

SANTA MONICA PLEASURE PIER

A LOOK BACK TO 1917 FROM TODAY



NOVEMBER 5, 2019 thru FEBRUARY 22, 2020
1350 7TH ST. | SANTAMONICAHISTORY.ORG

SANTA MONICA PLEASURE PIER

"Where the Mountains Meet the Sea"
SANTA MONICA, CALIF.

HISTORICAL IMAGES COURTESY OF
STEPHEN RAUL ANAYA COLLECTION

CREATED BY
MICHAEL MURPHY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
JENS LUCKING

HISTORICAL INSIGHTS BY
SARA CROWN



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The Santa Monica Pier is composed of two conjoined structures—the Municipal Pier and the Loeff Pier—each of which had their own evolution. Santa Monica opened the Municipal Pier at the foot of Colorado Avenue in 1909 as an extension to protect pipes routing sewage outfall into the bay. It was built on the footprint of Shoo Fly Landing and Jones Wharf, an 1870s railroad pier.

The Municipal Pier was a marvel of engineering, utilizing the newest concrete construction techniques. It turned out Santa Monica's beach sand was more suited to building sand castles than mixing concrete. After a decade, the pier began to show significant structural weakness and the city replaced concrete pilings with traditional wooden ones.

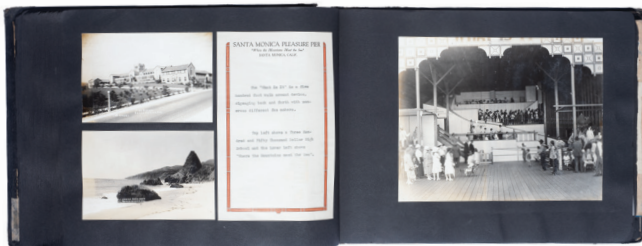
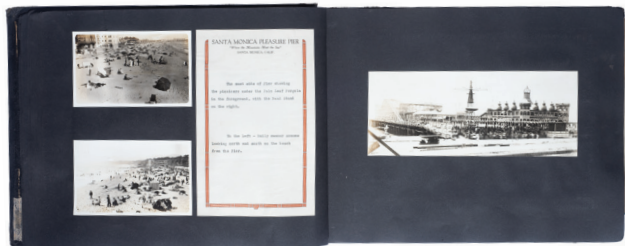
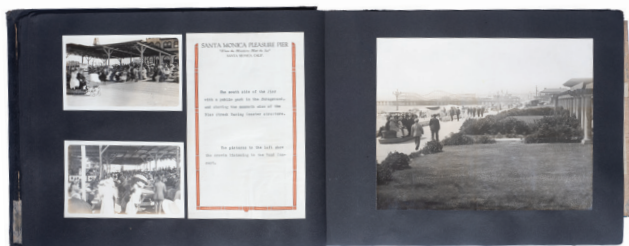
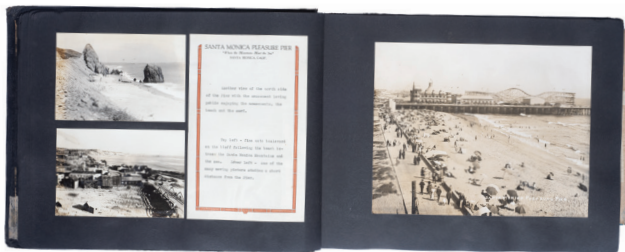
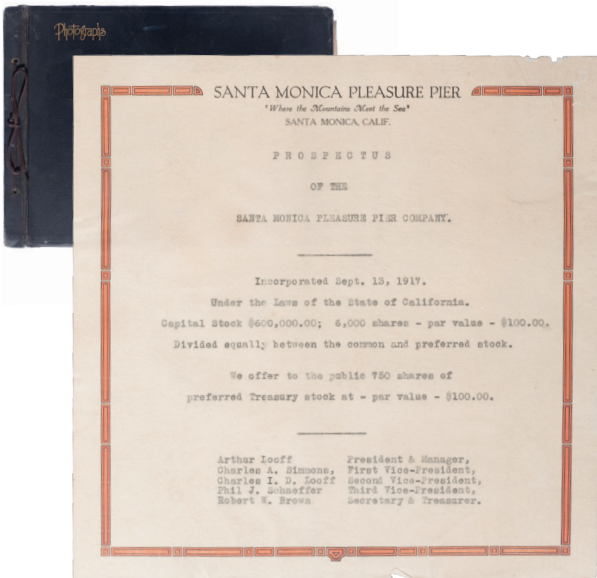
Coney Island amusement entrepreneur Charles Loeff saw opportunity in Southern California's coastal communities. Loeff acquired rights from Santa Monica to build an amusement pier in 1916 and opened to the public later that year. He favored Santa Monica Beach due to its being, "well-known as one of the finest on the Pacific Coast [and] it attracts the highest class of people."

Loeff abided the city's no-alcohol stipulation and positioned his pier as a place for innocent, clean-cut fun where alcohol and gambling were prohibited. The jewel of Loeff's pier was the Byzantine, Moorish and California-style Hippodrome, built to house one of his elaborate carousels. A large roller coaster, the Blue Streak Racer, provided thrills and a thatched-roof picnic area gave families a place to relax and enjoy the sea air.

In 1917, Loeff began advertising the sale of stock in his Santa Monica Pleasure Pier Company. The prospectus displayed in this exhibition was part of that effort. Detailed diagrams of each ride and building, lush photographs promoting the pristine location, as well as careful inventories of amenities and supplies provide a snapshot of Santa Monica's historic pier at this pivotal moment.

Since its restoration in the 1980s, the Santa Monica Pier has grown increasingly popular. Millions of people visit the pier each year and enjoy amusements at Pacific Park that recall the Loeff-era heyday. Visitors still enjoy the carousel, fishing, and walks above the waves.

The Santa Monica History Museum would like to thank Michael Murphy, who conceived this exhibition; Jens Lucking, who took the award-winning "Today" photographs; Jim Harris, for his extensive research and for providing rare Pier artifacts for display; and Stephen R. Anaya, for his generosity in sharing his personal collection that documents a pivotal moment in the Pier's history. We would also like to express gratitude to our exhibition sponsors and team of tireless museum volunteers.







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WED, FRI & SAT: 10AM - 5PM, TUE & THU: 12PM - 8PM, SUN & MON: CLOSED

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