

## DID YOU KNOW?

# The Railroad That Once Ran Through Boquete

Long before the highway, Boquete had a railroad. President **Belisario Porras** drove the ceremonial first spike on **April 4, 1914**, launching what he called a “ferrocarril de penetración” — a railway built to develop the wealth it would later carry. The Boquete branch of the **Ferrocarril Nacional de Chiriquí** opened on **April 15, 1916**, connecting the highlands to the port at Pedregal via David and Dolega, alongside sister lines to La Concepción (later extended to Puerto Armuelles) and Potrerillos. For decades the train carried coffee down from Boquete and carried children to school, the sick to hospital, and farmers to market — Chiriquí’s daily rhythm ran on its schedule.

The Interamerican Highway made the line obsolete through the 1970s, and the last trains stopped running in **1997**. When the tracks came up, the steel didn’t go to waste: across old Chiriquí railroad towns, salvaged rail was commonly repurposed as fence posts and utility poles — a well-documented example still stands in a fence in **David** today. Some of Boquete’s own rails likely found the same second life, holding up power lines or fences around the district.

**Sources:** amigosfnch.com (Ferrocarril Nacional de Chiriquí historical archive); Facebook, Amigos Pro Rescate del Ferrocarril de Chiriquí, “Rieles del ferrocarril reutilizados como postes”; “El caballo de hierro Chiricano que dejó de galopar,” DAVID una Ciudad para la Modernidad (2020).