

Golden Spike given to Library

September 14, 1967

A gift of outstanding interest to the Library of the University of California, San Diego is the famed "Golden Spike" which drove home the completion of the San Diego and Arizona Railway in 1919. This artifact joins the San Diego and Arizona Railroad archives and business papers, given to UCSD last year.

San Diego's prominent pioneer J.D. Spreckels drove in the golden spike on the summit of the Carriso Gorge November 15, 1919. More than a thousand people from San Diego, Imperial County and Baja California watched the celebration, which signified the end of construction for the railroad.

Ownership of the golden spike can be traced from J.D. Spreckels to Sam Mason, President of the San Diego and Coronado Ferry Company. Mason kept it until 1946 when he gave it to Rear Admiral Sydney B. Dodds USN (ret.), vice-president and General Manager of the Ferry Company. He used it in his office as a conversation piece and paperweight for 20 years.

The San Diego and Arizona Railway was the "last of the transcontinental railroads." It was Spreckels' dream to have a railroad linking the port of San Diego with its hinterland and eastern markets.

At the time many people scoffed and reminded him of the rugged coastal range to the Imperial Valley and to Yuma. It cost J.D. Spreckels more than \$18 million to build the railroad, but it fulfilled an important dream for his adopted San Diego.

In addition to the spike, the University received a life-sized framed portrait of Spreckels. The portrait was in the main office of his San Diego Electric Railway Company, which became the San Diego Transit System Bus Lines.

It is the original from which was copied the frontispiece in the volume "Rails by the Silver Gate, the Spreckels San Diego Empire" by Richard V. Dodge.

Also received were a large folder of executive correspondence referring to the San Diego and Arizona Railway and the financial accounts from 1906 to 1918 of the personal expenses of Spreckels.

The donors of these historic mementos are the family of the late Mr. Jesse Lee Haugh of La Jolla. Haugh received these materials when he bought a controlling interest in the municipal transportation system in 1948.