

RANCHO BODEGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DID YOU KNOW?

Bohemian Grove

“Redwoods Hideaway for the Elite Goes On, but Protest Days Fade.” A 2010 NY Times article about the San Francisco-based Bohemian Club, which dates back to 1872. “For more than a century, thousands of men have shed wives and cares to hike, listen to lectures, drink, discuss current events, celebrate the arts, drink, share frat-boy traditions, enjoy boon companionship and drink. Predominately white, affluent and Republican, they stage theatrical acts, enjoy like-minded company and imbibe, amid mature redwoods and old posters from past gatherings.”

Some of the 125 camps within have their own valets, and there is even a gift shop. The opening Cremation of Care ceremony, an elaborate production in which hooded characters burn “Dull Care” in effigy at an altar, is meant as a cathartic release of life’s worries. And the club’s motto, “Weaving Spiders Come Not Here”, reflects the prohibition against any conducting of business. The folks who protest, believe “that if you corral thousands of privileged men and throw in some fine wine and food, they cannot help but make valuable connections and occasionally, public policy.”

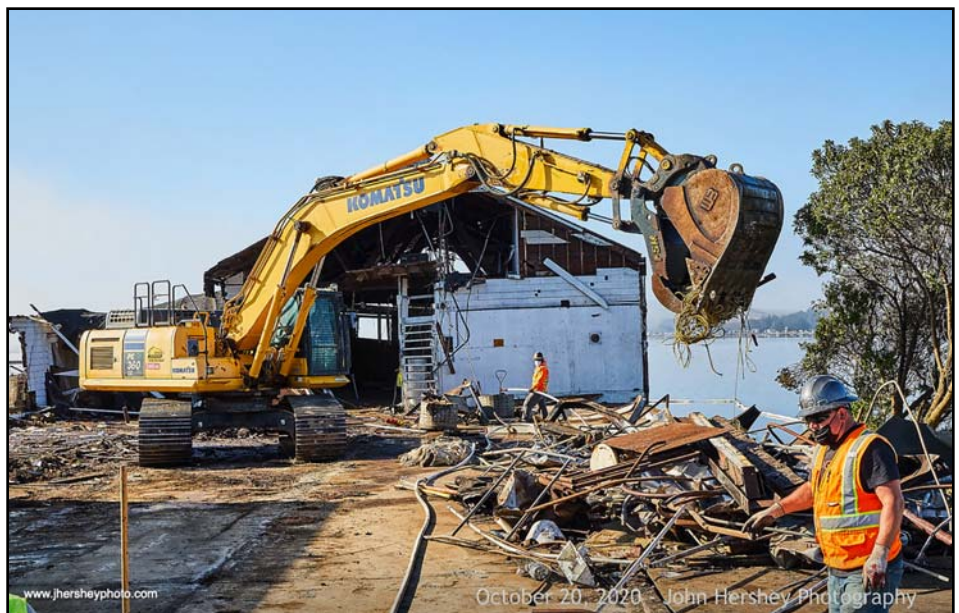
Farewell to Meredith Wharf

by Andrea Granahan



As heavy equipment removed chunks of piers and the dock, piece by piece an important part of Bodega Bay’s history disappeared. The old wharf was once home to a thriving sea food business that employed men and women in Bodega Bay and was once an important part of the war effort.

After the jetties and the channel were built in 1940, fishing became even more important in Bodega Bay. The commercial fleet rapidly increased during World War II when protein-rich food sources were critical in the effort to feed troops and the home front. *continued page 2*



MEREDITH WHARF

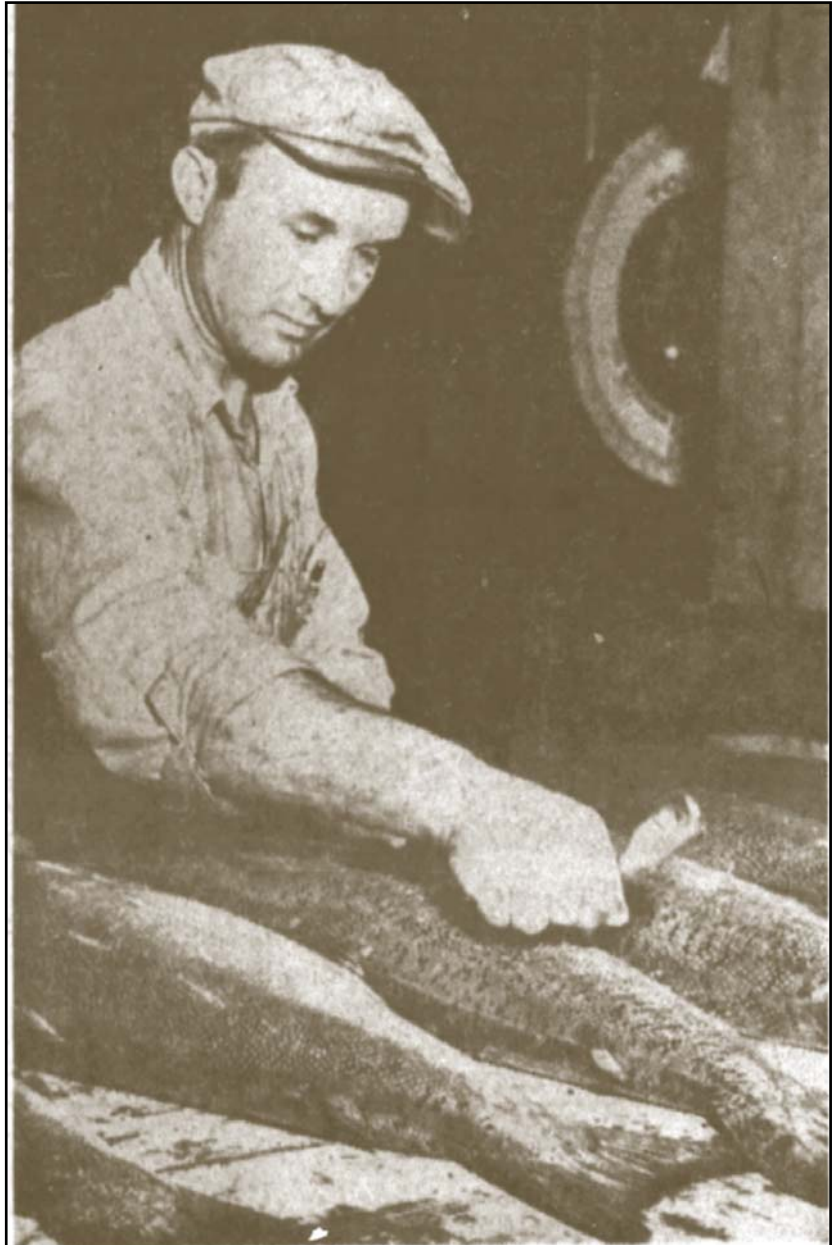
Fifty years before, Craddock Meredith of Sacramento founded a fish-buying company, hence the name of the pier. Two men, Lloyd Turnacliff and Mark Jensen bought Meredith's company in 1942 and constructed the fish cannery and pier to help with the war effort. It later became Washington Fish and Oyster Company under the management of Frank Lucido. For the next of couple decades, the processing line employed 70-80 people, including many women during the war, like Evelyn Cassini's mother, picking crab, cleaning shrimp, shark, cod, hake and salmon to ship in salt barrels back East.

Bodega Bay resident Ned Mantua recalls getting a job there when he was ten years old, although the legal age for a work permit was twelve. "I had to collect livers from the cod," he says, not a particularly fun job, but cod liver oil was big business.

Several generations of fishing families were born and raised in the area. Ed Fomasi, a driver for Bodega Bay's creamery in the 1930's, had a son Amadeo who eventually took over management. Everyone who remembers Amadeo does so with affection, the fisherman's friend who managed the Pier for 45 years.

"When I was a kid Amadeo invited me to go with him to deliver fish to Sacramento. He told me that on the way, we would get run over by a train. I lay in bed the night before, worrying. At five the next morning we left. Amadeo timed the delivery, just as a morning train leaving Sacramento went over an overpass, we were under it. That's how we got run over by a train and lived to talk about it," Ned Mantua laughs.

Sonoma County officially signed just a month-to-month agreement with Meredith Wharf owners in 1961 charging a monthly rent of \$41.80. By 1964 Meredith Wharf succeeded in getting a lease, but the county discovered in 1977 the lease had never been officially recorded. Negotiations restarted and were concluded in 1983 with a 50-year lease for \$170 a month.



SCORING—Amadeo Fomasi uses a scoring knife on a salmon preparatory to splitting. The small holes cut in the skin allow salt to penetrate during the curing process. (Staff photo by John LeBaron.)

MEREDITH WHARF

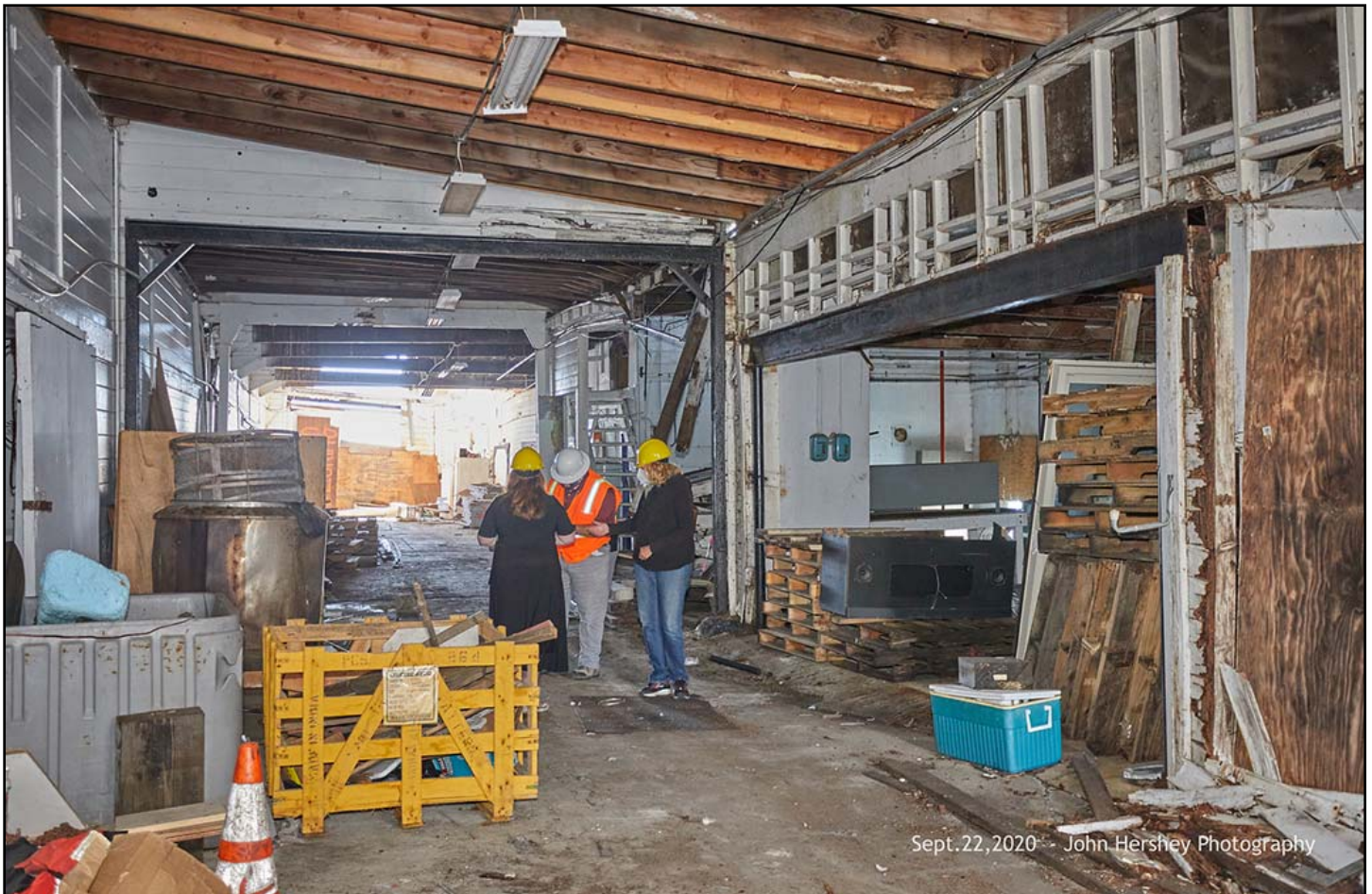
In the meantime, Amadeo kept it running. He offered a cot at the wharf as a refuge where deckhands back from an unsuccessful fishing trip could bunk until landing a job with hopefully a more successful captain. When times were hard, he offered credit to fisherman so they could keep fishing.

In 1990 Eureka Fisheries took over Meredith Wharf. The new owners made a big announcement about their proposed cannery then promptly declared bankruptcy and disappeared after some reportedly shady dealings.

Amadeo died in 1994 after having retired from the wharf. His death was a blow to those who had known him through the years. During the annual Fisherman's Festival and Blessing of the Fleet, from the Lead Boat, Bev Burton would toss floral tributes to honor Amadeo as they passed Meredith Wharf on their way to and from the Tides dock.

With Amadeo gone and the bankrupt owners having skipped town, the wharf fell into disrepair. There was some talk of turning it into a fishing museum. A man named Sean Eaddy purchased the wharf with hopes of building a big tourist complex. Time, the salty air and storms from the sea had done the old wharf no favors and in 2004 the county finally condemned it.

This year in 2020, the county finally brought out its wrecking equipment. And now it's time to bid farewell to a Bodega Bay institution. *Demolition Photos - John Hershey* <http://tinyurl.com/pier-demo> ■



Sept. 22, 2020 - John Hershey Photography