



NOW THIS IS CROWDED! If you thought this Fourth of July was crowded, you should have been on the Boardwalk on July 4, 1946, when this picture was snapped.

Despite changing with the times, the Boardwalk has kept that old time flavor. Photo from Warren Littlefield's historical file.

History, changing times recalled at the Boardwalk

Old timers can remember how Santa Cruz's Boardwalk once was. Now, Santa Cruzans can enjoy what the Boardwalk is.

Despite changing with the times, the Boardwalk has also kept that old time flavor. Joining such climbing, curving landmarks as the Giant Dipper and the Jet Star is the spanking new Logger's Revenge. This watery ride in a hollowed-out log which zig-zags along a fiberglass flume towering 55 feet above the beach ends with a drenching into a mill pond.

"We feel this ride is a real natural for this area with its logging industry," said Dana Morgan of the Seaside Company, which owns the Boardwalk.

SAW MILL

As in the elegant days of the past, the new Boardwalk still has style as well as thrills. To climb aboard the Logger's Revenge you must make your way through a replica of an old saw mill, loaded with logging artifacts and designed with the expert advice of local lumber people.

While this ride replaces the middle-aged Wild Mouse, other much older

rides are permanent fixtures of the Boardwalk's venerable history and, through painstaking maintenance and repair, will probably outlive us all.

GIANT DIPPER

The last wooden frame roller coaster on the West Coast, the Giant Dipper, recently got an \$80,000 paint job and a new Victorian facade with mansard roofs and gingerbread decor.

It was engineered and built in 1924 by Arthur Loeff, son of the man who designed the Boardwalk's carousel. This great American scream machine is a half-mile long and its operators cheerfully announce runs even faster when dampened by rain or fog.

Experts say the beautiful and rare carousel with its 62 hand-carved horses and two chariots could not possibly be duplicated today. Built in 1911 by Danish woodcarver Charles L.D. Loeff, this brilliantly painted work of functional art and its museum-piece Ruth Band organ is a stunning reminder of the Boardwalk's colorful past.

TOPLESS MEN

Warren "Skip" Littlefield, who has been with the Seaside Company longer and knows more about its past than anyone else, remembers his job back in the late twenties. He walked the beach with Santa Cruz's only policeman searching for "topless" bathers. Any man whose bathing suit shoulder strap was undone would receive a warning to fix the errant strap or risk arrest for indecent exposure.

Still earlier, in the late 1880's, Santa Cruz Beach became a favorite spot for the very wealthy, according to Littlefield. First by boat and later by train, they flocked for extended stays along the sea and in the redwood

forests along the San Lorenzo River.

In 1907, John Philip Sousa's band played for the inaugural ball of the elegant new casino on the Boardwalk (the first one had burned down two years earlier). Among the glittering guests were the governors of three states. President Theodore Roosevelt sent a telegram of congratulations.

But, by 1915 the fickle-rich were taking their holidays elsewhere, first at Del Monte and later at Carmel and Monterey. Spoke-wheeled touring cars had begun chugging and sputtering their way over the new concrete highway from Los Gatos, carrying middle-class weekenders with their tents and picnic baskets.

BIG BANDS

All the glamour wasn't gone. During the 1930's and 1940's the casino and ballroom, called the Cocoman Grove, booked all the big name bands, Paul Whiteman, the Dorseys, Benny Goodman and Woody Herman played night after night for the hammed crowds.

However, just as the big bands declined in the post-war era, so did beachside amusement parks. These playlands by the sea withered and one after another, up and down the coast, were demolished to make way for shopping centers, houses and parking lots.

But the Santa Cruz Boardwalk survived and is blossoming. The mile-long beach, flanked at each end by sandy cliffs and towering Victorians, is as broad and white as ever. Everywhere is fresh paint, a new facade or a refurbished ride. Yes, the Boardwalk is here and is definitely here to stay.

-HISTORY



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