



LES LONG/SANTA CRUZ HARBOR

Quadripods for the jetty.

## Jack O'Neill's dredge rescue

In 1962 Woods Lagoon's transformation began as Granite Construction built jetties using rip-rap reinforced with quadripods to gird the outer west jetty.

A channel was dredged, docks were secured, and parking lots, retaining walls and restrooms were built and the harbor was dedicated April 19, 1964.



DAN HAIFLEY

Our Ocean Backyard

Retired Port Director Brian Foss says the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers saw the site as a compromise. A sand drift study in 1955 using a temporary steel jetty confirmed that the site would be filled with sand from the west. The corps promised that "when the need became apparent" it would share the cost of a bypass system with the harbor paying 35 percent and operating it with the federal government contributing 65 percent.

Congress followed the corps recommendation believing a regional port would help the economy. "The harbor was built for three functions including commercial fishing, recreational boating, and a harbor of refuge for sailors," he said, adding that the Corps also believed it would stem cliff erosion just west of where Aldo's is today.

The dredge used to carve the channel was kept to maintain it. Around the time surfer Jack O'Neill was planning his building at the harbor, the 1964 tsunami struck. Former Port Commissioner Jim Thoits was taking care of the 26-foot Monterey fishing boat Buona Madre and remembers water surging in and out of the channel.

"The dredge was tied to the gas dock and was taken out at night by a tsunami," O'Neill told me. "At first we didn't know what happened to it then one of Stagnaro's boats hit something on the way into the harbor." Port Director Ralph Ringe asked him to investigate.

O'Neill went diving and located the dredge. Then he, Jerry Colfer and Bob Judd went to work. "We got four wasp engine shipping cartons and put them together in pairs and sank them next to the dredge on each side by letting water in. We cabled them to the dredge and pumped the water out, thus raising the dredge high enough to tow it in at high tide," O'Neill recalled.

Back in the harbor they told the tug boat operator they'd quit diving that night. "It was too dangerous with all the cables and wires to dive through when the light kept going out, and the tug operator said OK and promised to leave the light on and we went

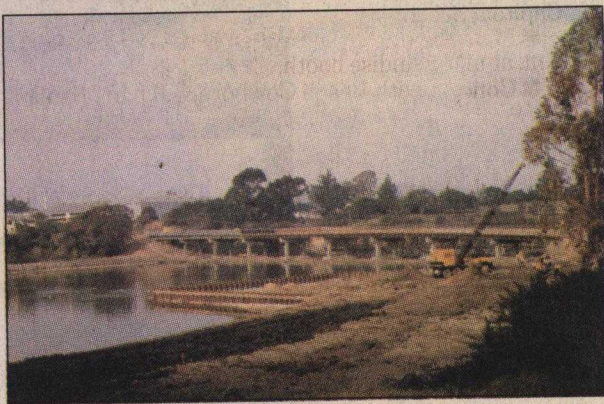
## HAIFLEY

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back to diving. We got the dredge up to Aldo's dock where Ringe had a crane. We pulled it partially up when some connection failed, almost pulling the crane into the water. Ringe freaked out because he was standing in front of it when it started tipping. He was concerned because he couldn't swim." The trio took the dredge to the boat yard for repairs.

The Army Corps contracted a crew and machinery to dredge but only began work once the harbor was shoaled. It would take weeks to clear the channel, often resulting in lost business for fishermen and charter boats. There were two fatalities and many injuries due to attempts to leave the harbor in shoaled conditions.

In 1970, the harbor bought the dredge Santa



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The transformation of the harbor transformation.

Cruz but it proved too small for rougher ocean conditions, according to Port Commissioner Bill Lee. Thoits told me that a jet bypass pump was also used around 1977 but got buried in a storm. After some years of dredging contracted by the Army Corps, Lee was elected to the commission in 1983 where he pushed the cost-share concept because the need had become apparent again that the harbor needed to take

control.

The Seabright was purchased in 1986 for \$2.6 million and operates today along with its tender, the Dauntless. It can be scheduled to accommodate recreational boaters and fishing and charter vessels. My next column: the port expands inland.

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