

By Land and By Sea



San Francisco Bay is known for more than its great beauty. Its large estuary, where seawater mixes with huge river flows, is also a major ocean port.

Richmond's deep, natural waterfront lent itself to early industrial development. Augustin Macdonald recognized the potential here in 1895, and promoted the idea of a railway terminal:

"On reaching the summit of the hills a magnificent view greeted my eyes...its commercial possibilities appealed to me at once...[it was] the only point on the east...bay where land and navigable water met."

Chicago trains began arriving at Ferry Point in 1900. Passenger and auto ferries operated through the 1930s, while freight operations continued later, into the 1960s.



Courtesy The Richmond Museum of History Collection

The Santa Fe tugboat Edward Engel nudging a freight barge toward the Ferry Point wharves. The 250' long barges held 14-16 railcars each, and had a draft of 6' when fully loaded.



Courtesy of The Point Richmond History Association

The newly completed Municipal tunnel late in 1915 as it looked from the west end. To the left is the railroad tunnel that was built in 1900.



Time table for the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway Co.