



REPORT

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SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

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PUERTO PENASCO - On the Gulf of California, the village is headquarters for both commercial and sport fishing.

EXCURSION EDITION

For more than 67 years, the cruel and forbidding Altar Desert had prevented man from establishing vital lines of land communication between the Territories of Baja California and the Interior of the Republic of Mexico. Not until the advent of the diesel-electric locomotive would the building of such a railroad be practical and air conditioning to make the journey fairly comfortable.

On April 7, 1948, Mexican President Miguel Aleman drove the final spike to complete the 325-mile Sonora-Baja California Railroad to join Mexicali via Puerto Penasco to Benjamin Hill, the northern terminus of Mexican rail traffic. For the first time the peninsula of Baja California was united directly by rail with the national network. The building of the Ferrocarril Sonora-Baja California Railroad, the FSBC, was no easy task.

In 1881-2, the first railroad was proposed from San Diego via Tijuana, Port Isabel in the state of Sonora, across the Altar Desert to a connection with the Sonora Railway, which the Santa Fe was building north from Guaymas. This plan died on paper.

First rails were laid in 1887 when an English Corporation the Mexico Land and Colonization Company planned rail lines from San Quintin, a Pacific Coast Harbor about 195 miles south of San Diego, to San Felipe on the Gulf of California; to Tijuana and San Diego and to Yuma. The Peninsular Railroad was actually built for about 18 miles from San Quintin in 1892. There the railroad ended.

Then came a bold plan of the California Development Co. to irrigate the valley south of the Salton Sink in California with Colorado River water and the Imperial Valley came into being with irrigation in mid-1901. Towns sprang up, Calexico and Mexicali, among others. This caused the importance of the northern part of Baja California to increase.

E. H. Harriman, President of the Southern Pacific Co., sensed the future value of the valley and a rail connection was built from Old Beach, now Niland, junction with the main line between Los Angeles and Yuma to Calexico. Regular service began on June 29, 1904. In December 1905, the Southern Pacific placed a box car on a side track at El Centro to be used as a station.

In the meantime, the San Diego and Arizona Eastern railroad had been formed by San Diegan John D. Spreckels and E. H. Harriman to build from San Diego via Tijuana, Campo Carriso Gorge, El Centro, Mexicali to Yuma. However the SP organized the "Campania del Ferrocarril Inter-California" and constructed the railroad from Mexicali via Pascualitos to Algodones, Baja California. There the track crossed back into the United States with an extension to the SP main line. Completed in 1909, this road formed a more direct route for shipments from Mexicali Valley to points on the Mexican mainland but round about via Tucson and Nogales or El Paso. This relieved the SD&AE from building from El Centro to Yuma. The SD&AE opened December 1st, 1919, providing service from San Diego and the Tijuana area to cities in the interior of Mexico.

A series of revolutions broke out in 1910 and a new regime took over. In 1917 the construction of highways from Ensenada to Tijuana and to Mexicali and a railroad from Pascualitos, the junction point with the Inter-California Railway to San Felipe, on the gulf, connecting with the steamer lines.

MILES FROM K. P. MEXICALI	STATION	REMARKS
0.00	Mexicali	Line from the International Border past the station to Pascualitos is the old "Inter-Cal"
5.59	Pascualitos	Former junction of FSBC and the Inter-Cal. Pascualitos is a maintenance-of-way facility
17.40	Cerro Prieto	
18.02	Canal Crossing	
25.17	Delta	
32.31	Victoria	Look to your left. It's a quaint town
34.49	- - - -	Curve to left, then right for pictures
36.04	Rio Colorado	Colorado River one-lane rail-highway bridge
41.07	Coahuila	Market town - included on short trips as a stop
42.87	Baja-California State Line	
44.49	Riito	Short excursions turn back here
63.2	El Doctor	Railroad whistle stop
80.30	Kilom. 121	Railroad facility
85.07	Sanchez Islas	Railroad facility
?	The Crosses	No station, but crosses beside right-of-way mark the graves of surveyors who lost their lives during construction of the railroad
93.07	Torres B.	Railroad Facility
113.97	Lopez Collada	Railroad Facility
133.86	Gustavo Sotelo	Railroad Facility
153.46	Puerto Penasco	Passengers will disembark at the station and board busses for a short ride to the town