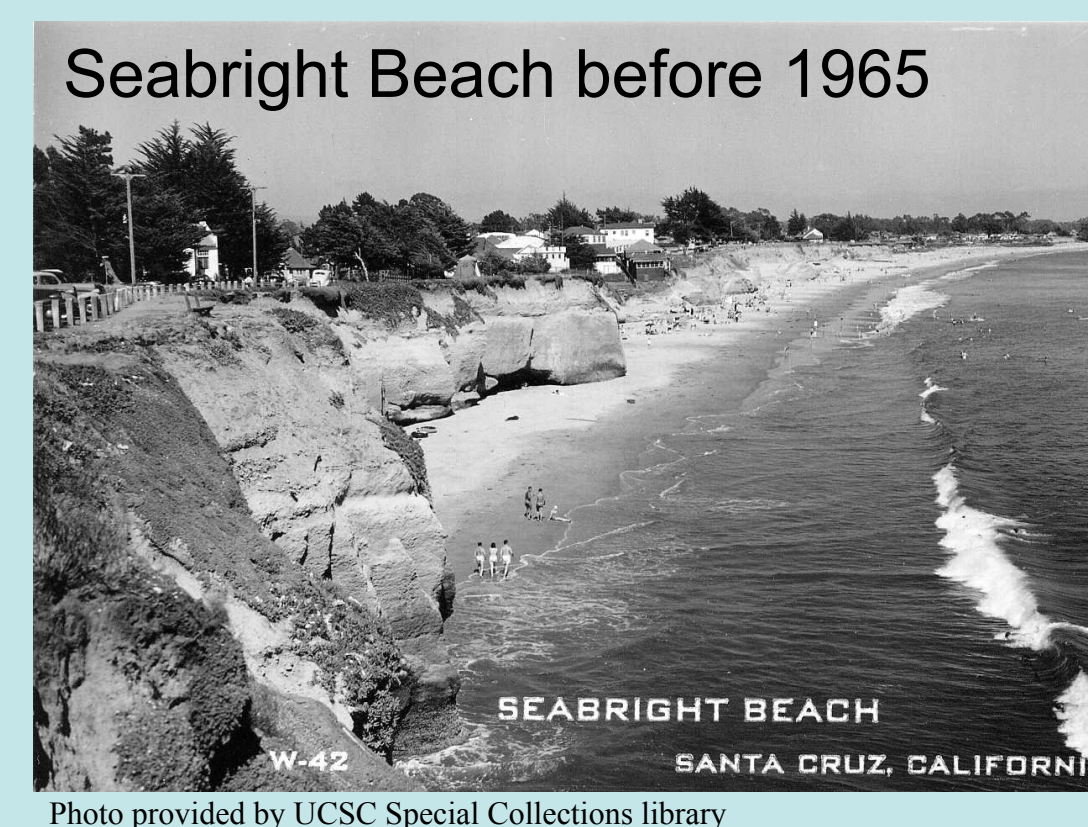
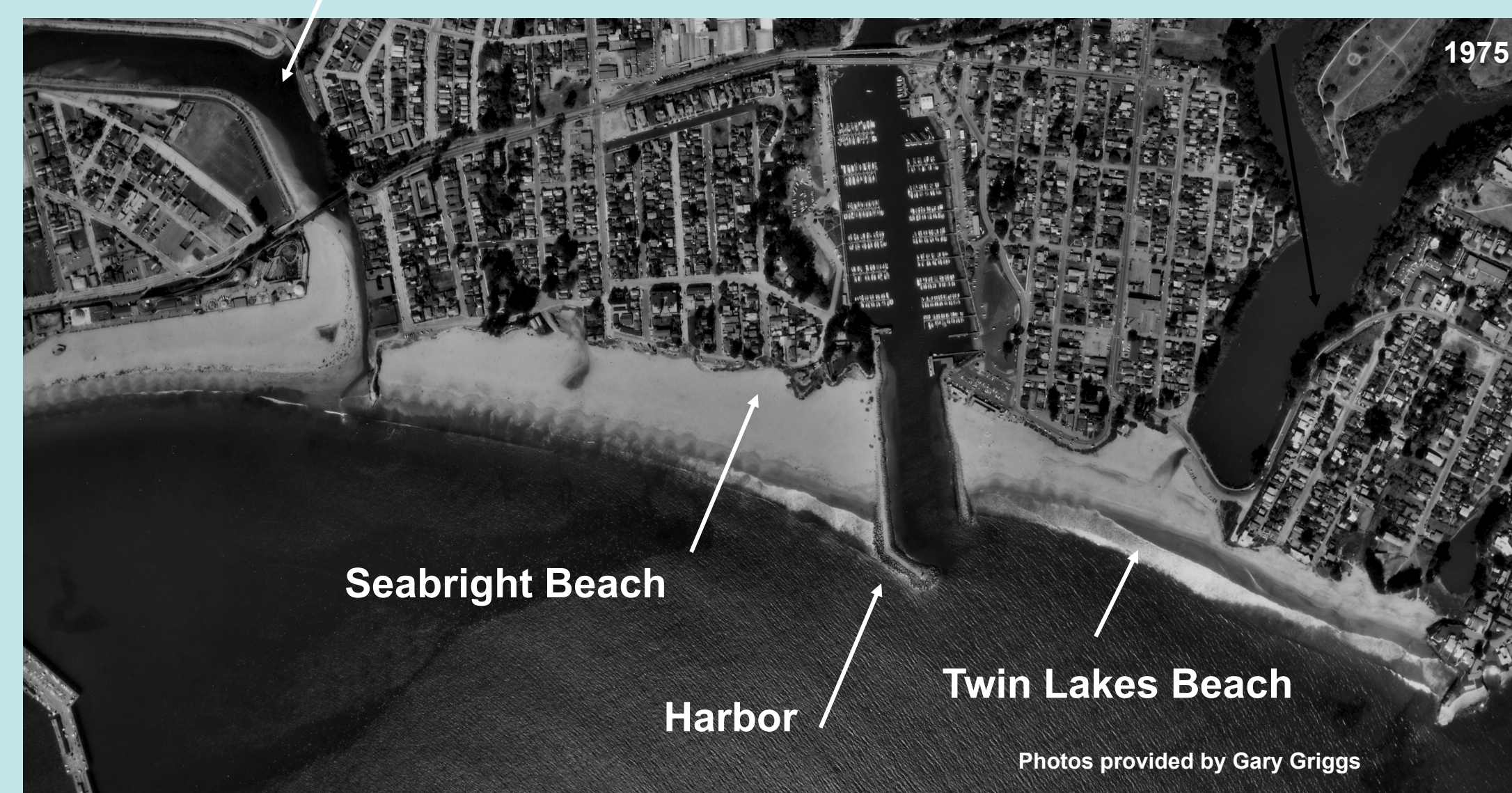


Welcome to Seabright Beach

Beaches attract people all over the world. Are you curious about how a beach forms? How old do you think this beach is? How has the beach changed since the last time you were here? Read on to learn how wind, weather, and ocean currents have created, shaped, and will continue to change Seabright Beach. Enjoy your visit today.



Why is Seabright Beach here?

How long has it been here?

You might be surprised to learn that this wide south-facing beach is very young. Until 1963, it was a narrow strip connected to the much wider beach to the east as one long continuous beach. The official name of this long beach was Twin Lakes Beach because of the two nearby lagoons, Woods Lagoon and Schwann Lake. However, locals referred to the beach as Castle Beach.

In 1963, this long beach was split into two parts when the small craft harbor you can see to the east was constructed in Woods Lagoon. Jetties were also built out into the bay to protect the harbor entrance from the forces of water, wind, and sand. After this the western beach became known as Seabright Beach, while the eastern beach was still called Twin Lakes Beach. Today Schwann Lake remains a little inland of Twin Lakes Beach.

Western Seabright Beach

1. San Lorenzo Point

Why is this point here?

The rock under this point is harder and, therefore, slower to erode than the softer rock that makes up the cliff at the back of the beach. Until recently, you could walk out on the point, but because of erosion, this is no longer possible.

2. San Lorenzo River

Watch how the river and ocean mix here.

Rivers carry most beach sand to the beach. You can see sand flowing into Monterey Bay at the mouth of the San Lorenzo River. This cannot happen, however, when dams are built across rivers such as the San Lorenzo. The sand is trapped and cannot get to the beach.

Does it look like the river is flowing backwards?

This is no illusion. Waves from the bay are strong and push against the incoming river. Can you see how the shape and width of the river can also be affected by ocean tides and runoff?

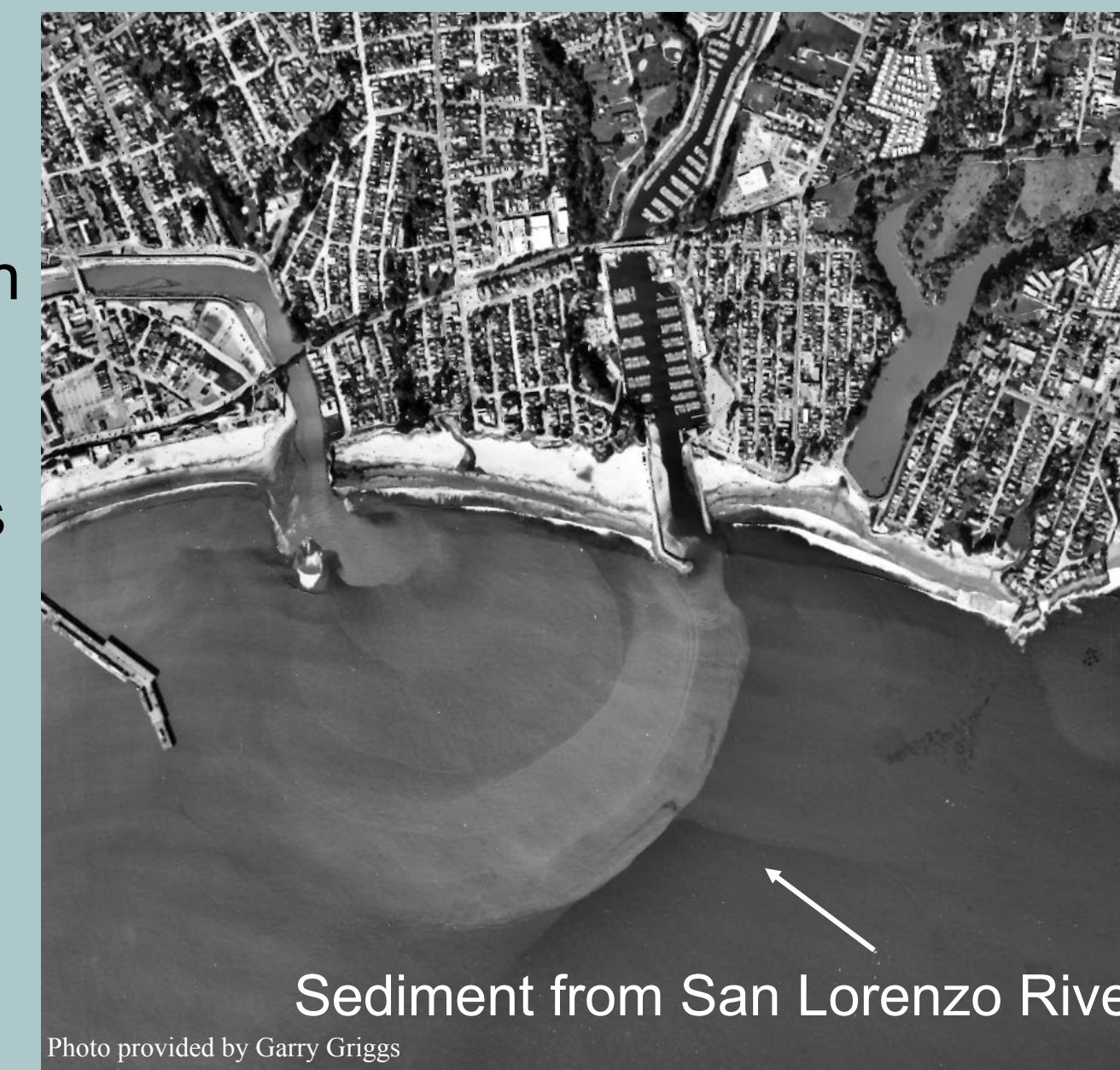
Does the width of the Boardwalk Beach change near the river?

Yes. It is wider in the summer when San Lorenzo Point traps both coastal sand and river sand and deposits this in front of the boardwalk. In the winter it is narrowed when both the rain-swollen river and powerful waves remove much of the boardwalk beach sand.

3. Arch

How and why did this arch develop at the base of San Lorenzo Point?

This rock is 5-7 million years old! Through time, cracks have weakened the point at this spot and waves have carved out this arch. Take a moment to feel the rock. Why do you think it is called sandstone?



Eastern Seabright Beach

4. East Cliff Footpath

Walking along the East Cliff footpath, what do you notice? How would you explain the large chunks of asphalt hanging off the cliff?

You are walking on all that remains of what was once East Cliff Drive. Before 1963, when Seabright Beach was narrow, erosion undercut the street on top of the cliff so that it collapsed. Because Seabright Beach is much wider now, cliff erosion has slowed but not stopped. But erosion still happens, especially during large storms and this path will also eventually erode due to continuing erosion.

Compare the cliff by the harbor with the cliff by the point. The wider beach at the west end of Seabright protects the cliff. More plants can grow here because the cliff is less steep.

5. Dunes

Dunes form where a beach is wide where plants can hold them in place. These plants, adapted to their rough life here in sun and sand, may look tough. In fact, though, these plants are very fragile. Please avoid stepping on them.

6. Jetties

Sand moving down the coast gets trapped between the jetties and forms a sandbar. Dredging is necessary to keep the channel open to boats. Can you see the dredge anchored at the harbor mouth? Using a long hose and powerful engines, this long, flat boat removes sand blocking the channel and dumps it onto the narrow Twin Lakes Beach just to the east to help make that beach wider.

The harbor jetties allow the sand to build up west of the harbor to form the modern wide Seabright Beach. Before the beach was split by the harbor in 1963, however, this sand kept moving down the shore to make a wide Twin Lakes Beach.

Why are these jack-shaped blocks here?

These blocks are called tetrapods and weigh 10-12 tons each. That's 20,000-24,000 pounds! Tetrapods are extremely stable because their four "feet" interlock. They were placed here to protect the harbor from the ocean waves' enormous force.

