



Top Hats and All — They Went to the Beach

Tref'n'Sea
Living

A brisk Monterey Bay breeze...
The warm white sand stretching
along a mile of emerald waves.

The Santa Cruz Beach scene fit
that description 80 years ago and
more. Only the characters in the



The little girl above is all set for wading. Mama has pulled up her skirts and petticoats and wound them into a "knot" to keep them from the wavelets. Plump mamas and happy kids also posed on photographer's fake logs in front of painted backdrops.



setting have changed.

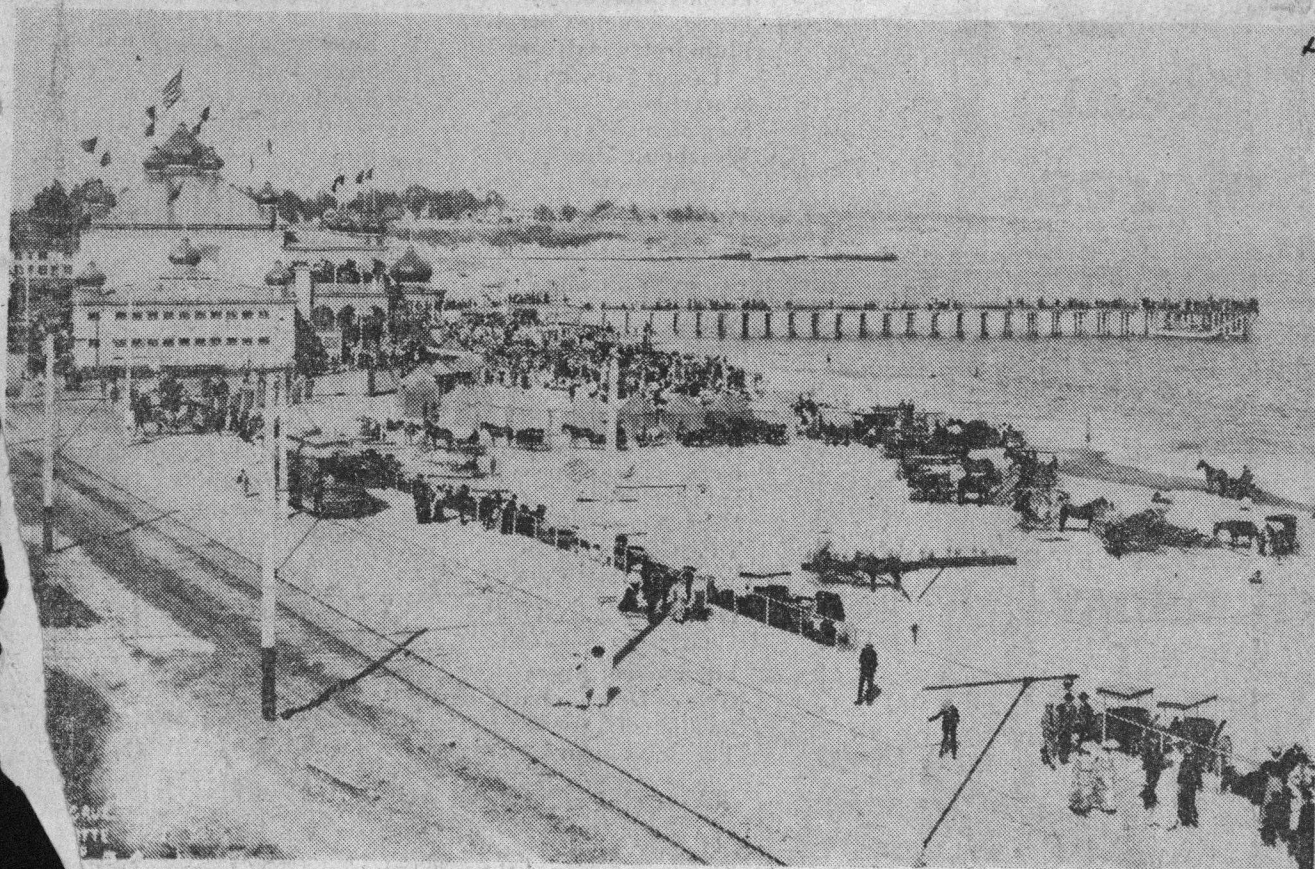
Ruffles, crinoline and whalebone gave way to daring (!) knitted knee-length swimming costumes. Then those knits shrank to the thigh, to the hip, and —finally out of existence in some instances to-day.

When the old photographs on this page were made, "going to the beach" was a pretty formal occasion. Some of the men are in top hats and stiff white collars. The ladies (women were ladies in those days) protected their alabaster skins with umbrellas and layers of petticoats.

Looking at these old pictures one might sigh for that simpler age and say "How times have changed."
—M.K.



Bathing beauties wore polka-dotted long wool stockings so as not to show their "limbs"...and they posed on the photographer's fake log in front of a painted backdrop of the bay. There was a huge rope reaching from the beach out to a float and those who couldn't swim could hang onto it. From the Neptune Baths, built in 1883, and the Dolphin Bath next door with its wooden pool of sea water, we got a real Casino with turrets and towers. There were still horses and buggies on the beach.



Photos From McPherson
and Koch Collections

