

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name: Silvergate Ferry **DRAFT**Other names/site number: N/AName of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. LocationStreet & number: Fifth Avenue Landing, 600 Convention WayCity or town: San Diego State: CA County: San DiegoNot For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___national ___statewide ___local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B ___C ___D

Signature of certifying official/Title:_____
Date_____
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:_____
Date_____
Title :_____
**State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government**

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☒

Public – Local

☐

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☐

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Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
District	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site	<input type="checkbox"/>
Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Object	<input type="checkbox"/>

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
<u>1</u>	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION: water related

RECREATION: water related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION: water related

RECREATION: water related

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: Ferry

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Douglas Fir and Mahogany

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The *Silvergate* (Vessel No. 240106) is a privately owned ferry boat moored at 990 N Harbor Drive in San Diego, California. The vessel was built in 1940 by the San Diego Marine Construction Company for the Star & Crescent Boat Company to provide ferry service between San Diego and Naval Air Station North Island, during a time of increased demand related to the ramp-up to World War II. The *Silvergate* has a length overall (LOA) of 58'6" and a 22' beam. The hull is constructed of three-inch straight-grain Douglas fir, and the decks, cabin, and trim are mahogany. When constructed, the vessel was powered by two 150-horsepower diesel engines; it was repowered within the past 10 years to meet emission standards and now includes two John Deere 6090HF485 Variable Speed Industrial Marine Engines, which each provide 375 horsepower to the vessel's twin screws and single rudder. *Silvergate* includes a below-deck engine room; a main deck with a large, open-plan cabin and two small (non-operating) heads; and an open-air, open-plan upper deck with a small pilothouse. *Silvergate* is owned by Flagship Cruises & Events, a company with direct lineage to the Star & Crescent Boat Company, and operates in its historic use, providing passenger ferry service on the San Diego Bay.

Narrative Description

Exterior

Silvergate is 58'6" LOA and has a 22' beam. The bow is generally plumb and the stern projects out over the waterline in a short fantail arrangement. The vessel's Douglas fir hull is painted black below the water line and blue above the waterline and includes rub rails and fenders at both port and starboard. Bulwarks are clad in metal over wood; they are punctuated by scuppers, hawse, and a total of four gangway openings, and trimmed with polished mahogany handrails mounted on metal poles. The vessel's name is painted on the fore portion of the bulwarks and at the stern. The main deck cabin and the upper deck pilothouse are constructed of mahogany and painted white.

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Main Deck

The main deck includes narrow exterior fore, side, and aft decks and an enclosed cabin. The foredeck includes a polished wood bench with a molded seatbed and long thin drainage gaps, fit within the prow of the vessel; a corresponding painted wood bench with long thin drainage gaps wraps around the fore wall of the cabin. Additional features at the foredeck include a mounted flagpole, mounted cleats, and a brass anchor locker, and the deck surface is finished with nonslip paint. Side and aft decks include painted wood benches with long thin drainage gaps mounted along the cabin walls; additional features include large wood cleats and two wood ladders with wood handrails, located at the fore portion of the side decks, which provide access to the upper deck. Side and aft decks include exposed wood decking and are shaded by the overhang of the upper deck, which includes painted beams.

Port and starboard cabin walls each include one half-glazed wood panel sliding door; six large, fixed windows, and one smaller vinyl sliding window. The fore wall includes two rectangular vented openings and the aft wall includes one large fixed window. The cabin's interior aft and side walls are finished with vertical wood cladding. Interior arrangement includes two small head closets in the fore cabin, inoperable but with some original wood finishes and porcelain fixtures; polished wood slat benches mounted to side walls, mounted atop wood storage lockers; and a non-historic granite-top wood storage cabinet against the aft wall. An enclosure near the fore of the cabin houses the smokestack; a small wood door at the port side of the enclosure provides access, via a ladder, to below deck. A movable non-historic cabinet located directly aft of the enclosure serves as life-jacket storage. The floor is unpainted wood decking and four circular brass hatches are arranged along the center line of the cabin; the ceiling consists of the painted beams and the decking of the upper deck, and is supported by three painted turned wood posts, arranged along the center line of the cabin.

Upper Deck

The upper deck includes eleven banks of double-sided plexiglass bench seating, accessed via a center aisle. Ladder access from the main deck is semi-enclosed by L-plan polished wood handrails mounted on metal posts with metal strap rails, finished with open weave metal mesh. The upper deck is enclosed by a wood handrail mounted on metal posts with metal strap rails, currently covered by canvas; a wood seating platform with a curved profile is mounted at the fore starboard area. A cylindrical metal smokestack enclosure is located at the center line of the upper deck directly aft of the pilothouse; the enclosure meets the deck within a square apron and includes a large flush metal hatch door at its aft side. The upper deck is finished with non-slip paint.

The pilothouse has a semi-circular footprint; its interior is accessed via two half-glazed wood doors at its port and starboard sides, and its fore wall consists of a row of five operable wood frame pocket windows which drop into the lower half-wall as needed. The aft wall includes two small, fixed windows. Simple wood furnishings within the pilothouse include a navigational console, countertop, and bench seating. The large navigational wheel is stainless steel, and the pilothouse lacks fixed seating for the pilot. The floor is painted wood, and the ceiling includes painted beams (some trimmed to accommodate the height of pilots) and rafters.

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Below Deck

Accessible below deck areas are limited to the engine room, a utilitarian space enclosed fore and aft by riveted metal bulkheads. The engine room houses the vessel's two John Deere 6090HF485 Variable Speed Industrial Marine Engines, which each provide 375 horsepower to the vessel's twin screws and single rudder, along with a tier three small generator and additional mechanical system components. The painted wood components of the hull are exposed here, consisting of three-inch straight grain Douglas fir with mahogany replacement members.

Integrity

Original construction documents and maintenance records for the *Silvergate* are not held by the vessel's current owner, Flagship Cruises & Events, and were not uncovered in any other repository in the course of research for this Registration Form. Based on a comparison between historic photographs and the vessel's current appearance, information in sources including the United States Coast Guard's Port State Information Exchange (PSIX) system and newspaper articles, and conversations with long-term Flagship employees, the *Silvergate* appears to have undergone few alterations. When the vessel was restored in 1987-1988 in preparation for renewed ferry service, the wood hull was reefed and caulked, mahogany components were stained and oiled, the ship was repainted, steering mechanism gears were removed, an attempt to repair the gears was made, and a decision was made to install updated hydraulic steering components.¹ It is likely that the window modifications (two sliding, one fixed) were also installed at this time. The vessel was repowered within the past ten years to meet emission standards, and the original two 150-horsepower diesel engines were removed and replaced with two John Deere 6090HF485 Variable Speed Industrial Marine Engines. Additional changes include reconfiguration of strap railings at the upper deck, and installation of updated bench seating at the upper deck.

The vessel remains on the water and operates in the market it was constructed to serve, thus retaining integrity of location and setting. No notable changes have been made to the profile of the hull, or to the profile, features, configuration, or materials of the decks; thus, the vessel retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Because the *Silvergate* retains the vast bulk of original physical features that, taken together, convey the vessel's historic character, integrity of feeling is retained. And, because the *Silvergate* continues to provide ferry service on San Diego Bay, the activity for which it has been found significant, and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer, the vessel retains integrity of association. In sum, *Silvergate* retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance.

¹ Mark Amott, "Restored Silvergate Gets Historic Preservation Award," *Coronado Journal*, March 3, 1988, 1, 6.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MARITIME HISTORY
TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1940-1957

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Significant Dates

1940 (construction)

1945 (shift from ferry to recreation use)

1957 (last year in service as Star & Crescent fleet's primary recreational vessel)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

San Diego Marine Construction Company (builder)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The ferry *Silvergate* was built in 1940 to provide improved commuter service between San Diego and Naval Air Station North Island and is associated with the regional increase in military employment and production that took place in the lead up to and during the years of World War II. While military facilities had been present on Coronado Island since the turn of the twentieth century, the significant increase in production and employment in the years preceding World War II led to a call amongst boatbuilding firms up and down the Pacific Coast to bid on establishing improved ferry service crossing San Diego Bay.² Local firm San Diego Marine Construction Company, the boatbuilding yard of the Star & Crescent Company, both under leadership of Oakley J. Hall, responded with construction of the *Silvergate*, a wood vessel built for heavy service between San Diego and Naval Air Station North Island, capable of transporting a passenger load of 350 people, traveling 12 knots under power by twin 150-horsepower diesel engines.³ *Silvergate* was the first of several wartime ferries built by Star & Crescent and provided nearly continuous ferry service across San Diego Bay from its launch in early 1941 through the end of the war in 1945, after which it transitioned to excursion use in San Diego's thriving maritime recreation sector. The vessel remained Star & Crescent's primary recreational use vessel through 1957 when it was supplanted by several newer larger vessels. *Silvergate* remained in limited excursion use through 1987 when it returned to ferry use, in which it remains. Research indicates that *Silvergate* is the oldest ferry in operation on San Diego Bay, the last extant boat from the World War II era ferry fleet, and is one of only two wood ferryboats known to be in consistent operation on the West Coast (the other is the *Carlisle II*, operating in Puget Sound).⁴ The *Silvergate* has undergone few alterations, including hull and deck

² "New Ferry to be Launched in S. D.," *San Pedro News Pilot*, September 24, 1940, 2.

³ "New Ferry to be Launched in S. D."

⁴ Christian Vosler, "The Carlisle II is Back: Century-old Ferry Ready for Riders Again After \$1.3 Million Overhaul," *Kitsap Sun*, April 28, 2021, accessed May 2, 2024, <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/news/2021/04/28/historic-carlisle-ii-ferry-returning-port-orchard-bremerton-route/4864071001/>.

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restoration; installation of new hydraulic steering components; limited window modifications, changes to railings and seating benches, and repowering with new engines. The vessel retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic appearance and is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criterion A for its association with maritime transportation both during World War II and in the post-war years as part of San Diego's maritime recreation sector. The period of significance is 1940-1957, spanning the year the vessel was constructed through the last year it operated as the primary recreational use vessel in Star & Crescent's fleet.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Silvergate was built in the fall of 1940 by the San Diego Marine Construction Company, the boatbuilding yard of the Star & Crescent Company, both under leadership of Oakley J. Hall.⁵ Oakley J. Hall was born in Seattle in 1878 to a family of mariners; his stepfather Rufus M. Creswell operated freight and passenger ferry service on Puget Sound and his mother, Mary Hall, was the first woman on the West Coast to obtain a motor boat operator's license.⁶ The family moved to San Diego in 1892 and by 1895 Creswell owned a small fleet of vessels on San Diego Bay. Despite his young age, Oakley J. Hall helmed many trips, including the first known recreational excursion craft, the *Point Loma*, which toured the undeveloped harbor, and the government-contracted ferry route between San Diego and the newly established Fort Rosencrans.⁷

In 1908 Rufus M. Creswell purchased the Star Boat Company and consolidated his operations under that company's name. Oakley J. Hall served as an engineer and boat operator at his stepfather's firm through 1912, when he was promoted to manager. In 1915, during a time of increased tourist travel related to the Panama-California International Exposition, Hall spearheaded a merger between the Star Boat Company and competitor firm the Crescent Boat Company, forming the Star & Crescent Boat Company ("Star & Crescent"). The company relocated to the Crescent Boat Company's newly built boathouse directly south of the Broadway Pier (in direct proximity to where descendant company Flagship Cruises & Events continues to operate) and provided a variety of maritime transportation services, including the Fort Rosencrans ferry run, three-hour harbor excursion trips, trips to the Coronado Islands (Mexico), and water taxi service between San Diego and ships moored in San Diego Bay.⁸ Water taxi service grew to a significant portion of the Star & Crescent's business as the number and size of ships in the bay increased in the lead up to and during World War I.

⁵ "New Ferry to be Launched in S. D."

⁶ Mark Wilson, "Captain Oakley J. Hall and the Star & Crescent Boat Company, Part 1," *Mains'l Haul, A Journal of Maritime History*, Vol. 27. No. 4, Summer 1991, 15-18, 16.

⁷ Wilson, "Captain Oakley J. Hall and the Star & Crescent Boat Company, Part 1," 16.

⁸ Wilson, "Captain Oakley J. Hall and the Star & Crescent Boat Company, Part 1," 17.

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In 1918, Oakley J. Hall purchased the San Diego Marine Construction Company, an established boatbuilding firm headquartered at the foot of Sampson Street in San Diego.⁹ Hall installed himself as president of this firm, which produced a variety of vessels, both on commission and for Star & Crescent. Also in 1918, construction began at what would become Naval Air Station North Island (known as Naval Air Station San Diego through 1955), an early military aviation training facility that became the home port of the Navy's Pacific Fleet carriers.¹⁰ Coronado Island had long been served by the San Diego and Coronado Ferry Company, which was established in 1886 as a subsidiary of the Coronado Beach Company and served in its infancy to transport workers building the Hotel del Coronado.¹¹ However, North Island was still a separate geographic entity during this era, separated almost completely from Coronado by the body of water known as the Spanish Bight. Oakley J. Hall recognized a need for ferry service to North Island as the naval air station was developing and established a route to this location in 1918.¹² The service was immediately successful, and Star & Crescent added multiple vessels to the route. The ride cost five cents and was colloquially known as the "nickel snatcher."

Through the 1920s and 1930s, Star & Crescent continued to expand their fleet and the range of services they provided. Under Hall's leadership, in addition to ferries, excursion boats, and water taxis, the firm built and ran several diesel-powered tugboats; developed a subsidiary oil company which transported oil from San Pedro to San Diego (later expanding to Alaska and Central America) via dedicated barges (and, later two massive oil tankers) and distributed the product via company-owned service stations; and entered the lucrative sportfishing market, with five purpose-built anglers built in the 1930s.¹³ As the fleet expanded, vessels departed from additional landings, including from the foot of G Street, and the Fifth Avenue landing (in direct proximity to where descendant company Flagship Cruises & Events continues to operate), now the site of the San Diego Convention Center.¹⁴

In 1940, the year before the United States entered World War II, the population of San Diego was just slightly over 200,000, and the city was characterized by a moderately developed harbor, a limited industrial base, and quiet residential communities.¹⁵ The United States entered the war in December 1941 after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, an event particularly impactful to San Diegans due to Hawaii's proximity to the Pacific Coast. Within three years, San Diego was completely converted into a wartime boomtown, as the population nearly doubled to 390,000 by

⁹ Shipbuilding History, "San Diego Marine Construction," information compiled by Tim Colton, accessed April 30, 2024, <http://shipbuildinghistory.com/shipyards/small/sandiego.htm>; Wilson, "Captain Oakley J. Hall and the Star & Crescent Boat Company, Part 1," 17.

¹⁰ National Park Service, "Naval Air Station, San Diego, Historic District," National Park Service (website), accessed May 1, 2024, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/naval-air-station-san-diego-historic-district.htm>.

¹¹ Dudek, "Historic Context Statement and Historic Resources Inventory, City of Coronado," prepared for the City of Coronado, 2023 (draft), 30; UCSD Special Collections & University Archives, "San Diego and Coronado Ferry Collection, Historical Note," Online Archive of California (website), accessed April 30, 2024, https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt7199r9tn/entire_text/.

¹² Wilson, "Captain Oakley J. Hall and the Star & Crescent Boat Company, Part 1," 17.

¹³ Mark Wilson, "Captain Oakley J. Hall and the Star & Crescent Boat Company, Part 2," *Mains'l Haul, A Journal of Maritime History*, Vol. 28. No. 1, Fall 1991, 9-12, 10-11.

¹⁴ Wilson, "Captain Oakley J. Hall and the Star & Crescent Boat Company, Part 2," 10.

¹⁵ Lucinda Eddy, "War Comes to San Diego," *The Journal of San Diego History, San Diego Historical Society Quarterly*, Spring 1993, Volume 39, No. 1 and 2 (double issue), accessed April 20, 2024, <https://sandieghistory.org/journal/1993/january/warcomes/>.

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1943, not including military personnel.¹⁶ During this time, President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized increases in aircraft production and expansion of military bases and camps, and Naval Air Station North Island served as the major continental base supporting operating forces in the Pacific, including over a dozen aircraft carriers, Coast Guard, Army, Marines, and Seabees.¹⁷ The mammoth base also included aircraft factories and additional production plants that operated around the clock. While many wartime industry workers lived on Coronado Island, countless others lived in and around San Diego, and struggled to find transportation to North Island.

In 1940, Star & Crescent was one of several firms on the Pacific Coast invited to bid on the provision of improved ferry service across San Diego Bay to North Island.¹⁸ The company's fleet of "nickel snatchers" was already running round the clock service when they were selected to provide additional service. The *Silvergate* was the first new vessel constructed to fulfill the bid for improved ferry service between San Diego and North Island. Built in the fall of 1940 and launched by the start of 1941, the vessel was constructed at the company's boatyard, San Diego Marine Construction Company, with a three-inch straight-grain Douglas fir hull and mahogany decks, cabin, and trim. The vessel was designed to carry 350 passengers with a 58'6" LOA, powered by two 150-horsepower diesel engines propelling the vessel at a speed of 12 knots.¹⁹ Immediately pressed into full time service upon its launch, *Silvergate*, along with the previous generation of "nickel snatchers," provided round the clock service to North Island, transporting stationed sailors to a location known as the "Main Landing" and civilian workers to the "East Beach" area of the island.²⁰ Star & Crescent also built an improved ferry terminal during this time; forced to vacate their earlier boathouse at the foot of Broadway to allow expanded mooring at the Navy Pier, the company constructed a new terminal at the foot of Market Street, with amenities for waiting passengers including a restaurant and a bar.²¹

Wartime demand for ferry service could not be met by the *Silvergate* and Star & Crescent's older vessels, and the company built five additional "nickel snatchers" between 1942 and 1944; all five, including the *Juanita*, the *Point Loma*, the *Del Mar*, the *Glorietta*, and the *Ramona*, were boxy, square-headed, wood-hulled vessels, 61'6" LOA, each with two large passenger decks built to carry as many people as possible.²² With this expanded fleet, Star & Crescent competently served as a primary transportation route to Naval Air Station North Island throughout World War II.

When World War II ended in 1945, the demand for ferry service to Naval Air Station North Island plummeted, and *Silvergate* was quickly reassigned to Star & Crescent's recreational excursion service.²³ Recreational excursions had been part of Star & Crescent's business model

¹⁶ Richard F. Pourade. *City of the Dream* (La Jolla, California: Copley Books, 1977) 251.

¹⁷ United States Navy, "Naval Air Station North Island," Navy Region Southwest, NAVBASE Coronado (website), accessed May 1, 2024, <https://cnrsw.cnric.navy.mil/Installations/NAVBASE-Coronado/About/Installations/Naval-Air-Station-North-Island/>.

¹⁸ "New Ferry to be Launched in S. D."

¹⁹ "New Ferry to be Launched in S. D."

²⁰ Wilson, "Captain Oakley J. Hall and the Star & Crescent Boat Company, Part 2," 12.

²¹ Wilson, "Captain Oakley J. Hall and the Star & Crescent Boat Company, Part 2," 11.

²² Wilson, "Captain Oakley J. Hall and the Star & Crescent Boat Company, Part 2," 12; Shipbuilding History, "San Diego Marine Construction."

²³ Wilson, "Captain Oakley J. Hall and the Star & Crescent Boat Company, Part 2," 12.

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since the turn of the century, and the company was able to easily pivot to expanding this service in the post-war era. This shift was part of a renewed city-wide effort to highlight and develop recreational opportunities in the region. Prior to World War II, San Diego civic leaders and city planning experts had noted San Diego's extreme lag in industrial development, and recommended the region promote recreation and tourist-oriented development, culminating in the California Pacific International Exposition of 1935 and 1936.²⁴ While World War II did transform San Diego into a boomtown focused on industrial production, it was not immediately clear to city officials or the broader public whether these changes would have a lasting impact on the area's economy, and many feared a worst case scenario of economic depression. Defense cutbacks did cause an immediate impact on the local economy, specifically within the aircraft industry, but federal wartime infrastructure investments including the dredging of the harbor and provision of permanent durable water supply muted the post-war economic collapse by enabling San Diego to retain industry and residential population, and to strengthen its tourist economy.²⁵ As a result, the tourist trade, which had virtually disappeared during the war, was by 1946 a \$30 million annual industry.²⁶ This bright spot propelled a large-scale wave of public investment in the tourist industry in San Diego through the 1950s and 1960s, specifically focused on the waterfront and maritime activities.²⁷

Immediately after the end of the war, *Silvergate* served as Star & Crescent's primary excursion vessel.²⁸ Departing twice daily from the company's boathouse at the foot of Broadway, *Silvergate*'s two-hour route traveled north along the San Diego waterfront, passing the WPA-constructed San Diego County Civic Center complex, Lindburgh Field (later San Diego International Airport), Point Loma and the Point Loma Lighthouse, and out the "Silver Gate" into the open ocean, turned south back into the harbor, passing Naval Air Station North Island, Coronado Island, and Glorietta Bay, and turned back northward to pass the vast tuna canneries south of the city, finally passing downtown San Diego before returning to dock.²⁹ San Diego's numerous military installments were also highlighted, as the vessel passed several naval facilities and the Coast Guard and Marine Corps bases; nostalgia for America's wartime might was also on full display, with former naval officers serving as tour guides over onboard public address systems, and a long list of the "heroic Navy" vessels and fighting ships that might be viewed. Highlighted non-military attractions included water skiing, historic sights, bird watching and marine mammals. By the early 1950s, shortly after commercial whaling was outlawed, whale populations had rebounded, and San Diego became the locus of the new recreational activity of organized whale watching: by 1955, crowds of up to 10,000 people were flocking to the shoreline of Coronado Island and a dedicated whale watching location at Point Loma.³⁰ That

²⁴ Pourade. *City of the Dream* , 67.

²⁵ Abraham Shragge, "A New Federal City: San Diego During World War II," *Pacific Historical Review*, August 1994, Vol. 63, No. 3, pp. 333-361, 335. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3640970>

²⁶ Pourade. *City of the Dream* , 67.

²⁷ Susan G. Davis, "Landscapes of Imagination: Tourism in Southern California," *Pacific Historical Review* , May, 1999, Vol. 68, No. 2, pp. 173-191, 174. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3641983>

²⁸ Mark Wilson, "Captain Oakley J. Hall and the Star and Crescent Boat Company, Part 2," 12.

²⁹ "San Diego Harbor Excursion," (brochure), no date, estimated 1948, UC San Diego Geisel Special Collections.

³⁰ "Grey Whales Attract 10,000 People to Point Loma Lookout," *Times-Advocate* (Escondido, California), December 21, 1956, 15.

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year the first water-based whale watching tours were launched from San Diego, starting a new trend in marine tourism that continues to this day.³¹

Silvergate continued to serve as Star & Crescent's primary excursion vessel through 1957, when increasingly large passenger numbers motivated Oakley J. Hall to commission the *Marietta*, a steel hulled 95' LOA excursion vessel built in Alameda, California by the Pacific Coast Engine Shipyard and launched in June 1957.³² *Silvergate* did continue to provide excursion service during the winter months when passenger numbers were lower. The vessel served for one season in 1958 as a tow for Star & Crescent's glass bottom boat, carrying passengers and moving the 'underwater viewing' vessel into position on the coast of Coronado Island.³³ Star & Crescent also chartered the boat for private parties and tours.³⁴

As had happened in the San Francisco Bay Area, where the construction of bay-spanning bridges in the 1930s precipitated an end to a robust ferry system, the construction of the San Diego-Coronado Bridge and its completion in 1969 brought about the end of ferry service on San Diego Bay. However, unlike in the San Francisco Bay Area, ferry use had already been dwindling on San Diego Bay, with a marked decrease for Star & Crescent's service in the second half of the 1950s, when reductions in Navy personnel stationed at North Island and a lack of parking along the Embarcadero in San Diego contributed to a fifty percent loss in revenue between 1955 and 1960.³⁵ The San Diego and Coronado Ferry Company was still operating as well, moving passengers and vehicles between San Diego, Coronado, and North Island, presumably under similar revenue declines. Both companies fell victim, to varying degrees, to the new bridge, long discussed but ultimately successfully promoted in 1966, funded through revenue bonds by the California Toll Bridge Authority.³⁶ Bond financing mandated cessation of all other forms of transportation to Coronado Island within ten miles of the new bridge during the bond repayment period. Officials of the California Transportation Department (Caltrans) reported that the State of California would buy the San Diego-Coronado Ferry Company and the Star and Crescent ferry companies to aid in the displacement of ferry workers; the San Diego and Coronado Ferry Company accepted the buyout and ceased operations at midnight on the night before the bridge opened on August 2, 1969.³⁷ Star & Crescent chose to remain in business: they ceased ferry operations to North Island as required and shifted completely to excursion service and boat charters.³⁸

External changes during this era were mirrored by internal changes at Star & Crescent. The company was confident enough in its recreation sector for Oakley J. Hall to design a new

³¹ Erich Hoyt, *The Worldwide Value and Extent Whale Watching, A Special Report from the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society* (Bath, United Kingdom: Alexander House, 1995) 8; Flagship Cruises & Events, "Flagship Timeline: 1915-Today," Flagship Cruises & Events (website), accessed May 2, 2024, <https://www.flagshipsd.com/timeline>.

³² Wilson, "Captain Oakley J. Hall and the Star & Crescent Boat Company, Part 2," 12.

³³ Wilson, "Captain Oakley J. Hall and the Star & Crescent Boat Company, Part 2," 12.

³⁴ "Navy Doctors Guests at Shipwreck Party," *Coronado Eagle and Journal*, October 17, 1957, 4.

³⁵ "Harbor Group Sets Ferry Firm's Rental," *San Diego Union*, March 20, 1960, 6.

³⁶ Dudek, "City of Coronado Historic Context Statement," 57.

³⁷ UCSD Special Collections & University Archives, "San Diego and Coronado Ferry Collection, Historical Note."

³⁸ "Governor Gets Ferry Bill," *San Diego Union*, June 15, 1965, 22; Dudek, "City of Coronado Historic Context Statement," 57; Mark Wilson, "Captain Oakley J. Hall and the Star & Crescent Boat Company, Part 3," *Mains'l Haul, A Journal of Maritime History*, Vol. 28. No. 2, Summer 1991, 20-23, 21.

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excursion vessel, the *Cabrillo*; built by San Diego Marine Construction Company and launched in June 1964, this was the first and only vessel in the company's fleet actually designed by the lifelong mariner.³⁹ Hall also contributed to the redesign and enlargement of the *Cabrillo*, shortly before his death in September 1967. After Hall's death, his sons Oakley J. Hall Jr. and Glen Edward Hall took over the company and guided it through ongoing ferry revenue loss, successfully petitioning the California Public Utilities Commission for the ability to raise fares to fifteen cents on the North Island route in 1968, and through the eventual complete loss of ferry service and shift to excursion service in 1969.⁴⁰ Four of the company's "nickel snatchers" were sold off for various uses: *Juanita* was renamed *Bahia Belle*, lengthened and converted to a false steamer, and used as a party boat in Mission Bay; *Ramona* was renamed the *Hilton Queen* and also used for Mission Bay party boat service; the *Point Loma* was sold to Brazilian owners, renamed *Esperanca*, and used as a health clinic on the Amazon River; and the *Del Mar* was renamed *Pavilion Queen* and used as an excursion boat off Newport Beach.⁴¹ The *Glorietta* was stripped of its engines and used by Star & Crescent as a gift shop.⁴² *Silvergate*, which had already transitioned to excursion service after the war, escaped this culling, and continued to serve as an excursion vessel through the 1970s.

Star & Crescent sold the San Diego Marine Construction Company to Campbell Industries in 1972, and divested of its tugboats soon after, leaving the company solely operating recreational vessels.⁴³ In 1979, Campbell Industries was acquired by Art and Herb Engel, who renamed it Southwest Marine Inc. and soon shifted solely to repair. The Engels sought to acquire additional maritime investments and bought Star & Crescent from the Hall family in 1984. During a period marked by older fleet renovations, the *Silvergate* was described as having reached the end of its life expectancy.⁴⁴

The vessel's fate changed course, however, in 1986, when the bonds that financed the construction of the San Diego-Coronado Bridge were paid off, seventeen years ahead of schedule, allowing the possibility of renewed ferry service.⁴⁵ While ferry service to North Island was deemed no longer viable, Star & Crescent proposed a route between the company's operating dock at the foot of Broadway and a new pier to be constructed at the foot of Orange Street in Coronado, the historic location of the San Diego and Coronado Ferry Company's pier and adjacent to a new \$6.5 million shopping and restaurant development the company was developing.⁴⁶ The California Public Utilities Commission approved this proposed service in February 1987, noting that the service was expected to be a boon for bicyclists and pedestrians, who had never been allowed on the bridge, and who would be able to incorporate the new boat

³⁹ Wilson, "Captain Oakley J. Hall and the Star & Crescent Boat Company, Part 3," 20.

⁴⁰ Wilson, "Captain Oakley J. Hall and the Star and Crescent Boat Company, Part 3," 21.

⁴¹ Wilson, "Captain Oakley J. Hall and the Star and Crescent Boat Company, Part 3," 21; Ken Hudson, "Ferryboat Now Sails Amazon," *San Diego Union*, September 21, 1967, no page, in the collection of the San Diego Maritime Museum clipping file, "Ferry Boats: San Diego."

⁴² Wilson, "Captain Oakley J. Hall and the Star and Crescent Boat Company, Part 3," 21.

⁴³ Shipbuilding History, "San Diego Marine Construction;" Wilson, "Captain Oakley J. Hall and the Star and Crescent Boat Company, Part 3," 21.

⁴⁴ Wilson, "Captain Oakley J. Hall and the Star and Crescent Boat Company, Part 3," 22.

⁴⁵ Jim O'Connell, "Old Ferry to Coronado is New," *San Diego Union*, July 1, 1987, B-3; Michael Richmond, "Ferry Links to Coronado, Catalina Given State OK," *San Diego Union*, February 12, 1987, A-1.

⁴⁶ Richmond, "Ferry Links to Coronado"; Wilson, "Captain Oakley J. Hall and the Star and Crescent Boat Company, Part 3," 23.

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service into broader tourism and active recreation activities. It was anticipated that the new ferry service might have a similar character as the cable car service in San Francisco, which had recently been overhauled and reinvigorated as a tourist attraction to great effect; a nostalgic transportation technology that could appear to locals and tourists alike.⁴⁷

Silvergate went into dry dock at the South Bay Boat Yard in Chula Vista for a multi-month restoration, complete in part by shipwrights who had participated in the vessel's original construction in 1940.⁴⁸ When service began on July 1, 1987, the *Silvergate* had a capacity of 290 passengers and 20 bicycles, and drew a mix, as hoped, of tourists, nostalgia seekers, and commuters.⁴⁹ In its first two weeks of operation, the *Silvergate* moved 37,219 passengers across San Diego Bay, an average of 2,659 riders per day.⁵⁰ It was so popular with bicyclists that there was often a substantial wait to board, as the vessel needed to maintain a 20 bike maximum. By mid-August 1987, 110,000 passengers had ridden *Silvergate* in its renewed ferry role, and Star & Crescent announced they were adding a second boat to ferry service, the *Spirit of '76*, which was moved to San Diego from East Coast service.

While the *Spirit of '76* was later replaced by the *Cabrillo*, *Silvergate* has continued to provide ferry service between San Diego and Coronado since it was placed back into service in 1987. In 1988, Star & Crescent was awarded a historic preservation commendation by the Stewart Title Company for the quality and character of *Silvergate*'s restoration and return to service.⁵¹ The commendation focused on the vessel's cultural significance within the history of San Diego Bay, but the design and material restoration of the boat were also called out: the restoration supervisor found a sound hull with very little rot, noting, "This is a first-class boat. The keel is straight as a die and the structure is hard as a rock. It's a good, husky, beefy structure."⁵² He concluded by predicting, "With a little care, this boat could last another 50 years."

Star & Crescent changed its name to San Diego Harbor Excursion in 1990, and again to Flagship Cruises & Events in 2011, and the company and the *Silvergate* remain under ownership by the Engel family.⁵³ While original plans, drawings, and maintenance records for *Silvergate* are not held by Flagship Cruises & Events, nor were these types of records uncovered in the course of extensive research for this report, a comparison between historic photographs and the vessel's current appearance, information in sources including the United States Coast Guard's Port State Information Exchange (PSIX) system and newspaper articles, and conversations with long-term Flagship employees indicate that the *Silvergate* has undergone few alterations. When the vessel was restored in 1987-1988 in preparation for renewed ferry service, the wood hull was reefed and caulked, mahogany components were stained and oiled, the ship was repainted, steering mechanism gears were removed, an attempt at repair was made, and a decision was made to

⁴⁷ Market Street Railway, "Cable Car History," Market Street Railway (website), accessed May 1, 2024, <https://www.streetcar.org/cablecarhistory/>; Kathryn Bold, "Ferry Tales do Come True," *Times-Advocate* (Escondido, California), June 21, 1987, 23.

⁴⁸ Bold, "Ferry Tales do Come True."

⁴⁹ R.B. Brenner, "Nostalgia Sails with the Coronado Ferry," *San Diego Union*, July 2, 1987, B-1.

⁵⁰ John R. Lamb, "Holiday Crowd Gone, but Coronado Ferry is Still a Hot Ticket," *San Diego Union*, July 16, 1987, B-10.

⁵¹ Amott, "Restored Silvergate Gets Historic Preservation Award."

⁵² Amott, "Restored Silvergate Gets Historic Preservation Award."

⁵³ Flagship Cruises & Events, "Flagship Timeline:1915-today."

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install updated hydraulic steering components.⁵⁴ It is likely that the window modifications (two sliding, one fixed) were also installed at this time. The vessel was repowered within the past ten years to meet emission standards, and the original two 150-horsepower diesel engines were removed and replaced with two John Deere 6090HF485 Variable Speed Industrial Marine Engines. Additional changes include reconfiguration of strap railings at the upper deck, and installation of updated bench seating at the upper deck.

The other wood hulled boats built by Star & Crescent to provide ferry service between San Diego and Naval Air Station North Island in the lead up to and during World War II are no longer extant: *Juanita*, renamed *Bahia Belle*, sank off Point Loma in 1981, *Glorietta* was scrapped, both the *Del Mar* and *Ramona* sank, and the *Point Loma*, renamed *Esperanca* and used on the Amazon River, is presumed scrapped.⁵⁵ Along with the *Cabrillo*, *Silvergate* continues to provide ferry service on San Diego Bay, and are the only boats to do so in the San Diego area. A review of active passenger ferry fleets operating on the West Coast indicates that *Silvergate* is one of only two wood ferryboats in regular operation on the West Coast; the other is the *Carlisle II*, operated by Kitsap Transit in Puget Sound.⁵⁶

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⁵⁴ Amott, "Restored Silvergate Gets Historic Preservation Award."

⁵⁵ Shipbuilding History, "San Diego Marine Construction"; "Bahia Belle Sinks off Point Loma," *San Diego Union*, January 31, 1981, 1.

⁵⁶ Vosler, "The Carlisle II is Back: Century-old Ferry Ready for Riders Again After \$1.3 Million Overhaul."

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency

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☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property N/A

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 32.715172, Longitude: -117.173805

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Boundary of the resource is the physical boundary of the vessel; vessel is moored in San Diego, California, either at the Fifth Avenue Landing, 600 Convention Way, or at Broadway Pier at 990 N Harbor Drive.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Boundary of the resource is the physical boundary of the vessel.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Stacy Farr, Associate, Architectural Historian
organization: Architectural Resources Group
street & number: Pier 9, the Embarcadero, Suite 107
city or town: San Francisco

Silvergate Ferry

Name of Property

state: CA

zip code: 94111

e-mail: s.farr@argcreate.com

telephone: (415) 421 -1680

date: December 5, 2024

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)



Map 1. Site map showing 600 Convention Way, San Diego; location of *Silvergate* circled in red (NAIP, annotated by ARG)

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Map 2. Overview map showing 600 Convention Way, San Diego; location of *Silvergate* noted in red (ESRI, annotated by ARG)

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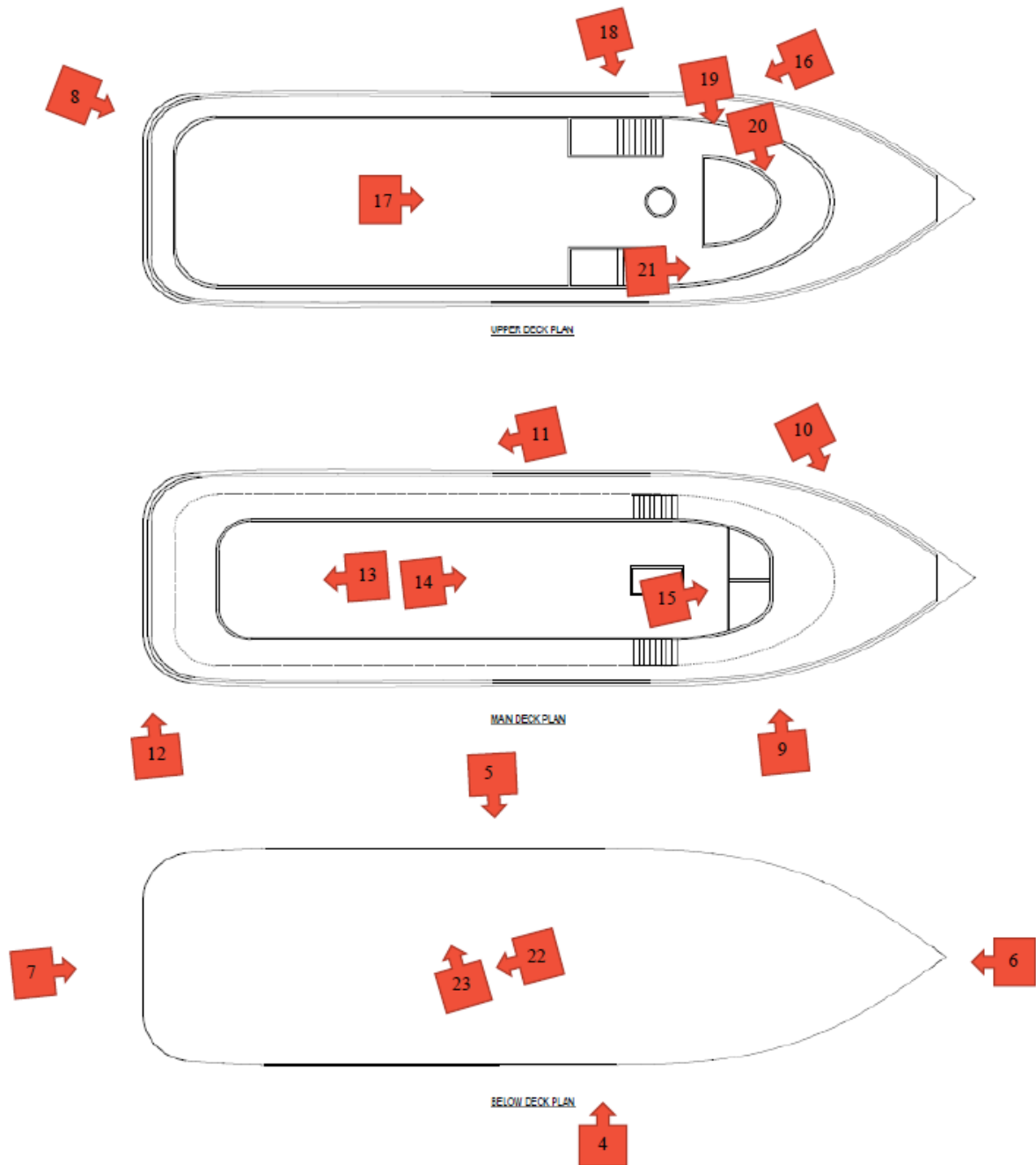


Photo key for existing conditions photos (schematic deck plans adapted from drawings of the *Cabrillo*, annotated by ARG)

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: *Silvergate*

City: San Diego

County: San Diego

State: CA

Photographer: Stacy Farr, Architectural Resources Group

Date Photographed: March 6, 2024

- 1 of 20 (CA_San Diego_Silvergate_0001) Exterior, starboard side
- 2 of 20 (CA_San Diego_Silvergate_0002) Exterior, port side
- 3 of 20 (CA_San Diego_Silvergate_0003) Exterior, fore view
- 4 of 20 (CA_San Diego_Silvergate_0004) Exterior, stern view
- 5 of 20 (CA_San Diego_Silvergate_0005) Exterior, overview from port side
- 6 of 20 (CA_San Diego_Silvergate_0006) Fore starboard, showing hull and bulwark detail
- 7 of 20 (CA_San Diego_Silvergate_0007) Fore main deck, showing bench and deck details
- 8 of 20 (CA_San Diego_Silvergate_0008) Port main deck, showing bench and deck details
- 9 of 20 (CA_San Diego_Silvergate_0009) Aft main deck, showing bench and deck details
- 10 of 20 (CA_San Diego_Silvergate_0010) Interior, main deck cabin, aft view
- 11 of 20 (CA_San Diego_Silvergate_0011) Interior, main deck cabin, fore view

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- 12 of 20 (CA_San Diego_Silvergate_0012) Interior, main deck cabin, head doors at fore
- 13 of 20 (CA_San Diego_Silvergate_0013) Upper deck, aft view, showing stair from main deck
- 14 of 20 (CA_San Diego_Silvergate_0014) Upper deck, fore view
- 15 of 20 (CA_San Diego_Silvergate_0015) Upper deck, starboard view showing smokestack enclosure and apron
- 16 of 20 (CA_San Diego_Silvergate_0016) Pilothouse, starboard view showing helm and navigational console
- 17 of 20 (CA_San Diego_Silvergate_0017) Pilothouse interior, starboard view showing helm and navigational console
- 18 of 20 (CA_San Diego_Silvergate_0018) Upper deck, port view showing bench seating starboard fore of the pilothouse
- 19 of 20 (CA_San Diego_Silvergate_0019) Below deck showing engines, decking, and bulkhead wall
- 20 of 20 (CA_San Diego_Silvergate_0020) Below deck showing hull and bulkhead wall

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Photo 1. *Silvergate*, exterior, starboard side

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Photo 2. *Silvergate*, exterior, port side

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Photo 3. *Silvergate*, exterior, fore view

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Photo 4. *Silvergate*, exterior, stern view

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Photo 5. *Silvergate*, exterior, overview from port side

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Photo 6. *Silvergate*, fore starboard, showing hull and bulwark detail

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Photo 7. *Silvergate*, fore main deck, showing bench and deck details

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Photo 8. *Silvergate*, port main deck, showing bench and deck details
Port main deck, showing bench and deck details

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Photo 9. *Silvergate*, aft main deck, showing bench and deck details

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Photo 10. *Silvergate*, interior, main deck cabin, aft view

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Photo 11. *Silvergate*, interior, main deck cabin, fore view

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Photo 12. *Silvergate*, interior, main deck cabin, head doors at fore

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Photo 13. *Silvergate*, upper deck, aft view, showing stair from main deck

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Photo 14. *Silvergate*, upper deck, fore view

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Photo 15. *Silvergate*, upper deck, starboard view showing smokestack enclosure and apron

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Photo 16. *Silvergate*, pilothouse, starboard view showing helm and navigational console

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Photo 17. *Silvergate*, pilothouse interior, starboard view, showing helm and navigational console

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Photo 18. *Silvergate*, upper deck, port view showing bench seating starboard fore of the pilothouse

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Photo 19. *Silvergate*, below deck showing engines, decking, and bulkhead wall

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Photo 20. *Silvergate*, below deck showing hull and bulkhead wall

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Figure 1. San Diego Harbor Excursion Brochure, front side, no date, estimated 1948 (UCSD Special Collections)

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**SAN DIEGO'S BEAUTIFUL 25-MILE
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A Two Hour Trip Filled with a Thousand entertaining Educational Sights for Your Convenience, Twice Daily: 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

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World's Mightiest Navy
Anchored in the "Harbor of the Sun" is a cross section of Uncle Sam's heroic Navy, many of the ships are those you have read about during the years of the war. A thrilling and educational sight for young and old.

On this trip, when the vessels are in port, you will see the very latest type of fighting ships, the U.S. Navy's newest Destroyers, as well as U.S. Navy's newest Destroyers, submarines, and Submarine Salvage Vessels; all the white, Fighter Planes and Flying Boats will be soaring overhead.

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You gain full advantage of this great harbor trip by viewing and learning with a vast knowledge of nautical matters. They are students of Uncle Sam's Navy — of aquatic birds — of fine life. For your pleasure they will describe little in the colorful, diversified life of a busy harbor.

Your comfort and well being has been considered to the utmost, the vessel is always in quiet waters, eliminating seasickness. A new public address system will carry the guide's voice to any part of the ship, making it possible for you to move around the decks to enjoy full vantage points.

San Diego Harbor is the "Home Port" for scores of your Navy's ships.

Because of its 22 square miles of landlocked harbor, San Diego has been one of the focal points of the Pacific Coast for your Navy. Floating units, repair facilities and training centers for the new Navy men, coupled with the Nation's largest Naval Air Station with its massive shops and hangars—all these are incorporated in one glorious cruise which will bring a thrill never to be forgotten.






Figure 2. San Diego Harbor Excursion Brochure, back side, no date, estimated 1948 (UCSD Special Collections)

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Figure 3. *Silvergate* undergoing restoration in drydock at the South Bay Boatyard, 1987
(Coronado Historical Association Collection, Catalog #1900.37.01-13)

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Figure 4. *Silvergate* in service, 1987 (Coronado Historical Association, Catalog # 1900.37.01-127)

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Figure 5. *Silvergate* in service, 1987 (Coronado Historical Association, Catalog # 1900.37.03-11)

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County and State



Figure 6. *Silvergate* in service, 1987 (Coronado Historical Association, Catalog Number 1900.37.01-115A)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.