Oceanside’s Piers

Oceanside has had six piers since its incorporation in 1888. A brief history follows:

A wharf company was formed in March of 1888 and the proposal of building Oceanside’s first pier would soon become a reality. The American Bridge Company out of San Francisco started construction in May of 1888. This pier was made entirely of wood. In August of that same year it was reported that pier was out 1200 feet. Oceanside’s first pier opened at the foot of Couts Street, now known as Wisconsin Street. A storm destroyed all but 300 feet of this pier in December, 1890. Today during low tide one can still see the pilings left from this relic of the past.

In 1891 Melchior Pieper, owner of the South Pacific Hotel, originated the idea of rebuilding the wharf. He gathered the piling of the first pier that had washed to shore and stored it behind his hotel, which was near Third and Pacific Streets. Seeing an opportunity to attract more visitors to his stately hotel, Pieper suggested that the pier be built at the foot of Third Street. The town was slow to move at first, but, finally in 1894 a second pier was built with iron pilings at a length of 400 feet. It was affectionately called the "little iron wharf". In 1896 at a cost of $2,000 it was extended. Citizens proposed extending it yet again in 1900, but it was damaged severely in 1902 by heavy storms.

Oceanside’s third pier was built in 1903. Supported by steel railway rails purchased from the Southern California Railway Co. at $25 a ton, it was nearly 1300 feet long and twelve feet wide. In 1908 the Oceanside Electric Co. offered to light the pier free for one year if the city would agree to pay for the necessary wiring. Eventually this structure would again succumb to the merciless waves.

Voters approved a $100,000 bond issue in 1926 to build a fourth pier. The concrete portion was U-shaped and extended 1,900 feet into the ocean. When it was dedicated on July 4, 1927 Oceanside threw a three day celebration the likes have not been seen since. Over 20,000 people from all over Southern California came to join in the festivities and to help Oceanside celebrate.

Storms have always taken their toll on our piers, and one of the worst storms in Oceanside’s history destroyed 385 feet of the pier in 1942. A second bond issue of $175,000 was passed in 1946 for construction of the fifth pier. At the time of its construction it was the longest pier on the west coast.

Oceanside’s sixth and present pier was dedicated and formally opened to the public September 29, 1987. At a cost of $5 million dollars the pier is 1900 feet long and once again the source of Oceanside’s Pride.