

DATA
onFerryboat Bells
presented by
Senator James R. Mills to

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The bell from the ferryboat North Island originally was on the old sidewheel ferry steamer Coronado which, aside from the steam-launch Della and a barge towed by the tug Gen. McPherson, was the first ferry on S.D. Bay. She was built by Alexander Hay, of San Francisco, and arrived here in the summer of 1886. She ran until 1920, and shortly thereafter was sold to the movies and was blown up during the filming of the silent film, "Captain Blood" --having been rebuilt into a plywood "pirate ship."

Actually, this bell dates back only to 1911, for on New Year's Eve, Dec. 31, 1910, when she was leaving San Diego on the last trip to Coronado at 12 o'clock, the captain "rang in the New Year" with such zeal that he cracked the bell, and they had to send back to the original bell-founder, W. T. Garratt of San Francisco, for a new one.

The bell from the modern ferry San Diego came originally from the side-wheel ferry steamer Ramona, built by the Risdon Iron Works at Alameda in 1903, and operated until 1928. It, too, is a Garratt bell. She was, incidentally, the first San Diego harbor vessel to have electric lights; the Coronado had her coal-oil running-lights and cabin lamps and lanterns right up to 1920.

State Senator William T. Garratt, of San Francisco, came to California as a young man in 1849, determined to make his fortune as a miner. It didn't work out; so, having been a brass-founder in the east, he set up a modest foundry in San Francisco, and soon had all the business he could handle -- fire bells, school and church bells, steamboat bells and gongs, nozzles, pumps, steam-gauges and all the rest. Having failed in gold, he made a fortune in brass, and the firm is still in business. But he had time to enter into civic affairs, and wound up as State Senator.

