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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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