

## Timeline of Natural Hazard Events Impacting the City of Capitola

DATE	TYPE	IMPACT/PROPERTY DAMAGE	IMAGES
1791-1792	<b>Flood</b>	Santa Cruz Mission destroyed	
1847	<b>Flood</b>	Sawmill constructed on Soquel Creek (Rancho Soquel) destroyed. It had been built by John Hames and John Daubenbiss, who later obtained lands of the Rancho Rodeo, and became the founders of the town of Soquel (1852).	
1852	<b>Flood</b>	This was a major flood event but impact not recorded (no newspapers had yet been established).	
1/9/1857	<b>Earthquake</b>	Three earthquakes struck the Santa Cruz vicinity in a series. The tower and a portion of the Santa Cruz Mission Church collapsed.	
Jan. 1862	<b>Storm/Flood</b>	Major event—Soquel village inundated; mills, flumes, school, town hall, houses and barns were destroyed. Massive pile of debris went out to sea and then washed ashore at Soquel Landing.	
8/01/1863	<b>Earthquake</b>	Described as “severe shock.”	
1863-64	<b>Drought</b>	Unknown	
10/08/1865	<b>Earthquake</b>	Unknown	
11/25/1865	<b>Storm/High Tide</b>	500 feet of the Soquel Landing wharf is lost; the remaining 600 feet are deemed “useless.” Nearby barn blown down. Two young whales and a hair cloth sofa washed ashore. Waves described as “mountain high.” Wharf damage is \$6,000. Pilings are deposited in a potato field beyond the beach.	

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12/14/1867	<b>Storm</b>	Wharves damaged in Aptos and Watsonville but no specifics are listed for Soquel Landing.	
9/19/1868	<b>"Tidal Wave"</b>	High tide described as tidal wave; damage unknown	
10/24/1868	<b>Earthquake</b>	"Second only to October 1865"	
2/03/1869	<b>Storm, flood, slides, washouts</b>	New bridge washed away at Soquel; roads impassable.	
12/23/1871	<b>Southeast gale, flood, high tide</b>	Water gauged to be "higher than flood of 1862."	
1/24/1874	<b>Storm</b>	Roaring surf. Rain threatens crops.	
12/04/1875	<b>Flood</b>	Compared to ferocity of the 1862 flood	
1877	<b>Severe drought</b>	<p>Capitola's founder, S.A. Hall, was boarding 300 horses at his stable during the summer. The price of hay went to \$20.00 a ton due to the drought, and he lost money. When landowner F.A. Hihn increased the rent two years later, Hall couldn't afford the increase, and left.</p>	

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1/19/1878	<b>Storm with tide</b>	No Capitola impact recorded.	
7/01/1882	<b>Earthquake</b>	Worst since 1868	
1/30/1881	<b>Storm</b>	Conflicting reports on damage to Capitola. One report describes the resort as destroyed, while another stated damage was "not as serious."	
March 1883	<b>Earthquake</b>	Severe shock with several aftershocks recorded. No damage listed for Capitola.	
3/10/1884	<b>Flooding and Washouts</b>	Storm lasted five days. No Capitola impact described in newspapers	
12/16/1886	<b>High surf</b>	Capitola impact unknown	
12/30/1886	<b>High surf</b>	High seas; ships prevented from landing	
5/10/1887	<b>Heaviest surf of the season</b>	No damage reported for Capitola.	
9/18/1888	<b>Earthquake</b>	Described as extremely severe.	
1/05/1889	<b>Storm</b>	Damage to beach areas	
12/26/1889	<b>Storm</b>	Train service stopped; Santa Cruz County becomes isolated.	
1/06/1890	<b>Storm/ Mudslides in mountains</b>	Worst winter in 40 years; concern for grain crops	

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1/27/1890	<b>Floods</b>	Judged to be as bad as 1852, 1862, and 1871; Capitola floods, footbridge and span of wagon bridge destroyed. Esplanade flooded—buildings to be replaced in “permanent form.” A huge pile of debris appears along the beach.	
2/08/1892	<b>High tides</b>	Yacht “Petrel” washed ashore at Capitola; beachfront concessions damaged. Swimmers endangered.	
1/12/1899	<b>Severe storm</b>	Several days duration; damage unknown	
1/02/1900	<b>Storm</b>	Severe; no damage listed.	
3/14/1905	<b>Storm</b>	Judged to be “worst in 27 years.” Capitola impact unknown.	
1/20/1906	<b>Flood</b>	Buildings from Loma Prieta Lumber Company camp above Soquel are destroyed. Debris at Capitola. Downtown Soquel floods. Landslides in hills.	

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1906, 5:12am	<b>Earthquake</b>	Nine men killed in mudslide at the Loma Prieta mill above Soquel; surge on local creeks; water pipes broken, chimneys and walls cracked. Splits in the earth. Magnitude 8.3.	
4/27/1907	<b>Storm</b>	High water and flooding; Capitola damage unknown	
1/21/1911	<b>Storm</b>	Unknown	
3/07/1911	<b>Storm</b>	Unknown	
1911	<b>Erosion</b>	<p>Incidents of cliff erosion along Grand Avenue prompt Lewis B. Hanchett, the owner of El Salto Resort, to begin chopping down trees on what is left of "Lover's Lane" along the bluff of Depot Hill. Hanchett believed that when the trees fell, they further hastened the cliff erosion.</p>	

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11/27/1913	<b>Storm and tide</b>	<p>Great groundswells when the tide was highest. Waves ran across the beach to the Esplanade and water spread "clear to the railroad tracks." Union Traction Company tracks covered with sand. Water reached the Hihn Superintendent's Building (Capitola and Monterey Avenues), and waves were described as "monster." About 200 feet of wharf washed away. Stranded fisherman rescued and pulled underwater to safety. A huge pile of debris covered the beach and was cut-up for firewood. Fisherman Alberto Gibelli stranded when mid-section of wharf washed away.</p>	
1/01/1914	<b>Flood</b>	Flood in Soquel and along Soquel Creek.	
11/28/1919	<b>Storm</b>	Damage high; no Capitola details	
12/27/1921	<b>Storm</b>	Described as "great."	

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<p>2/12 and 2/13/1926</p>	<p><b>High tides</b></p>	<p>Waves to 20 feet. Wharf damaged. Sea wall promenade broken at Venetian Courts. Apartments flooded. Breakers slammed into Esplanade, destroying boathouse/bathhouse, beach concessions. Tide hits the second floor of Hotel Capitola. Water runs a foot deep through village.</p>	

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		<p><i>Top photo courtesy of Homer Berry</i></p>	  

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10/28/1926	<b>Earthquake</b>	Damage recorded in Capitola	
1/24/1930	<b>Erosion</b>	About 130 residents appear before Santa Cruz County Supervisors to protest announced firing of 12-inch guns at Camp McQuaide, Capitola. Among petitioners claims are that "the terrific jar of the guns loosens the rim of the cliffs, and the earth is sloughing off to a dangerous degree."	
1928-1937	<b>Drought</b>	Reported as one of longest and most severe in state's history. Capitola is bordered by bulb ranches and floral nurseries, as well as poultry ranches and rabbit farms.	
12/26/1931	<b>Storm</b>	Soquel Creek rises; cleans lagoon at Capitola. Debris and wood deposited on the beach.	
12/28 and 12/29/1931	<b>Storm and high tide</b>	<p>Damage to cottages and concessions at New Brighton Beach. Roads fill with "the muck of the sea." At Seacliff Beach, the concrete ship Palo Alto is shaken loose and moved about three feet as if "impelled by the spirit of the sea to fulfill its destiny and start moving."</p> <p>Soquel "River" widens to sixty feet, the highest since 1890, damaging property in Soquel and all the way to the mouth at Capitola. Orchards are lost with the rapid rise of water. Hundreds gather to watch the tides batter the concessions at the beach. There is a "vortex of water where the river and sea meet." The waterfront is piled high with flood debris thrown back up the beach.</p>	<p><i>Photo courtesy of Lee Lester</i></p> 

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		<p>The creek cuts across the beach and moves sand below the new outlet. Two months later, workers discovered a noticeable settling of the western end of the bathhouse, due to a break in the retaining wall. This left a portion of the bathhouse supported only by its concrete flooring. Repairs required rebuilding the retaining wall and replacing the fill.</p>	
1/04/1935	<b>Flood</b>	<p>Capitola Village floods; thirty feet of the sea wall is taken out. Beach playground disappears. Venetian Courts hit hard but damage minimal.</p>	<p><i>Photo courtesy of Lee Lester</i></p>
1/09/1935	<b>Erosion</b>	<p>Near the seawall cave-in by the site of the old hotel, a tree fell sixty feet from Grand Avenue. The "new favorite outdoor sport" for onlookers is to walk behind the sewer plant to see the fallen tree and debris of the broken sea wall.</p>	
12/14/1936	<b>Drought</b>	<p>Long drought ended by rain.</p>	
2/14/1937	<b>Flood</b>	<p>Soquel Creek floods in Soquel Village due to logjam at the bridge on Soquel Drive. Landslides in watershed.</p>	
3/22-23/1937	<b>Storm</b>	<p>Boats in the streets at Capitola. An estimated \$3,000 is spent to repair the sea wall at the Venetian Court Apartments.</p>	
2/10/1938	<b>Storm winds</b>	<p>Winds up to 70 mph; 500 trees uprooted throughout county. Thunderous seas lashed the waterfront from Aptos to Capitola.</p>	

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1/04/1939, 10:30pm	<b>Wind and waves</b>	<p>Main damage to Capitola Beach Club at the Esplanade and Monterey Avenue. Water and sand carried into the structure and spread out over the dance floor to the bandstand.</p> <p>While the storm was still raging, thieves jimmied the back door of the club's tap room, and made away with two slot machines, along with the stands on which they had rested.</p> <p>Ocean also swept over the Esplanade during the night, and into town for a block-and-a-half, carrying sand and rocks, some 6-8 inches in diameter. Waves hit the front and sides of the pier. Sand and rocks were swept into lower terraces of the Venetian Court and covered porches of the casino on the waterfront, but did no serious damage.</p>	
1/8/1940, 9pm-Noon	<b>Storm</b>	<p>The "old Capitola casino" owned by Capitola Amusement Company was the principal victim of storm. Casino "capsized" shortly after 9 a.m. Plans for new structure announced immediately.</p>	

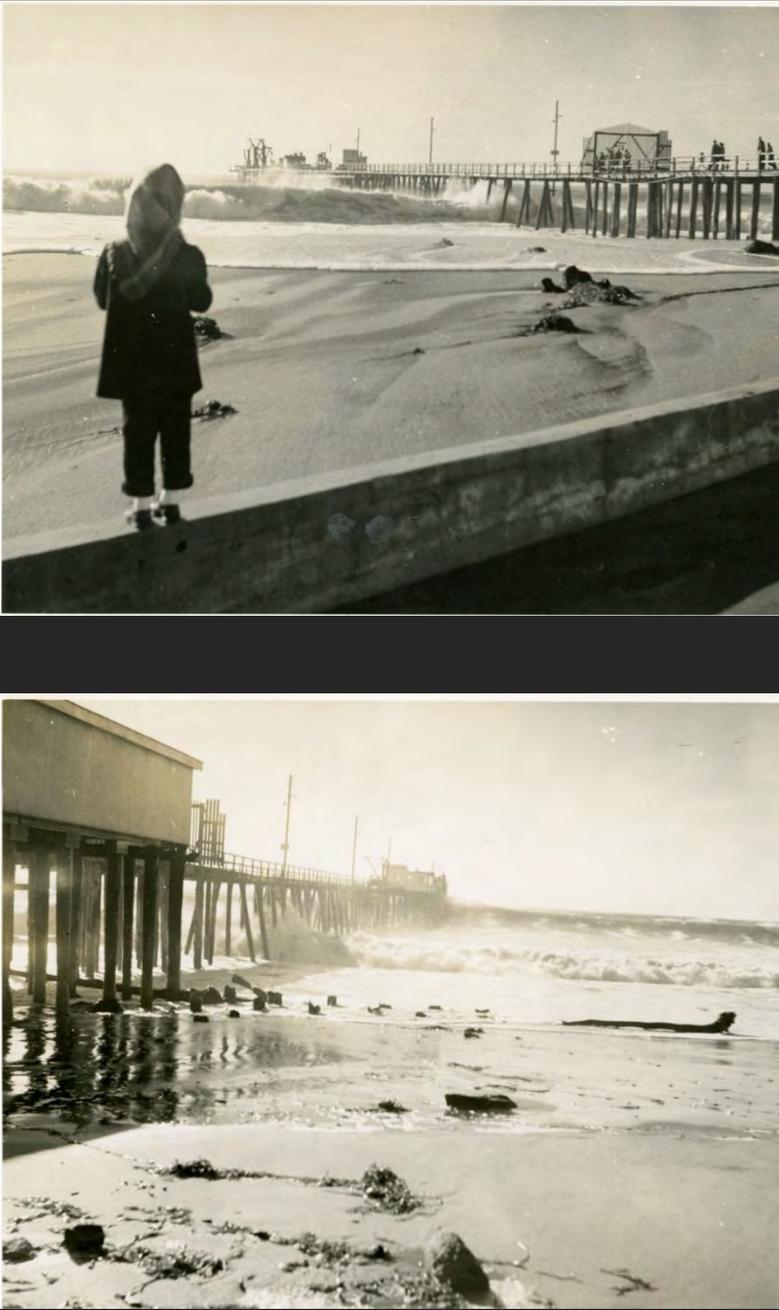
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		<p>Photo courtesy of Homer Berry</p>	
1/12/1940	<b>Storm</b>	Most rain "since 1890" reported.	
1/26/1940	<b>Storm</b>	"Shatters all records."	
2/27/1940	<b>Severe Flood</b>	<p>Logs pile against bridge in downtown Soquel and village floods. Landslides in watershed.</p>	

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3/31/1940	<b>Storm</b>	“Wettest day in Santa Cruz history.”	
12/23/1940	<b>Storm</b>	Flood conditions, winds	
2/09/1941	<b>Near record storm</b>		
4/2/1941	<b>Severe Storm</b>	Lasting many days Damage unknown	
4/15/1941	<b>Earthquake</b>	Santa Cruz is epicenter. No damage.	
6/02/1941	<b>Earthquake</b>	Sharp jolt	
6/18/1941		Capitola announces plans to lengthen flume	
12/09/1943	<b>Gale winds</b>	60-mile-an-hour winds create damage in county	
2/5/1945	<b>Flood conditions</b>	Local damage unknown	
April 1946	<b>Tsunami</b>	Earthquake in Aleutians produced 115-foot wave. Tsunami observed along the West Coast. A man was swept to sea in Santa Cruz. Ten-foot waves hit the coastline.	
1947-1949	<b>Drought</b>	Statewide	
8/01/1949	<b>“Heaviest surf in 20 years”</b>	18-foot waves recorded along the coast. Swimmer drowns in Santa Cruz.	

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<p>Winter 1953</p>	<p><b>Giant swells</b></p>	<p>Ocean side of building at the end of the Capitola Wharf smashed in by waves 20-30 feet at high tide. Six pilings broken off.</p>	

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4/15/1954	<b>Earthquake</b>	Falling plaster, broken chimneys, shattered dishes	
12/22/1955	<b>Highest Flood</b>	<p>At the Soquel Drive bridge in downtown Soquel, remains of a four-room house and five cabins joined the rubble that wedged against the bridge abutments, causing the bridge to collapse. Overall damage to property in Soquel and Capitola exceeded \$1 million. Capitola damage included the Venetian Courts. Noble Creek and Tannery Creek also flooded.</p> <p><i>Photos courtesy of Carolyn Swift</i></p>	

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5/2/1955	Erosion	<p>Sentinel: Capitola City Council Asks Cleanup Help</p> <p>“Believe it or not, a few people still occasionally throw garbage over the cliff, particularly along Grand Avenue. This not only creates health hazards, but also attracts rodents which burrow into and weaken the cliff, increasing the rate of cliff erosion....”</p> <p><i>Photos courtesy of Covello and Covello Photography.</i></p>	
4/3/1958	High Tide	<p>Esplanade smashed by tides. Andy Antonetti's Merry-go-round damaged; horses are knocked off and washed down San Jose Avenue.</p> <p><i>Photo courtesy of Covello and Covello Photography.</i></p>	

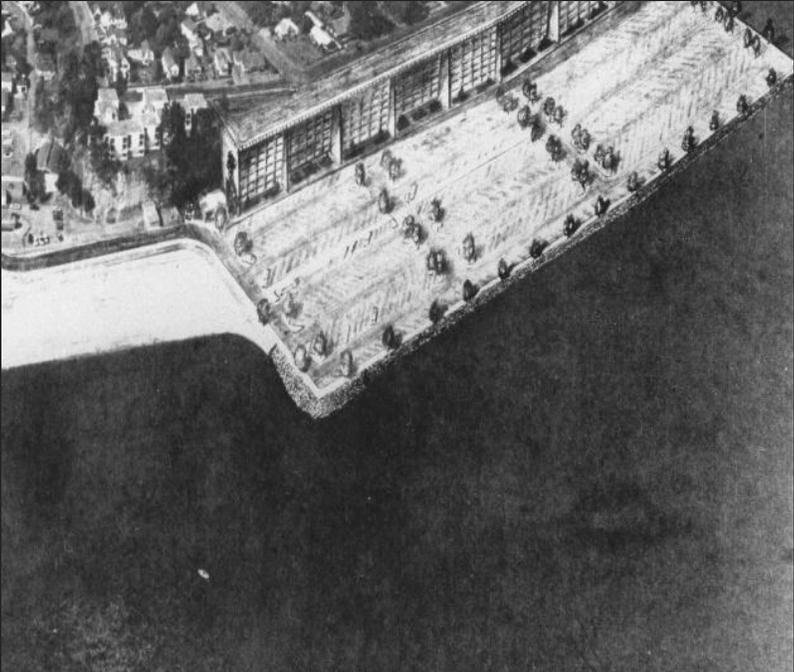
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DATE	TYPE	IMPACT/PROPERTY DAMAGE	IMAGES
2/09/1960	Gale winds, heavy seas	<p>Power outages, slides, and winds 35-40 mph. Capitola hardest hit. Damage estimated at \$100,000. Ten Venetian Court apartments flooded. "A sign was ripped off the end of the wharf, rolled into a ball, and deposited into an apartment."</p> <p>Heavy waves smashed the beach restaurants, amusement concessions, and the merry-go-round. Rocks and logs strewn across the beach. Water pushed back under the Stockton Bridge, crushing the riverfront fences 100 yards on either side. An estimated \$5,000 in damage was done to the wharf building, but not much happened to the wharf itself. Cliffs crumbled on Grand Avenue.</p> <p>Police Chief Marty Bergthold called it "The worst storm in 15 years."</p> <p>A portion of Grand Avenue falls into the ocean.'</p> <p><i>15 people knocked to the ground by breakers. One woman injured.</i></p>	
Summer 1961	Birds fall from sky	<p>Sooty Shearwaters fall from the sky; they are affected by toxins from red algae. Birds cover streets, wharf, and beach. Alfred Hitchcock inspired to move ahead with filming "The Birds."</p>	

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1963	<b>Erosion</b>	Capitola City Council votes to start condemnation proceedings against Harry Hooper to obtain 320 feet of Hooper Beach for erosion control to protect Cliff Drive, where a high rise development was planned.	
1963	<b>Erosion</b>	Capitola City Council considers construction of seawall to control erosion from Grand Avenue to New Brighton Beach. The filled in area would also provide parking for approximately 400 cars.	
Dec. 20, 1964	<b>Erosion</b>	<p>Construction begins on controversial Crest “prestige” 24-unit apartment house on the bay side of Grand Avenue on Depot Hill. Robert Lamberson, architect. Grand Avenue residents eventually sue the City over a disputed 10-foot setback for the project, which was built on a former park site at the top of the bluff. <i>Cost \$500,000.</i></p> <p>In the 1980s, several units facing the bay were removed due to cliff erosion.</p> <p><i>Photo courtesy of Minna Hertel.</i></p>	
12/20/1964	<b>Flood threat</b>	Storm and tide alarms City with a disappearing beach	

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DATE	TYPE	IMPACT/PROPERTY DAMAGE	IMAGES
1/13/1965	Erosion	<p>Capitola considers feasibility study to build 370-foot seawall along Grand Avenue. Backfilling below Grand Avenue would be used for a 1,000-car parking lot.</p> <p>Developers expressed desire to lease portion of the parking lot for a three-story, 20 unit convention hotel with restaurant and cocktail bar, to be built along the Grand Avenue bluff.</p> <p>First step was to have the beach deeded to the city by the state.</p> <p><i>\$1,228,000 estimated cost for parking lot</i></p> <p><i>\$275,000 estimated cost for hotel.</i></p> <p><i>Photo courtesy of Covello and Covello Photography.</i></p>	
Summer 1965	Erosion	<p>Capitola requests help from the State Department of Water Resources to solve the problem of disappearing sand, due to "failure of Santa Cruz harbor officials to install a recommended sand by-pass at the harbor jetty.</p> <p><i>Photo courtesy of Al Lowry.</i></p>	

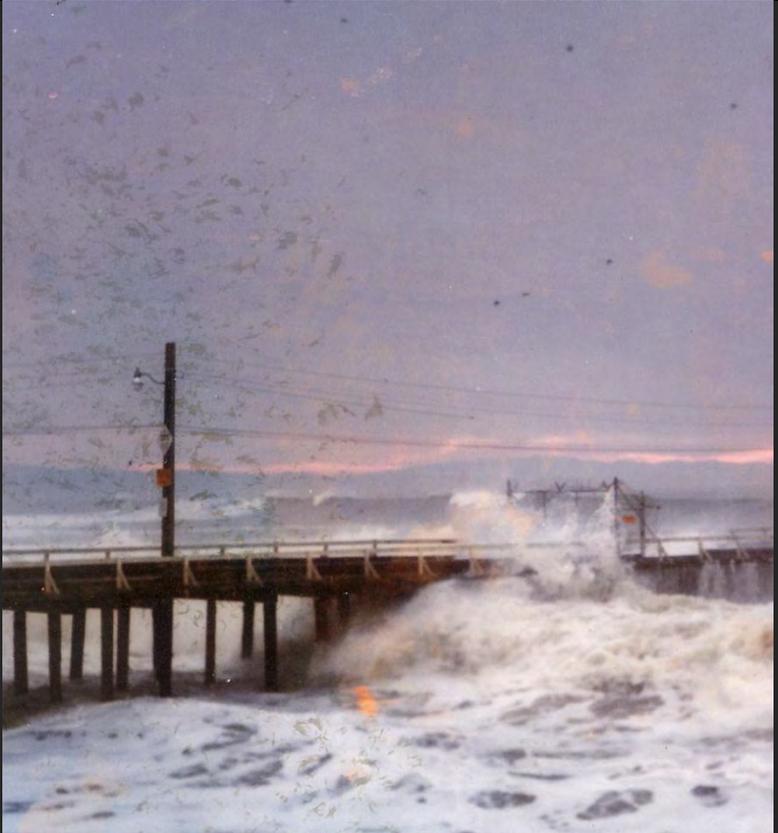
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<p>Summer of 1965</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Erosion</b></p>	<p>Off-Shore parking lot plan revised. Parking lot to extend 430 feet out into the way from the cliffs south of Capitola beach for about 1,500 feet. A breakwater is planned to extend 600 feet south to the end of the high cliff area, to prevent cliff erosion. The parking lot would also be used as an "overnight parking unit" with commercial concessions for tourists. Project to cover ten acres reclaimed from the bay.</p> <p><i>Photo courtesy of Covello and Covello Photography.</i></p>	
<p>December 1965</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Storm</b></p>	<p>The City replaced 21 pilings under the wharf that were weakened by the storm.</p> <p>Capitola officials fear that waves would smash the seawall which protected sewer lines that ran from Capitola's pumping station to the East Cliff Sanitation District plant.</p> <p>That winter, the county public works department offered 500 cubic feet of rock rubble to be placed against the seawall.</p>	

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1966	<b>Erosion</b>	<p>Lifelong resident Violet Gooch hired Granite Construction to build a rip-rap wall at the base of the cliff at the end of the row of homes west of the wharf. (Hooper Beach)</p> <p><i>Photo courtesy of Covello and Covello Photography.</i></p>	
January 1967	<b>Storm</b>	Reported as heavy	
1968	<b>Erosion</b>	<p>Army Corps of Engineers begins work to construct a groin, completed the following spring. Cost \$160,000.</p>	
January 1973	<b>Storm</b>	Beach littered with tons of driftwood after heavy rains.	
1975	<b>Wind storm</b>	40 knot winds downed trees and power lines.	
1976-77	<b>Severe drought</b>	Water conservation ordered	

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1976	<b>Strong winds</b>	Winds downed power lines	
12/21/1976	<b>High waves</b>	Waves crash over wharf	
10/2/1979	<b>High waves</b>	<p>At least eight sailboats were destroyed at Capitola during the morning. A powerful swell broke 15 boats from their moorings off the Capitola Wharf. The boats were pushed ashore by 12-to-20 foot waves that pounded the shoreline.</p>	
Jan 1980	<b>Flood</b>	No damage reported	

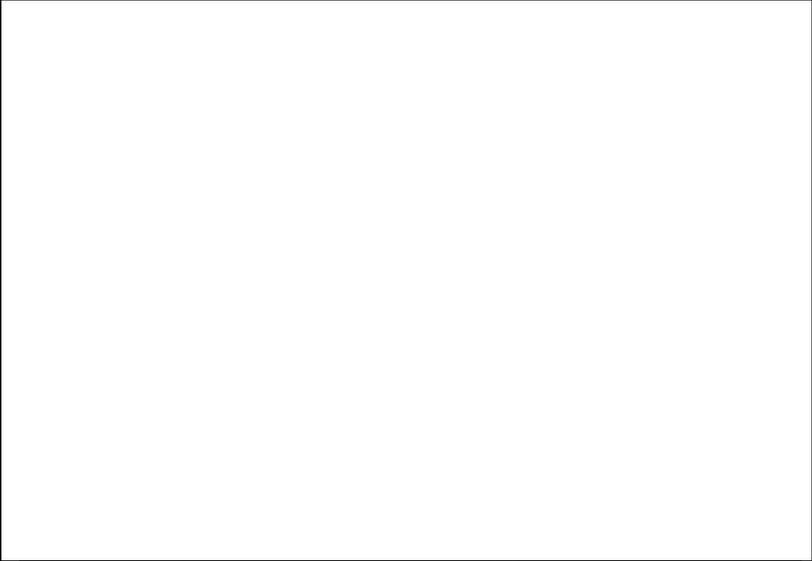
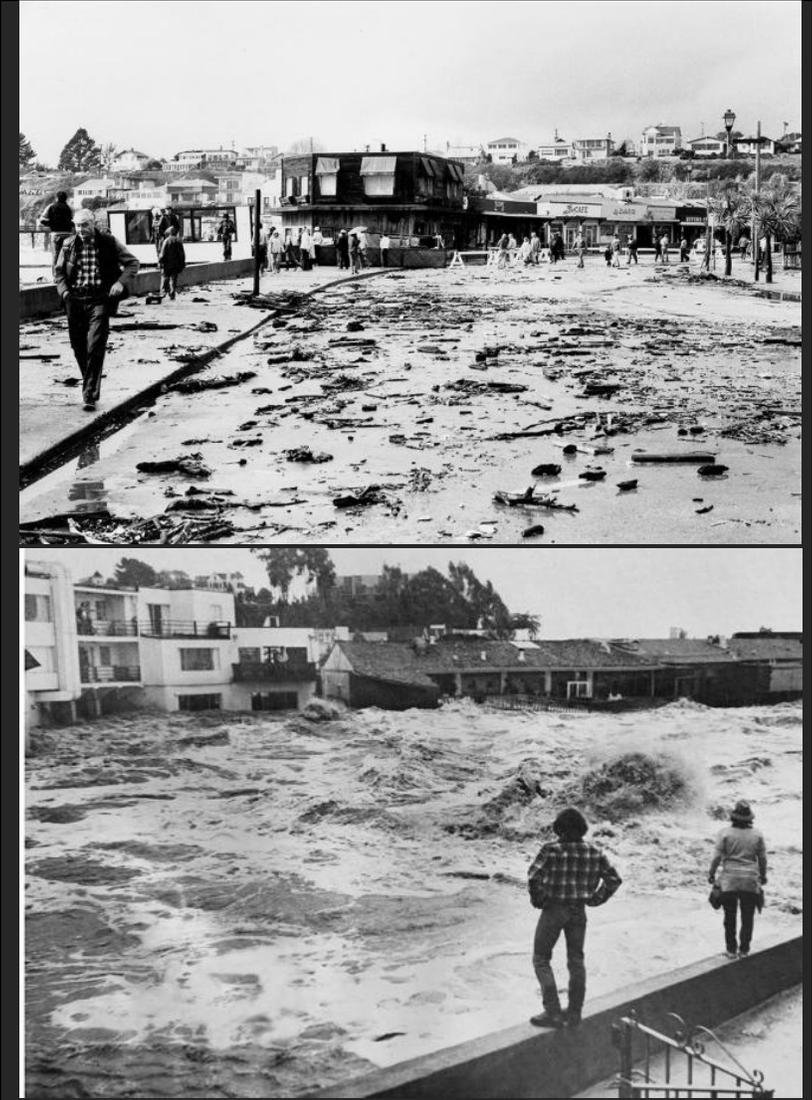
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1/16/1980	<b>Earthquake</b>	Epicenter of 3.6 magnitude quake in Corralitos	

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<p>January 3-5, 1982</p>	<p>Flood</p>	<p>Torrential rainfall, floods, mudslides countywide. Soquel Creek overflowed and flooded Soquel. The logjam at the bridge was estimated to be nearly 100 yards wide and 25 feet high. In Capitola, damage was comparatively minimal. The roadway leading to the Stockton Avenue bridge was damaged. The bridge bulkhead was undercut. Several of the Venetian Court units were damaged and a portion of the seawall gave way.</p> <p><i>City officials estimated damage to public property at \$270,889.</i></p>	 <p>The 'IMAGES' column contains three photographs. The top photo shows a large wooden truss bridge over a wide, muddy, brown floodwater. The middle photo shows a street scene where a car is partially submerged in floodwater, with a house in the background. The bottom photo shows a curved concrete seawall or pier structure that has been damaged and partially collapsed into the water, with buildings nearby.</p>

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12/17/1982	<b>Storm</b>	<p>Restaurant on the newly renovated Capitola Wharf is damaged in storm.</p>	
1/27/1983	<b>High Tide</b>	<p>Capitola Wharf buildings, the Venetian Courts, the former boathouse building (Mr. Toots Downstairs) and all other business of the Esplanade were flooded. Water extends down San Jose Avenue and Lawn Way. Huge logs and debris are scattered through town.</p> <p>The giant surf took out a 30-foot section of the wharf which had been renovated in 1982.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Photos courtesy of Minna Hertel.</i></p>	

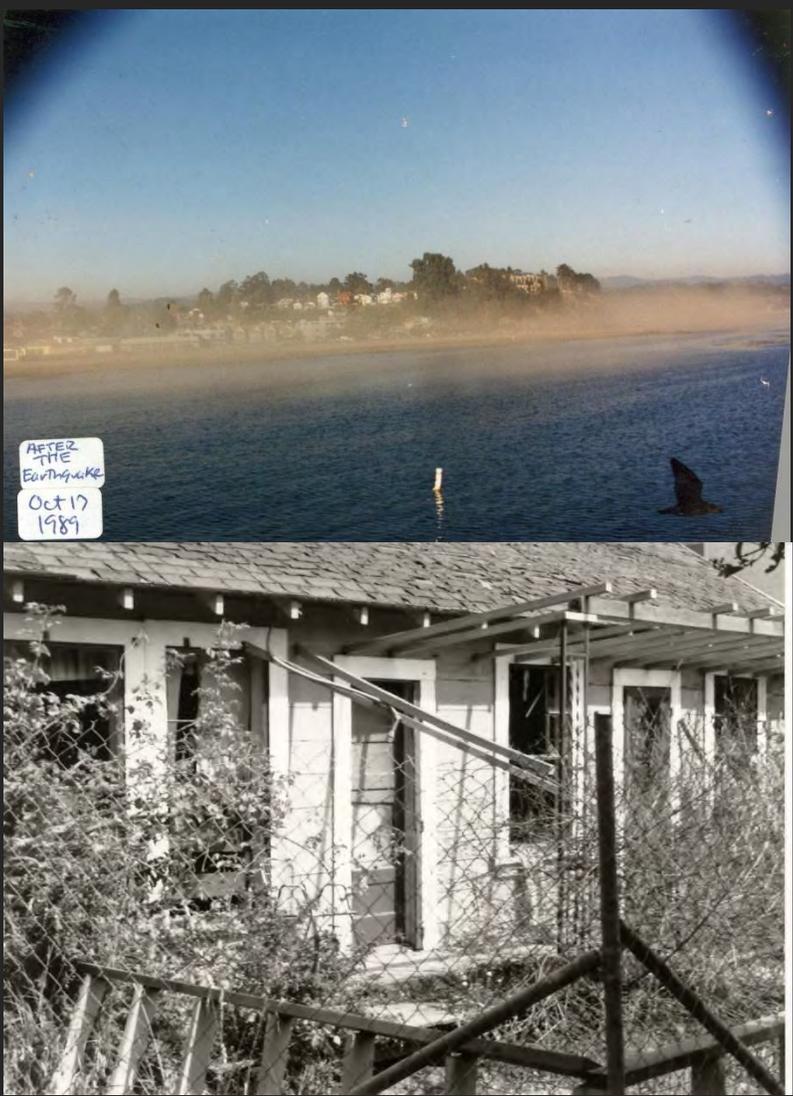
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		<p><i>Top photo courtesy of Minna Hertel; middle photo courtesy of Sandy Lydon.</i></p>	
<p>2/10/1983</p>	<p><b>High Tide</b></p>	<p>Surf rolls over the sea wall along the Esplanade. Water and debris extend as far as Capitola Avenue.</p> <p><i>(Photo courtesy of Minna Hertel)</i></p>	

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3/1/1983	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>High Tide/strong winds</b></p>	<p>Waves damaged the restaurant at the end of the wharf, crashed over beach wall and entered restaurants on the Esplanade, “but damage was nothing compared to the million-dollar loss suffered in January,” said Capitola City Manager Steve Burrell.</p>	
2/15/1984	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Erosion</b></p>	<p>Even though planner Susan Tupper warned the plan might not be a lasting solution, Capitola City Council approved a plan to stabilize its crumbling cliffs by installing artificial seaweed—a series of floating plastic fronds anchored to a sand-filled tube. The intent was to capture sand that drifts down the coast each year, thereby building a sandy beach in front of the cliffs below Grand Avenue. The “ersatz” seaweed lasted until the next major storm and then drifted to sea. <i>Cost \$120,000.</i></p> <p>The cliff continues to erode at a rate of 12-18 inches per year.</p>	

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1987-1992	<b>Drought</b>	Severe drought, water conservation ordered.	
10/17/1989, 5:04pm, Duration of 15 Seconds	<b>Earthquake</b>	<p>Loma Prieta 6.9 mag earthquake with epicenter 3 miles north of Aptos. Comparatively, damage to Capitola homes and businesses was not as severe. Within the city, no buildings damaged and no one was injured physically.</p> <p><i>Damage countywide ultimately estimated to be about \$1 billion.</i></p> <p><i>(Top photo courtesy of Karen Nevis)</i></p>	
March 1995	<b>Flood</b>	The creek rose near the village.	

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Winter 1996	<b>Flood</b>	Yards and basements of homes along both sides of Soquel Creek near the village were flooded.	
2007-2009	<b>Drought</b>	Water waste regulations strictly enforced; voluntary 15% conservation savings requested by local water providers.	
Winter 2008	<b>High tide</b>	<p>Old bathhouse/boathouse building (Margaritaville/Stockton Bridge Grill) battered by swells.</p> <p><i>(Photo courtesy of Karen Nevis)</i></p>	

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3/11/2011	Tsunami	Capitola Village received warnings, but no damage	
March 24 and 26, 2011	Noble Creek and Tannery Creek Floods	Noble Creek floods village; Tannery Creek rushes through New Brighton Parking lot and undermines the cliff roadway.	

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