were adapted for safety.

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In order to collect fares on late evening trains which were often crowded with revellers the train was sometimes stopped on a trestle while the conductor walked through the train checking his passengers.

Excursion trains from Los Angeles operated through to Coronado via the Belt Line.

Regular passenger service around the bay reportedly ceased in 1896, but special excursion trains operated frequently for several years, transporting visitors to Tent City and the Hotel del Coronado. The final excursion train was a Coronado Chamber of Commerce special run in 1949.

In 1906 four Coronado Railroad Company passenger coaches were sold to the National City and Otay Railway for conversion into electric interurban cars. These cars ran for some years between downtown San Diego and Otay via National City and Chula Vista.

The Coronado Railroad Company and the National City and Otay Railway were merged in 1908 as the San Diego Southern Railway. Another merger came in 1912 as the San Diego & South Eastern Railway was formed.

Around 1913, Mexico & San Diego Railway Company battery cars were run over a portion of the Belt Line at the south end of the bay, providing connecting service to Imperial Beach.

The 1916 flood brought about the demise of the San Diego & South Eastern Railway and the Coronado Belt Line was taken over by the San Diego and Arizona Railway Company, later known, and still known today, as the San Diego & Arizona Eastern Railway Company, a subsidiary of Southern Pacific. A portion of the tracks on the San Diego side were electrified and were used for some years by the National City and Chula Vista street cars of the San Diego Electric Railway.

Up until last year freight service
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continued into Coronado and North Island. Customers in recent years were the Amphibious Base and the North Island Naval Air Station. The last civilian customer, the Hotel del Coronado, received an occasional tank car of fuel oil on a short spur that crossed Glorietta Boulevard until about ten years ago. In recent years activity was limited to two trains weekly.

End of active trackage of the Coronado Belt Line is now at the salt works just south of Chula Vista.

MEMBERSHIP

If you are a 1970 or earlier previous member of PSRMA and have not renewed for 1971 this is the last issue of the Report you will receive until you do renew.

If you have not yet renewed, you have not received a 1971 membership card. This means you will not be able to participate in 1971 activities, such as steam-ups scheduled with Museum equipment stored at Miramar Naval Air Station.

In the past, extra issues of the Report have been sent to old members in the hope of encouraging them to rejoin. Now our membership has grown such that these extra issues are no longer available.

Before when we have had steam-ups at different locations in San Diego they have been open to the public. Now due to security reasons at the Naval Air Station these steam-ups are limited to members in good standing with current membership cards.

If you don't want to miss any future issues of the Report, if you want to participate in Museum activities, and if you are at all interested in preserving a bit of the railroad history and equipment of a bygone era, please rejoin us. Renewal forms can be had by writing to John F. Hathaway, Director of Records & Personnel, 4215 Dwight Street, San Diego, California, 92105. Please do not delay, it is later than you think!

BOARD BRIEFS

A BRIEF REVIEW OF REPORTS MADE AND ACTIONS TAKEN AT THE MARCH 2, 1971, AND APRIL 6, 1971, BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS OF PSRMA.

MARCH 2, 1971

1) President Kerr reported PSRMA has joined the San Diego Congress of History.

2) President Kerr reported on the visit of the Illini Railroad Club the previous week.

3) President Kerr outlined the four year plan presented by the Navy concerning payment on the lease for storage of equipment on trackage at NAS Miramar.

4) The Board passed a motion to establish a new standing committee with the single duty of planning and operating excursions.

Eric Sanders was appointed Chairman of the new Excursion Committee.

5) Further development of a proposed excursion to Puerto Penasco and another excursion to the San Francisco Municipal Railway was okayed by the Board.

6) Dave Parkinson reported Tom Matson has accepted the foremanship of the line truck restoration project.

The Board authorized Tom Matson to spend up to \$100 on the project.

7) The Board authorized movement of E. J. Lavino #10 from Perris to Miramar as soon as possible.

The Board also authorized movement of Mojave Northern #3 from Perris to San Diego as soon as feasible.

8) Dick Pennick reported a Navy Seabee outfit has offered to help dismantle for storage a wooden water tank currently standing in El Cajon and recently donated to PSRMA.

9) The Board moved to provide a box lunch for members at a work party in the
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near future to determine if this extra incentive would result in greater attendance at work parties.

10) The Board okayed Dick Pennick's proposal for a "first spike pulling" ceremony on the Coronado branch of the SD&AE to commemorate the historical significance of the end of rail service to that community.

11) The Board accepted Dave Parkinson's recommendation to run an ad in the Sunday edition of the San Diego Union's classified section seeking new members.

The ad is to be run on four consecutive Sundays to determine its effect.

APRIL 6, 1971

1) President Kerr reported the builder's plate on the Shay had been stolen and the other plate had been removed for safe keeping.

2) President Kerr reported on the possible effects of air pollution controls in San Diego County on Museum operations. It was the consensus that most Museum equipment could meet these controls with minor modification.

3) Reporting for General Manager Dave Parkinson, President Kerr announced the rail bus had been moved from the property of Walt Heyward to the property of Bob DiGiorgio.

Dan McLean will be foreman for the line truck restoration project.

4) It was reported that there had been a good response from the ad in the classified ads of the San Diego Union. Bob DiGiorgio reported some 40 persons had called the Museum number on the best Sunday.

The Board directed Dave Parkinson to continue the campaign, but place classified ads in different local papers.

5) Bob DiGiorgio reported the Shay had passed her latest boiler inspection in good shape. He also said a steam-up
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was possible by early summer and suggested consideration of July Fourth.

6) Chop Kerr announced he had been invited to make a presentation to the "O Gauge Toy Train Association."

7) Treasurer Bill Richards presented the 1970 Statement of Cash Receipts and Disbursements.

8) Dick Pennick, reporting for the Excursion Committee, presented a list of suggested excursions for the remainder of 1971 and into 1972. It was the consensus of the Board to accept these recommendations as a tentative excursion calendar.

9) Chop Kerr reported on his attendance at a fund raising seminar and the facts and suggestions he obtained concerning PSRMA fund raising projects.

10) The Board voted to sign the Miramar lease as presented by the Navy, and agreed to pay the approximately \$825 it would cost to lay a water line into the equipment area as stipulated by the lease for the first year's payment.

11) The Board directed the Editorial Committee to begin preparation of a new permanent Museum brochure.

CALENDAR

APRIL 18 General Meeting, 7:00 P.M.,
House of Hospitality, Balboa Park.

APRIL 24,25 Work parties to dismantle wooden water tank, 10:00 A.M. both days, 1463 East Lexington, El Cajon. Contact Dick Pennick, 463-2276, for information.

REPORT STAFF

EDITOR.....Jerry Windle
LAYOUT.....John Hathaway
CIRCULATION.....George Goyer

FROM THE CUPOLA

This past month has been hectic for your president. What with Income Tax reports, serving on Superior Court jury duty, and a host of other distractions, I have not been able to put together any "Pearls of Wisdom." However, least you not be forgotten, I submit the following.

Hello..Hello...Is anyone out there? Sometimes your officers and directors have the feeling that they are guiding a Phantom Ship. Serving in administrative positions is a lonely task at best. Especially so if the feedback is not regularly received from the PCM (Plain Old Member). PSRMA isn't exactly a rudderless ship, but the shoals along the way to our ultimate destination can be better navigated if the PCM keeps in touch. We want and need your ideas, be it constructive criticism or full support. But most of all, PSRMA can benefit from a constant flow of POM's. The Administrative Staff can't begin to attack all the tasks that have to be done without your help. So the more active workers we can muster, the better. Let us hear from you and see you all soon; don't delay, it's later than you think.

The next General Membership Meeting is Sunday, April 18th, at 7:00 P.M., so mark your calendar. The place is the La Sala Room, House of Hospitality in Balboa Park. This new location has ample and well lighted parking. The ladies should especially appreciate the La Sala Room; it offers very pleasant and comfortable furnishings for up to eighty persons. See you all there.

Some bad news along with the good. For the past eleven months our equipment has been safely stored at the Miramar Naval Air Station. Well, that record fell sometime during the past six weeks. The Shay locomotive had the left builder's plate removed and stolen. Since the discovery of the theft the other plates have been removed for safe keeping. This act emphasizes what PSRMA is going to be up against when we move into our permanent
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site. Around the clock protection of equipment will be a must; be it a watchman, watch dogs, alarms, what have you. Any volunteers for a live-in train sitter? Or, who has the Shotgun and Will Patrol...?

Help..your Report editor, Jerry Windle, needs news items and short articles. It is impossible for one person to fill these pages. So dust off your typewriter and send in all the news and rumors too.

The battle to protect the environment has been engaged on all fronts nationwide. In particular California has blitzkrieged the perpetrators of air pollution. San Diego County is in the forefront of this campaign for clean air. In fact, I believe San Diego County has the strongest requirements of any locality in the U. S. The governing body is the Air Pollution Control District for San Diego County. The current rules and regulations are applicable to the part of the county west of a north-south line through Harbison Canyon, and in the near future prohibitions will be county-wide. PSRMA operation of steam or diesel locomotives are governed by these rules. We are probably exempt from having to pay for a permit to operate, but we may have some trouble meeting rules 50 and 53 when burning coal or fuel oil. In part the requirements are: a) a person shall not discharge into the atmosphere from any single source air contaminants for an aggregate of three minutes in any one hour as dark as that designated as Number 2 on the Ringelmann Chart, b) No single source may discharge into the atmosphere sulphur dioxide over 0.2 percent by volume and/or combustion contaminants over 0.3 grain per cubic foot of gas....Anyone for trolleys?

Reminder...renew your membership in PSRMA if you have not already done so. April is the cut off for 1970 members. Renew now so that you will not miss a single issue of the Report or miss the chance to participate in the exciting events planned for the coming year.

H. Chalmers Kerr, Jr.
President

SOUTH WEST CORNER

As this is being written, SANTA FE has not yet decided whether or not it is going to join the National Railroad Passenger Corporation. If the railroad does join Railpax there will be a number of changes seen in the passenger service in and out of San Diego. As of now there is a question concerning some of these.

If Santa Fe does turn over its passenger service to Railpax, chances are service between San Diego and Los Angeles will be cut from three trains a day each way to two trains. However, three times a week there will be through service between San Diego and Seattle. According to some sources, passenger facilities here in San Diego will be expanded to serve as the terminus for this north-south western corridor.

Assuming Railpax takes over operation of the San Diegan (will that name be retained?), what kind of intermediary service for the communities between here and Los Angeles will remain? Will the Railpax schedule feature stops at Del Mar, Encinitas, Oceanside, San Clemente, and so on up the line? Or, in the interest of speed and efficiency, will these smaller cities be bypassed by the passenger train after May first, 1971?

As the San Diego to Los Angeles run is included in the Railpax schedule, if
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Santa Fe were to decide not to participate in the federal venture it would be obligated to retain the San Diegan at the present level of operation at least until 1975.

As mentioned before, we will continue to have passenger trains in San Diego in the future, but it is going to be interesting to see what develops.

Speaking of passenger trains, the National Railway Publication Company, publishers of The Official Guide of the Railways, have made a special offer for the April, May, and June 1971, issues of the Guide.

The April issue of the Guide, which lists among other things all rail passenger services, will be the last complete pre-Railpax passenger service listing. The May issue will be the first to list the new services of Railpax. Comparing the two would give a graphic illustration of the immediate effect of Railpax and the American passenger train. The June issue will continue to update the new services.

These timely issues of the Guide are available at \$6.40 for a singly copy, \$12.50 for two copies, or \$6.00 each for three or more copies and can be purchased from the publishers by mail:

National Railway Publication Company
Special Order Department
424 West 33rd Street
New York
New York 10001