

Overlooking SP's Oakland Mole



This view of Southern Pacific's Oakland rail-ferry passenger terminal on San Francisco Bay dates from the late 1920s or early '30s. When the Central Pacific purchased the San Francisco & Alameda Railroad in 1868, the deal included SF&A's ferryboat and Long Wharf in Oakland. In 1869, passengers from the newly completed transcontinental railroad left their trains and used the ferry to reach San Francisco, a practice that would continue for nine decades. In the 1880s, SP began building a mile-long pier

next to Long Wharf. The new structure was built as a rock-filled pier, or "mole," wide enough for four tracks and a wagon road. At its west end, out in the bay, the mole widened to accommodate 14 tracks, which were covered by train sheds. The Oakland Mole became the hub of SP Bay Area passenger service. From here the railroad dispatched trains to Portland, Ore.; Los Angeles; and Ogden, Utah. It was also home to SP's East Bay suburban service, electrified in 1911. Western Pacific, which built its own pier in 1910, used SP's during World War I, then



Southern Pacific photo

became a permanent tenant in 1933. Also in that year, work began on the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, which opened to highway traffic in '36. SP's suburban service (renamed Interurban Electric Railway in 1938) began using the bridge in 1939, ending the daily rush of commuters through the pier. SP and WP intercity trains used the pier until 1958, when they forsook it for inland stations and bus connections across the bay. The buildings were removed in the 1960s and today the pier is part of the Port of Oakland container facility.—*Rod Crossley*

- 1 Albers Milling Co. grain elevator
- 2 W. 7th Street, Oakland
- 3 End of Long Wharf after 1919
- 4 Water and oil tanks
- 5 Yerba Buena Island
- 6 Automobile ferry in slip
- 7 Restaurant
- 8 Ferry slips (behind train sheds)
- 9 Inbound and outbound ferries
- 10 Train sheds (SP steam trains)
- 11 SP interurban train sheds
- 12 Freight-car ferry slip
- 13 Bridge and building shop
- 14 Wharf No. 1, for ocean vessels