THE RESTAURANT THAT STARTED IT ALL
THE HIDDEN HERITAGE OF SAN FRANCISCO’S FISHERMAN’S WHARF

by

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Emi Takahara
Fresh cracked crab with Boudin’s round “dark bake” sourdough
and a well-chilled bottle of California Chardonnay
is still the quintessential S.F. meal.

Herb Caen, *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 17, 1995
DEDICATION

For my parents, Beau and Takeshi, for their tireless, and I mean tireless, encouragement.

And for Larry, I’m so glad you’re here.
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ABSTRACT

San Francisco’s Fisherman’s Wharf is one of the top tourist destinations in the United States, making it a requisite stop for travelers exploring the city. However, for many, this part of San Francisco has long been dismissed as just another tourist trap. At the heart of Fisherman’s Wharf are the seafood restaurants that line the edges of the Wharf, having grown out of sidewalk stalls where fishermen and vendors sold the day’s catch. Many of these restaurants have been in business for almost a century, mostly run by the Italian American families who started them.

One family in particular, the Geraldi’s, paved the way for these other restaurants by opening Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9, the first full-service restaurant on Fisherman’s Wharf. In doing so, the restaurants that followed became the building blocks for the area, shaping the landscape we now recognize as Fisherman’s Wharf. Most tourists and San Francisco locals, despite the City’s reputation for culinary innovation, remain unaware of the cultural and culinary heritage hidden beneath Fisherman's Wharf’s tourist-focused exterior.

This thesis explores the spatial and culinary history of this vibrant urban area, the threat to its continuing vitality, and the ways in which historic preservation may be able to play a role in its future.
INTRODUCTION

Fisherman's Wharf at Jefferson and Taylor streets is undoubtedly one of the most colorful and pleasant places for any tourist open (or native) to go for lunch or dinner, no matter what the weather or time of year. As you sit at one of the window tables, enjoying the wonderful food and magnificent view, your curiosity will probably be aroused--where did all this come from? What made this possible?

--Henry Evans, Fisherman’s Wharf, 1957

A number of years back, around 2009, I found myself at Fisherman’s Wharf. As a longtime San Franciscan, who grew up in the city, this was perhaps a bit unusual. Many San Franciscans I knew avoided the area, viewing it as a crowded tourist destination filled with mediocre food and shops selling “I Left My Heart In San Francisco” sweatshirts to freezing, ill-prepared tourists who didn’t realize we have unusually cold and foggy summers. I had recently started a job on Pier 17 on the Embarcadero, the waterfront street that traces much of the eastern edge of the city. To travel the one-mile journey to Fisherman’s Wharf, I jumped on the historic F-Market trolley car for the quick trip to the northeast corner of the city. I rode to the end of the line, which terminates in the heart of Fisherman’s Wharf, and got off with all of the tourists. It was a crisp, sunny day, which probably meant it was winter and our famous fog was on vacation. The briny smell of the Bay mixed with that of boiling seafood, sugary treats and the not-so-subtle whiff of pee. I walked along Jefferson Street, the area’s main thoroughfare, to Taylor Street, where I wove past tourists and the sidewalk seafood vendors stationed under colorful awnings, tending boiling crab in cauldrons - a culinary tradition that has existed on this street for over a hundred years. The vendors, there are six in total, are all attached to their respective restaurants whose entrances are on the other side of the sidewalk. The street these restaurants are located on, is actually a pier. They are numbered for their spot on the pier: Guardino’s No. 1,
Sabella & La Torre No. 3, Alioto’s No.8. The last restaurant on the pier was Fishermen’s Grotto No.9, and I walked into the entryway. To my right the staircase leading up to the dining room was covered in wall-to-wall carpet, custom woven with the image of the restaurant’s mascot “The Little Fisherman,” a pipe-smoking angler in a yellow sou’wester hat and slicker holding a fishing pole, repeated across a field of dark blue pile. Straight ahead was a sign that pointed to a gift shop, which I dutifully followed and found myself in one of the most puzzling shops I have seen. It was packed full of knick-knacks piled on top of counters and tightly packed into glass display cases. It looked more like an antiques shop filled with bric-a-brac than a souvenir store. The contents were in sharp contrast to the many dozens of brightly lit souvenir stores around the Wharf. Many of Fishermen’s Grotto’s items were San Francisco souvenirs, though not immediately recognizable as such, since they appeared to be fifty or sixty years old, maybe older. As I walked through the dimly lit space, I noticed the many hand-written signs that were placed around the shop that pointed out that most of the items, especially the interesting ones, were NOT FOR SALE. I wandered out, confused and very intrigued. It was because of this gift shop that I returned to Fisherman’s Wharf a couple of years later, this time bringing a friend. When we went in, the store had been almost completely cleared out and they were now selling all of the vintage deadstock items, previously and pointedly not for sale, that they had accumulated over the past seventy years. I bought a handful of items and then moved on from the gift shop to discover the cozy fireplace bar upstairs, with bright blue vinyl swivel chairs and a long bar with a bartender who had been working there for over twenty years. I would return again and again, bringing friends with me who were perplexed as to why I was dragging them to a restaurant in Fisherman’s Wharf but nonetheless curious. This was the period when I started digging a bit more deeply and discovered that many of these restaurants were run by the same families who
had started them nearly a hundred years ago; an incredible feat given how difficult it is for any restaurant to make it past five years. Which led to my initial question: why had so few San Franciscans ever been to any of these restaurants, the cornerstone businesses of Fisherman’s Wharf? How had such a place lost the interest of its own people and become only the realm of the tourist? San Franciscans for the most part had forgotten or never known the rich history down at the Wharf. At some point when the old ways and actual fishermen were disappearing, new developments, including wax museums and schlocky stores, began to proliferate, obscuring and then eclipsing a place rich with history and stories. Yet that history remained tangible in the form of Fisherman Wharf’s restaurants, as families passed these businesses down from one generation to the next. But that history wasn’t typically being promoted as part of the draw. One man, Alessandro Baccari, did try to keep the area’s history alive. As founder and president of the Fisherman’s Wharf Historical Society, he worked with the Port of San Francisco to have interpretive signs, called Port Walk, placed around the Wharf, mostly on the piers, where people could read about the history of Fisherman’s Wharf.¹

Though there is a fair amount of scholarship on the Italians of San Francisco, very little documents the history of Fisherman's Wharf and the Italian immigrants who worked there. If they do talk about the Wharf the discussion is about the fishermen and rarely do we hear about the restaurants their fishing families developed and that became the cornerstone of tourism for Fisherman’s Wharf. This dozen or so restaurants helped create the draw that would make Fisherman's Wharf the fifteenth most visited tourist destination in the country.² It is here that I direct my focus for this thesis. I will explore the importance of these restaurants which helped

¹ For more information on locations please see this website https://www.fishermanswharf.org/plan-your-visit/wharf-history/port-walk/.
create a destination for tourists from all over the world, how it evolved over time, and the state of the restaurants of Fisherman’s Wharf today.

**Italian Foodways and Tourism**

Foodways: the total system of practices and concepts surrounding food and eating.⁴

- Lucy Long, *Food and Folklore Reader*

**Foodways in Preservation**

The term “foodways” was first introduced in the field of folkloristics in the 1940s, but didn’t really take hold until the 1970s.⁴ The term has become more common within the food community at large, using it to mean not only, “what people eat, but when, where, why, how and with whom.”⁵ Within the field of historic preservation, incorporating this concept into our practice has slowly been gaining traction and becoming part of the equation when considering intangible cultural heritage. In 2013, San Francisco Heritage, a San Francisco architectural and cultural non-profit, launched the *Legacy Bar and Restaurants* program to help bring awareness to some of San Francisco’s oldest and most beloved eateries and bars. This program was the first of its kind and led to the creation of the of the city-run *Legacy Business Program* and has inspired similar programs across the country.⁶ As the idea of incorporating the importance of foodways into the field of heritage historic preservation has grown, it perhaps reached mainstream acceptance in the preservation field when in the summer of 2022, Stella Chase, the Black

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⁴ Long, 13.
⁵ Long.
American owner of historic Dooky Chase’s Restaurant in New Orleans, was featured on the cover of *Preservation*, the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s magazine.\(^7\)

**Italian Food at Fisherman’s Wharf**

The iconic food at San Francisco’s Fisherman’s Wharf has always been Italian or Sicilian and the majority of fishermen were either Italian or Sicilian. (Some might argue that Italians and Sicilians are the same. The Sicilians might argue otherwise.) When the fishermen became food vendors on the sidewalks of the Wharf, selling “walk-away” crab or shrimp cocktails, they were Italian. And when the first sit-down restaurant that offered table service on the Wharf opened, the owner was Italian (Sicilian). Because of its scenic location and proximity to the water, these early waterfront family-run restaurants always attracted people from outside the predominantly Italian neighborhood. Even though San Francisco was already known for its culinary diversity and enthusiastic epicureans by the 1890s, the Wharf catered to a broader, working-class population on the bustling waterfront.\(^8\) Because Italians and their food were considered ethnic (non-white) into the mid-twentieth century, the restaurants at the Wharf placed less emphasis on their Italian culinary traditions.\(^9\) By using “menu selection,” choosing dishes that might appeal to non-Italians, and “recipe adaptation,” utilizing ingredients and preparations familiar to consumers, they were able to present less intimidating dishes to a wider group of people.\(^10\)

These restaurants, that would help form the structure for one of the most visited places in the country, would mostly lose their Italian cultural identity over time and become more reliant

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on tourists, as San Franciscans began avoiding the area and sought out culinary adventures elsewhere.

This thesis begins with Chapter 1: Early Life in the Bay Area, introducing the earliest inhabitants of San Francisco and their foodways, as well as a brief overview of the founding of San Francisco. Chapter 2: Italian Americans, from “Ethnic” to American, provides early Italian American history and their rich culinary traditions in San Francisco from farming to restaurants. In Chapters 3 and 4 the focus is on one restaurant, Fishermen’s Grotto No.9. Chapter 3: Fishermen’s Grotto No.9 focuses on the Geraldi family’s restaurant, four generations of running the business, and what ultimately happened to it in the end. Chapter 4: Fishermen’s Grotto No.9: Culinary History and Evolution looks at how the menu was presented to customers and how it evolved over the decades.
Chapter 1: Early Life in the Bay Area

I contend that food traditions are as much a matter of movement and emplacement, as they are of roots.

--Krishnendu Ray, *Migration, Transnational Cuisines, and Invisible Ethnic*

Introduction

Before there was Pier 39, before there was the Wax Museum or Bubba Gump, before the cable cars or dozens of souvenir and t-shirt shops, before Ghirardelli Square, the Cannery, crab cocktails, or chowder-in-a-bread-bowl, or even Fisherman’s Wharf, there were the Indigenous inhabitants who lived in the area. They were the original anglers and seafarers of the region, their foodways largely forgotten after their population was severely wiped out after the arrival of the Spanish and then the Americans. The majority of Americans arrived during the Gold Rush. And so did people from other parts of the world, looking to get rich. When gold mining didn’t work out, sometimes cooking did and because of the numerous mouths that needed to be fed with very little infrastructure in place, this created for some a willingness to expand one’s palate.

Standing on the pier off Al Scoma Way, watching large fishing boats slowly move into the harbor, it takes some imagining to picture the first people to fish the now less-than-pristine waters that flow around Fisherman’s Wharf. For over ten thousand years Indigenous people have occupied the Bay Area, and the people who first lived and fished there were the Yelamu.12

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11 Only in the past decade or so, are a handful of Indigenous chefs opening restaurants centering native, pre-colonial foods of the region. Café Ohlone and Wahpepah’s Kitchen are two restaurants to showcase specific, traditional foods of the region of the Bay Area. For more information see: "https://www.makamham.com/cafeohlone or https://wahpepahskitchen.com/.

12 The Yelamu are thought of as a sub-tribe or group within the Ramaytush Ohlone. The Ramaytush occupied the lands of the San Francisco Peninsula. It is not known if the Yelamu were a distinct tribe or a tribal community. The Ramaytush Ohlone website states, “Like most California Natives, contemporary Ohlone peoples use linguistic boundaries instead of local tribal boundaries to define their respective tribal territories.” The Yelamu and Ramaytush Ohlone spoke a dialect of San Francisco Bay Ohlone/Costanoan. See the following website for more information on the origin of the term Yelamu. “Terminology: On the Terms Costanoan, Ohlone, Ramaytush, and Yelamu,” The Association of Ramaytush Ohlone, accessed September 17, 2022, https://www.ramaytush.org/terminology.html.
Current scholarship suggests that the Yelamu were an independent group, part of the larger Ohlone/Costanoan-speaking peoples whose reach ran from San Francisco to Big Sur and whose population was in the thousands. The Yelamu are believed to have lived only in the northern tip of the San Francisco Peninsula, occupying almost the same forty-nine square miles as modern day San Francisco County. Numbering about 200 people, the Yelamu occupied about five villages, mostly on the east side, where it is warmer and the waters calmer. [Figure 1.1]

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13 “Costanoan” is the name English-speaking settlers gave to the Ohlone. Costanoan is an English mispronunciation, derived from the Spanish word costaños, “coastal people,” which is how the Spanish referred to the Ohlone people. Yelamu is the Native name for the City and County of San Francisco.
The Yelamu

San Francisco’s compact seven by seven miles contains varied topography and microclimates. Surrounded by water on three sides, the west side of the city, closest to the Pacific Ocean, could be windy and blanketed in fog and at the same time, the east side, protected by a group of hills, warm and sunny. With the area’s mild Mediterranean climate, the Yelamu could harvest food year round, collecting what was seasonally available. Grasslands covered much of the area and grass seeds made up a large portion of their diet, along with young greens such as miner’s lettuce and clover, as well as tree nuts, bulbs, fruits and berries like wild strawberries and grapes. They intentionally burned these areas periodically to clear out underbrush and encourage new growth, maintaining the plants the Yelamu favored. The most important sources of carbohydrates for early Native Californians were acorns and seeds such as tansy-mustard, California buttercup, red maids, and chia. As for protein, the Yelamu relied mostly on hunting and fishing. Creation myths, as told by two Rumsen Costanoan women in the early twentieth century, shed some light on the traditional foodways of the Yelamu.17

Now Coyote gave the people the carrying net. He gave them bow and arrows to kill rabbits. He said: “You will have acorn mush for your food. You will gather acorns and you will have acorn bread to eat. Go down to the ocean and gather seaweed that you may eat it with your acorn mush and acorn bread. Gather it when the tide is low, and kill rabbits, and at low tide pick abalones and mussels to eat. When you can find nothing else, gather buckeyes for food. If the acorns are bitter, wash them out; and gather “wild oat” seeds for pinole, carrying them on your back in a basket. Look for these things of which I have told you. I have shown you what is good. Now I will leave you. You have learned.18

-Jacinta Gonzalez (b. 1838) and Maria Viviana Soto (b. 1823), Monterey, CA.19

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16 Randall Milliken, who has written extensively about Indigenous people in the Bay Area, states that for much of the year, seeds may have been the predominant source of carbohydrates; Randall Milliken, *A Time of Little Choice: The Disintegration of Tribal Culture in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1769-1810* (Banning, CA: Malki Museum, Inc., 2009), 17.
17 The Rumsen Coastanoans are Ohlone people from the coast of Monterey.
The story about Coyote, who in Ohlone culture is one of the three Creators, along with Eagle and Hummingbird, helps create a vivid image of the foods and foodways that once existed for coastal people. Though not specifically Yelamu in origin, this myth gives insight into how certain foods may have been gathered and prepared in an area that is in close proximity to the San Francisco Peninsula and shares similar natural resources.

Though Yelamu land was not expansive, there was much available to hunt. [Figure 1.2]

![Figure 1.2: “Tcholovonis a la chasse dans le baie de San Francisco,” (Tcholovonis hunting in San Francisco Bay), Louis Choris, 1822. Source Bancroft Library.](image)

They would bring down ducks and geese that were migrating, and even employed decoys made from straw to attract them, as well as quail, pigeons and ocean birds. Rabbits, mice and lizards were also plentiful in the grasslands, as were black-tailed deer and elk in the oak and redwood forests. Insects, such as grasshoppers, were at times plentiful and often collected into pits and
eaten roasted, or dried and saved for winter. Fish and shellfish in the waters surrounding San Francisco, ranging from the deep, nutrient-rich ocean to brackish estuaries in the Bay, not to mention the many streams that intersected the land, were also important sources of protein. From the ocean came abalone, mussels, clams, salmon, crabs, seals, and beached whales. San Francisco Bay teemed with bay shrimp and Olympia oysters; the abundance of the latter made apparent in the form of massive shellmounds created by Native people living on the Bay for thousands of years. The shellmounds that ringed San Francisco Bay contained not only oyster shells but all manner of food remnants as well as human burials. So prominent were these shellmounds that in 1909, over four hundred and twenty-five shell mounds were documented throughout the Bay Area, eighteen of which were in San Francisco. Only about four shellmounds remain today.

Yelamu relied upon fish from all of the water sources found in and around San Francisco. Small fish like smelt, Pacific herring and sardines ran in abundance as well as larger fish like salmon, sturgeon, trout, and the Sacramento sucker. They used many techniques to catch fish including nets, seines, weirs, basket traps, harpoons and even poison made from soap plants to stun fish. The Yelamu were not restricted to the land. Boats made from tule rushes that grew in marshes accommodated up to four people, allowing them to navigate the surrounding bay and marshes, travelling to potential food sources on islands and across the bay.

24 Margolin, 37.
The lives of the Yelamu, and all Indigenous people of the Bay Area, changed dramatically in the fall of 1769. The Spanish expedition led by Gaspár de Portolá arrived on horseback south of San Francisco and encountered Quiroste Costanoans. This marked the first recorded meeting of San Francisco Bay region people and Europeans, though other Indigenous Californians living along the coast to the north and south had encountered European ships since the sixteenth century.25

![Figure 1.3: Bateau du port de San Francisco [C.1815], Louis Choris. Source: Bancroft Library.](image)

**The Arrival of the Spanish**

The Spanish first sailed into the waters off Baja California in 1533. A few years later in 1542 they claimed the area to the north of Baja for the Crown, calling it Alta California, or “Upper California,” adding it to the territories of New Spain. Though they had been exploring various regions within the California territory for over two hundred years, they had missed the

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entrance to San Francisco Bay as it was often shrouded by fog. It wasn’t until the late 1760s that
the Spanish finally decided to colonize California spurred by the encroachment of the Russians
and Americans from the North. After Portolá’s initial expedition in 1769, other Spanish parties
made their way up into the Bay Area, but not into Yelamu lands. It wasn’t until 1776 when
Spanish Army Colonel Juan Batista de Anza, along with Franciscan priest Pedro Font, led an
expedition into Ohlone lands, looking for a place to establish a mission and military base. This
trip resulted in the founding of Mission San Francisco de Asís, now known as Mission Dolores,
the sixth mission in California to be established by Franciscan priests. These Missions, spaced a
day’s journey on horseback up the California coast, were established to spread Christianity to
Indigenous people. Eventually there would be twenty-one Missions, spanning from San Diego to
Sonoma, California. To protect Mission Dolores, a military outpost was established by the mouth
of the San Francisco Bay, El Presidio de San Francisco, now referred to as The Presidio. The
priests enticed the Yelamu and other native people from the surrounding Bay Area into the
Mission with promises of food, material goods and spiritual salvation. After baptism, priests did
little to explain to the neophytes that they could no longer return to their homes or traditional
way of life, essentially becoming slaves of the Mission and doing the majority of labor needed to
maintain Mission Dolores.26

Within just a few decades of the founding of the Mission, the native Californian
population in the Bay Area plummeted. Abysmal treatment of the new converts and denigration
of the traditional Indigenous way of life, along with diseases introduced by the Spanish,
devastated native populations around the Bay Area. By 1810, thirty-four years after the arrival of
Anza and his expedition, all the tribal territories in the Bay Area, except the most northerly, were

26 Milliken, 31-52.
empty. In 1842, just six years before gold was discovered in the Sierra foothills, only fifteen Ohlone native to the San Francisco Bay region were living at the crumbling Mission Dolores.

Soon the Spanish would be forced out of Alta California when in 1821 the former colony of New Spain declared its independence and became known as Mexico. The next year Englishman William Richardson sailed into San Francisco Bay on a whaling ship, the Orion. As a ship’s captain who spoke some Spanish, Richardson was allowed to stay by the Mexican government. He worked in the area’s growing Mexican hide and tallow trade and became the first white European inhabitant in the Bay Area. In 1835 he was granted permission by the Governor of California to establish a pueblo near the Yerba Buena Cove, which at the time, ” was nothing but sand dunes, covered with shrubbery and trees,” recalled Mariana Richardson, daughter of William Richardson. “Wild animals were very numerous, such as bears, wolves, coyotes,” Richardson recalled. The pueblo was named Yerba Buena, Spanish for “Good Herb,” so named by the Mexican settlers for the abundant and fragrant herb that grew in the area. There Richardson erected a lean-to for his family from four redwood posts and an old canvas sail. In 1837, after he built the first wooden house in Yerba Buena, he built an adobe house known as Casa Grande. [Figure 1.4]

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27 Milliken, 1, 219-226.
28 The Yelamu have no known living descendants. Of the Ohlone people who inhabited the San Francisco Peninsula, only one lineage, the Raymatush Ohlone, is known to have survived. They maintain a strong presence within the Bay Area. For more information see their website https://www.ramaytush.org/; “Yelamu: The Native Peoples of San Francisco,” ArcGIS StoryMaps (San Francisco Estuary Institute, October 25, 2021), https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/56b1d134920d46c6ac2462c1344eeb3f.
Figure 1.4: Tucked away in Chinatown at 823 Grant Avenue in San Francisco, there is a plaque to commemorate the “Birthplace of a Great City.” It reads:

The birthplace of a great city. Here, June 25, 1835, William A. Richardson, founder of Yerba Buena, (later San Francisco,) erected its first habitation, a tent dwelling, replacing it in October, 1835, by the first wooden house, and on this ground, in 1836, he erected the large adobe building, known as “Casa Grande.” Photo: Chris Carlsson, from “William Richardson and Yerba Buena Origins,” foundsf.org.

Perhaps spurred by Manifest Destiny, adventure or riches, by the early 1840s more Americans and Europeans started to make their way to the West Coast by boat and even attempted the treacherous overland route crossing mountains and deserts. On May 13, 1846, America declared war on Mexico, which began the Mexican-American War. Only months later, on July 9, 1846, American Commander John Montgomery sailed into San Francisco Bay and claimed the Pueblo of Yerba Buena for the United States. This was accomplished without any military action, owing to the feeble state of the Mexican garrison. About six months later, the

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hamlet of Yerba Buena (there were about 459 residents, and it is unclear if this number included Indigenous residents) was renamed San Francisco by the Americans.  

Figure 1.5: View of San Francisco, formerly Yerba Buena, in 1846-7 before the discovery of gold. Bosqui Eng. & Print. Co., 1884.

http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g4364s.pm000332.

https://www.sfmuseum.org/hist1/early.html#:~:text=During%201847%2C%20six%20trading%20vessels,Francisco%20was%20then%20459%20souls.
On February 2, 1848, when the Mexican government eventually ceded to the United States and California became part of the United States territories, there were approximately 900 residents living in San Francisco. Gold had been found at Sutter’s Creek just a few days earlier and everything was about to change for the tiny outpost of San Francisco.\(^{32}\)

*They Came by the Boatload - The Gold Rush*

If the Mexican War (1846–1848) was an expression of America’s sense of Manifest Destiny, the California gold rush was in effect destiny’s reward.

-Mark Eifler, *The California Gold Rush: The Stampede That Changed the World*

Most Americans are at least vaguely familiar with the California Gold Rush. Even people who are not football fans might know there is a football team called the San Francisco 49ers, named for the miners who in 1849 descended by the thousands on the village of San Francisco to hunt for gold. San Francisco’s population would explode and grow at an unimaginable pace. From 1848 to 1854, over 250,000 people would migrate to California, many of them passing through San Francisco on their way to the gold fields, some settling in San Francisco.\(^{33}\)

In January of 1848 James W. Marshall found gold in Coloma, California, while he was building a mill for John Sutter. The property was nestled in the foothills of the Sierras about 130 miles Northeast of San Francisco. Sutter had acquired the land through a Mexican land grant and hoped to make his fortune in lumber. Word got out quickly about the discovery and soon gold seekers began arriving in droves to the sleepy trading village of San Francisco. As the news


spread throughout the country and then the world, all manner of people, the vast majority men, came through the port of San Francisco before venturing on to see “El Dorado” for themselves. San Francisco grew rapidly from about 900 people in 1848 to 35,000 in 1850, with as many as 1,000 people arriving per week. As the town tried to accommodate the thousands that came mostly by ship, it grew from a tent city into a thriving metropolis in a matter of a few years. This meteoric growth required that strict social mores, de rigueur elsewhere in the rest of the United States, relax in order for the nascent city to function and quickly develop.34

While the city was being built, people, primarily men, lived in canvas tents, boarding houses and hotels. This meant that most people took their meals in restaurants. As a result, some of the earliest businesses in San Francisco were restaurants. William Alexander Leidesdorff, a mostly forgotten founding father of San Francisco, who was of Jewish and African heritage, established the first significant public hotel in 1846 where food was served.35 Bayard Taylor, a writer hired by the New York Tribune to write about the gold rush, wrote about his time in 1849 in his book El Dorado. He described the state of buildings and construction as well as the ethnic diversity he found when he arrived. “On every side stood buildings of all kinds, begun or half-finished the greater part of them mere canvas sheds… with all kinds of signs, in all languages.” He continues, “The streets were full of people, hurrying to and fro, and of diverse and bizarre a character as the houses: Yankees of every possible variety, native Californians in serapes and sombreros, Chilians, Sonorians, Kanakas from Hawaii, Chinese with long tails, Malays armed

34 Barbara Berglund, Making San Francisco American: Cultural Frontiers in the Urban West, 1846-1906 (Lawrence, KS: University Press Of Kansas, 2007), 7; Maldetto, “Why San Francisco???
35 Peters, San Francisco: A Food Biography, 36. Leidesdorff is considered to be the first African American millionaire. There is a small street in downtown San Francisco named after him. Other than a statue and a plaque, there is little else left of his legacy.
with their everlasting creeses [short sword], and others in whose embrowned and bearded visages it was impossible to recognize any especial nationality.”\textsuperscript{36}

In artist Frank Marryat’s 1855 illustration “High and Dry,” we are given a glimpse into what the streets of San Francisco may have looked like in the early days of the gold rush. [Figure 1.6] The image conveys a seemingly fantastical street scene of beached ships transformed into a hotel and warehouse, both nestled between newly constructed buildings housing such businesses as a dentist and a liquor store, and an ethnically diverse population carrying on with daily life in the foreground as if all of this were totally normal.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{high_and_dry.png}
\caption{“High and Dry” Frank Marryat, artist, 1855. San Francisco street scene depicting abandoned ships and transformed into buildings, and multi-ethnic inhabitants in the foreground. (Robert B. Honeyman, Jr. Collection of Early Californian and Western American Pictorial Material, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley).}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{36} Berglund, 6.
William Shaw, an Englishman who arrived in SF in 1849, described the housing conditions he frequented as miserable and cramped and were long “barn-like tenements” where you slept on “bunks” that were in fact just wooden shelving. The food however he found to be more favorable and was of the “most heterogeneous kind.” He described Mexican, Chinese and European-American foods, “placed on the table at the same time: boiled and roast meats, fresh and salt, potted meats, curries, stews, fish, rice, cheese, frijolis [sic], and molasses.” With the city in a constant state of flux and very little housing, restaurants became part of the daily ritual, and gongs and bells would ring at certain times throughout the growing city, alerting people that it was mealtime.

Though Chinese immigrants faced the most hostility and discrimination of any ethnic immigrant group, considered the lowest on the rung in terms of racial and social order, they were favored for their food by white San Franciscans in the early years of the gold rush. Journalist James O’Meara recounted that, “Chinese restaurants were largely patronized by the mass, where one could purchase a package of 21 tickets, each kit for a meal, breakfast, dinner, or supper, for $20, or get a fair single meal for $1.50.” James J. Ayers, an early editor of the San Francisco Call, noted that, “the best restaurants...were kept by Chinese, and the poorest and dearest by Americans.” By 1852 Chinese ran most of the restaurants in San Francisco.

In the early days of the gold rush, racial and class mixing was tolerated, and many social norms were all but cast aside as the need to survive outweighed the social stratification usually imposed by American society during that time. This included white patrons eating at “ethnic”

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37 Berglund, Making San Francisco American, 22.  
38 Berglund, Making San Francisco American, 23.  
39 Berglund, 26.  
40 Berglund, 27.  
restaurants. By the 1850s, as San Francisco grew more established and wealthier, and as more women and children arrived, mixing of social classes was frowned upon again and social norms of the time settled back into place. This affected eateries as well, as “ethnic” restaurants fell out of favor and were no longer considered acceptable for white people to patronize.42

Even after the gold rush had peaked, immigrants continued to arrive in San Francisco and many restaurants opened to cater to all of these people arriving from around the world. Early on Chinese and Mexican restaurants were the most common eating establishments along with French and European-American based eateries, but soon came immigrants from South and Central America, as well as Japan, Italians from Northern Italy, Jews from Eastern Europe, Irish and Filipinos. Italians, though not the largest European immigrant group to arrive in San Francisco (that title went to the Irish), would go on to dominate the food and agriculture industry in the early days of San Francisco’s development.43

In 1848, just before the world found out about gold in California, revolutions were sweeping across European nations. In Italy, which was not yet a unified country, there was a civil war brewing. Southern Italians and Sicilians, who were primarily peasants, had very few ways to make money. When word of gold from California arrived on their shores, it soon became obvious to many Southern Italians to use their life savings and board a ship to California, where there was at least hope of making a living and maybe even getting rich.

Coming from largely agrarian and fishing communities on the west coasts of Italy and Sicily, Italian immigrants found jobs working on farms, in greengrocers, fishing or in restaurants. These San Francisco Italians and their descendants would go on to create food businesses known

42 Berglund, 27.
43 Berglund, Making San Francisco American, 10.
locally, like the family-run restaurants at Fisherman’s Wharf, and across the country with brands that became household names such as Rice-A-Roni and Del Monte. Be they mom and pop restaurants that started as a single crab vendor on the sidewalk near the water’s edge or a large-scale fruit canning corporation, these businesses would help grow San Francisco and its economy throughout the decades.
Chapter 2: Italian Americans, from “Ethnic” to American

The secret of the success of North Beach and Fisherman’s Wharf in winning the affection of greater San Francisco was by appealing to its palate and taste buds. “Buon gusto!” and “Buon appetito!” were the rallying cries…

--Richard Dillon, North Beach

Introduction

Italian food is some of the most popular food in the United States. We love pizza and pasta and when we want to celebrate, we might seek out a sophisticated Italian restaurant. There are four Italian restaurants in New York City that have been awarded Michelin stars as of August 2023, and both San Francisco and Los Angeles have two apiece.44 Just over fifty years ago many Americans thought of Italian food as “ethnic,” a term often applied to food that seems foreign, and can sometimes suggest “a certain kind of inferiority.”45 How was Italian food perceived when it arrived in San Francisco in the 1800s and what happened to Italian food when it arrived in San Francisco? In the following chapter I briefly discuss how Italians arrived in San Francisco and once here some of the foods Italians introduced to San Franciscans through jobs they could get such as farmers, fishermen and restaurateurs.

Leaving the Kingdom of Italy

In 1849 the country of Italy as we know it did not yet exist. It was a group of city-states and kingdoms, swept up in the European revolutions that started in 1848. Economic conditions

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44 One of the highest honors you can receive in the food industry is to be give a star by the Michelin Guide. https://guide.michelin.com/us/en.
were dire in the rural areas, so large numbers of Italians left their villages in search of work and some left the country entirely. As word of the San Francisco Gold Rush spread into the world, it seemed to offer many poor Italians an opportunity out of poverty. They came to San Francisco in waves, starting from Northern Italy and working their way down the western coast of the country. The first influx of Italian immigrants that arrived in San Francisco, from about the 1850s through the 1880s, were primarily from the northern regions of Liguria and Tuscany, and specifically from the cities of Genoa and Lucca respectively.46 As the northern part of the country rapidly industrialized, the south remained largely impoverished, uneducated and cut off from industrialization, spurring the second wave of migration. In the 1870s, Italians from the southern regions of Calabria and Sicily began to trickle into San Francisco, and by the turn of the century thousands had come to the city. These southerners would end up supplying the majority of Italian immigrants to San Francisco. One third of Italy’s population may have left Italy during that time.47 There were so many people leaving the country that there was regular passenger service to the United States during the gold rush.48

In 1861 the Kingdom of Italy was formed, unifying most of the separate states. This did little to solve the grim economic conditions for many of the poorer Italians, many of whom were farmers or fishermen. Emigration to California continued owing to the social and political dysfunction that plagued the newly formed country into the twentieth century.

Ligurians, primarily from Genoa, were the first Italians to arrive in San Francisco. Liguria, a crescent-shaped region that abuts France to the west, is located in the northwestern

48 Fichera, Italy, 31.
part of Italy. It is covered mostly by mountains, but dips down to the water and runs along the Ligurian Sea. Such rugged and mountainous terrain makes the land hard to farm, but allows for herbs, especially basil, to be cultivated, along with citrus and olives grown in terraces overlooking the sea. This is the region that is known for Pesto alla Genovese and Ciuppin, the likely predecessor to San Francisco’s famed Cioppino, which will be discussed in Chapter 3.

The south of Italy, specifically Calabria and Sicily, supplied the most Italians to San Francisco. [Figure 2.1] These areas suffered repression after Italy's unification, and their barely surviving industry virtually disappeared. In 1901 Sicily and Calabria had an eighty percent illiteracy rate. At that time only fifty percent of Italians could read, compared to the United States, in which nine out of ten people were literate.\textsuperscript{49} The local dialect was the only language that mattered to the Italians. It didn’t matter if they were from “Italy” -- a name given to the newly unified country that was not familiar to many Italians--if they could not understand one another. Learning “Italian” was what people had to do after unification. Forty years after the unification of Italy, in 1910, only fifty percent of teachers taught in Italian.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{49} Fichera, \textit{Italy}, 35.
\textsuperscript{50} Fichera, \textit{Italy}, 38; Dino Cinel, \textit{From Italy to San Francisco: The Immigrant Experience} (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1982), 22.
Carlo Dondero, an early Italian language journalist, states that in 1850 through 1853 about 300 Italians resided in San Francisco. About 200 of them came through New York and the rest from South America. By 1860, he reported, they were in the businesses of boarding houses, hotels, grocery stores, bakeries, and manufacturing foodstuffs.51

51 Fichera, *Italy*, 16.
The Northern Italian community had been in San Francisco about forty years when the majority of Southern Italians began arriving in the late 1800s. The “new” Italians were often marginalized by the Northern Italians, who treated the newcomers as if they were from another country. Fichera points out the challenges faced by both communities coming together in a new country, “They had to learn a new language (Italian), upgrade their skills and acquire an enlarged sense of the common good.” It wasn’t until after the southerners’ arrival that most of the Italian community’s important institutions were created, such as Casa Fugazi (Club Fugazi), Saints Peter and Paul Church on Washington Square, and A.P. Giannini’s Bank of Italy, known today as Bank of America. By the time migration from Italy had subsided, around the 1930s, approximately half of Italian Americans in San Francisco were from southern Italy.

Between 1870-1930, over half and at times up to seventy percent of the population of San Francisco had foreign-born parents. By the end of the 19th century Italians were the city’s largest single immigrant group. In 1870 the Italian population was 2,345, which rose to 14,983 in 1900 and then peaked in 1930 with a population was 57,912, which was ten percent of San Francisco’s population. The Italian American population has been declining ever since.

Prior to World War II, Italians were some of the least skilled and most exploited of the white immigrants in the United States. However, in San Francisco, Italians, as well as the Irish, were drawn in more quickly to the “inclusive circle of whiteness” than in cities like Boston or New York. Even though the Italians came in larger numbers later in the great wave of migration to San Francisco, and were not considered “white,” the Chinese, who had been in

52 Fichera, 39.
53 Fichera, 3.
54 Cinel, *From Italy to San Francisco*, 17-19.
55 Fichera, 1.
San Francisco in larger numbers since the Gold Rush, were considered the lowest on the social totem pole, receiving the worst and lowest pay for jobs. Italians were what David Roediger calls “in between people.” “In between hard racism and full inclusion—neither securely white nor non-white.”

According to Sebastian Fichera, “Rather than using schooling as a path to white collar jobs, the Italian immigrant would more typically choose some sort of self-employment to get ahead.” This makes sense. Owning your own boat, farm, shop, or restaurant gave the Italian American a sense of accomplishment, as opposed to going into the white-collar work that most other immigrant groups chose as paths to climbing society’s ranks. Being your own “padrone” was the Italian idea of success.

Italy's economic depression and that country’s internal strife led to California’s gain. People fleeing poverty could find success in California, using their knowledge from the old country. They knew how to work in the agricultural, fishing and food industries. Banks set up by the Italian community helped finance businesses that weren’t otherwise able to get loans: canneries, restaurants, truck farms, wholesale fish businesses, macaroni factories and garbage companies. Working in these different fields also affected where they lived. Working in the canneries or as a fisherman would mean living near the water in North Beach or Telegraph Hill. Farming meant moving further outside of the city. As the Italian American population grew, people moved away from where they first landed.

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59 Fichera, 57.
60 Fichera, 76.
Settling into the City

The earliest Italians to arrive in San Francisco settled along the base of Telegraph Hill and an area called North Beach. [Figure 2.2] These neighborhoods housed the majority of immigrants since the 1860s. Though there were other areas in the city where Italians would settle, these neighborhoods housed the majority of the Italian population.

Located near the edge of San Francisco’s northeast corner, Telegraph Hill is a few blocks inland from the Embarcadero, or waterfront, and is comprised of impossibly steep hills and narrow streets that are sometimes only accessible by long wooden staircases. [Figure 2.3] Telegraph Hill’s western slope reaches down into North Beach, which expands out almost to the
base of Russian Hill to the west and to the Bay to the north. [Figure 2.4] North Beach is generally thought to be defined as the area nestled between Telegraph Hill (east) and Russian Hill (west), north to Francisco Street (sometimes Fisherman’s Wharf is included and when it is that boundary terminates at the water’s edge), and south to Broadway.

Figure 2.3: Telegraph Hill residents described as “hoodlums,” perhaps due to the large population of immigrants. Man and three boys on the eastern slope of Telegraph Hill looking north with the Bay in the background. Behind them is 228 Filbert Steps a "carpenter gothic Philip Brown house," built in 1869 and still extant. Source: OpenSFHistory / wnp37.00903-R.
Italians had been living in the North Beach and Telegraph Hill neighborhoods since the Gold Rush, but not until the turn of the century, just after the 1906 earthquake when many other immigrants moved out of the area, did they begin to make up the majority of the population in North Beach. There were Italian settlements in other parts of the city. A substantial settlement was located in the Mission and smaller settlements developed further south in Potrero Hill, Portola, Visitacion Valley, and the Bayview. Moving from the cramped North Beach area out to less populated areas further from the city center, allowed for a number of families who had farmed in their homeland to attain land and start small farms.

Figure 2.4: Looking west at North Beach and the Golden Gate and Marin Headlands in the distance, taken from the western slope of Telegraph Hill, ca. 1865. Sand dunes of White Point visible center right. Source: OpenSFHistory / wnp37.00716-R.

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61 Dino Cinel, From Italy to San Francisco: The Immigrant Experience (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1982), 106.
**Colombo Market**

As the Gold Rush died down, a number Italians turned to farming to make money. The need for agrarian knowledge in California was a match for many of the Italians coming from farming traditions based in a Mediterranean climate, one very similar to much of California. The Italians who moved out of North Beach to areas more sparsely populated on the outskirts of town and into San Mateo began growing produce for themselves, planting what they could not find in the markets such as artichokes, basil, eggplants, bell peppers and broccoli. Many of these vegetables were novel to San Franciscans (and most of America) but would later become ubiquitous to coastal California farms. The Italian farmers exposed Bay Area residents to produce that had been grown in the Mediterranean for hundreds of years and helped create a rich farm-to-table tradition that would eventually pave the way for the food movement that exploded in the Bay Area in the early 1970s.

As early as 1863 the Italian consul in San Francisco noted that Italians had taken up farming, “when their dreams of becoming rich in the gold country vanished.” Many became tenant truck farmers in developing neighborhoods a few miles from the San Francisco city center in the Mission, Visitacion Valley, Portola and the Bayview. [Figure 2.5]

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64 Cinel, 214.
65 Fichera, 57.
Figure 2.5: Map of San Francisco Districts of Italian Settlements.

A North Beach/Fisherman’s Wharf
B Marina District
C Hayes Valley
D Bernal Heights
E Black Diamond (Bay View)
F Outer Mission/Excelsior
G Gardens or Truck Farms
H Washerwoman’s Lagoon
N Nurseries of the “gardeners”
The farmers delivered fruits and vegetables by horse-drawn wagon to open air produce markets on Sansome Street between Jackson and Sacramento, in what would now be considered downtown.\textsuperscript{66} There was little in the way of commercial farming at this time so the Italians, who were mostly from Genoa, found success.\textsuperscript{67} In 1874 these growers founded the San Francisco and San Mateo Rancher’s Association and commenced to build the Colombo Produce Market that opened in 1876.\textsuperscript{68} Taking up a full block, bounded by Pacific Ave., Davis, Jackson, and Front streets, the market was a large structure, lit with large gas lights for the early morning business and divided into many stalls that could be rented out by members of the association.\textsuperscript{69} [Figure 2.6] A traveler from Italy who visited the market stated, “In the morning it is a handsome sight to see the coming and going of the two-horse wagons with the names of the owners on the side.”\textsuperscript{70}

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\textsuperscript{66} San Francisco Chronicle, August 27, 1876, 1. NewsBank: America’s News – Historical and Current. \\
\textsuperscript{67} Cinel, \textit{Italy}, 214. \\
\textsuperscript{68} The Colombo Market eventually grew to include a couple dozen square blocks. It was torn down by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency in 1963 to make way for the Golden Gateway Apartments. The produce market was moved south of Potrero Hill to an industrial area between the 101 and 280 highways. The only remnant of the Market is the arch pictured above that serves as an “entrance” to Sydney Walton Square park. For more photos see \url{https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Produce_Market} \\
\textsuperscript{69} Cinel, \textit{From Italy to San Francisco}, 216. \\
\textsuperscript{70} Giovanni Vigna dal Ferro, \textit{Un Viaggio Nel Far West Americano: Impressioni Di G. Vigna Dal Ferro. Estratto Dal Giornale La Patria} (Bologna: Stab. tipografico successori Monti, 1881), 42. \\
\end{flushright}
As the city grew and the transcontinental railroad arrived in 1869, followed by the refrigerated railcar in 1877 which allowed for California’s perishable bounty to travel back east, business boomed for many that worked the land for a living and just two decades prior, had been some of the poorest immigrants in San Francisco. By the early 1880s Colombo Market was the center of the produce industry catering to wholesalers, grocers, hotels, restaurants, and housewives.\(^{71}\)

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\(^{71}\) Dino Cinel, 216; Sebastian Fichera, *Italy on the Pacific: San Francisco’s Italian Americans* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 52.
Fishing San Francisco Bay

The Port and the Wharf

The Port of San Francisco, (originally called the Board of State Harbor Commissioners), referred to hereafter as the Port, is a semi-independent governmental organization that controls much of San Francisco’s waterfront and has been responsible for building seawalls and wharves since the mid-1800s. In the early days of San Francisco, fishermen were scattered across the northern wharves where Vallejo, Green, and Union Streets are now. Some were docked at Meiggs’ Wharf, built in 1852, by Henry Meiggs, who eventually was run out of town. In 1872, the state relocated all of the fishermen to the foot of Clay and Commercial Streets. In 1885 the fishermen, all 256 boats, were moved again to the Filbert Street Wharf, also called the Old Wharf or Italy Harbor.

Figure 2.7: View west from Old Fisherman's Wharf near Union and Filbert Streets, looking towards Telegraph Hill in the background. Masts of the feluccas peeking over the nets being mended.
Source: OpenSFHistory / wnp15.1663.

Finally, in 1900, the fishermen and their boats were moved for the last time, to Fisherman’s Wharf, where they remain. The Port wanted to create a modern wharf and found this new site at the terminus of Taylor and Jones streets well-suited for the fishing fleet. The Port constructed a wooden wharf alongside Jefferson Street, which ran atop the seawall, and a 785-foot stone breakwater to protect the fishing fleet, thereby creating what is now known as the inner lagoon or Fisherman’s Lagoon. By 1917, the Port began to build out the infrastructure of the outer lagoon north of Taylor Street, which lead to further development of the area.

**Italian and Sicilian Fishermen**

Fishing requires little knowledge of English, and by 1900 half of the city’s fishermen were Italian, or more specifically Sicilian. Sicilians came from coastal towns such as Trabia, Isola delle Femina, Castellane del Golfo and Termini Imerese, Sciacca, and Porticello, where the tradition of the annual celebration of the Madonna del Lume and the Blessing of the Fleet comes from. A few of the prominent San Francisco restaurateurs such as Mike Geraldi and the Sabella family were from the village of Sciacca.

The Italians and Sicilians who were from the coastal towns brought both their knowledge and the *felucca*, a small lateen sail-rigged boat with triangular sail used in the Mediterranean and North Africa. [Figure 2.8] In 1864, the Fisher Dealers’ Cooperative was formed and in 1882 the Italian Fisherman’s Association was formed. They became quite powerful in the fishing industry. In 1907 the San Francisco Chronicle suggested that Italian fishermen were using violence and intimidation to gain control of the fishing industry. “Many Chinese and Indians were driven out

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74 Dillon, *North Beach*, p. 89.
75 Corbett, *Port City*, 180.
76 Michael R. Corbett, *Port City*, 181.
77 Fichera, *Italy on the Pacific*, 54
of business by petty persecutions and physical intimidation. Boats have been scuttled, nets have been cut, and sometimes the owners of the nets have been cut. Launches have gone out to sea and neither launches nor owners have ever been seen again.” ⁷⁸ It was hard for other immigrants to gain a foothold in the fishing industry, especially for the Chinese.

Figure 2.8: Feluccas at Fisherman’s Wharf, San Francisco, CA, 1908 looking west. Source: U.S. National Park Service https://npgallery.nps.gov/SAFR/AssetDetail/c913eb1c-8a6a-49e3-ad3d-5277aeef6db.

⁷⁸ “How Price of Fish to Consumers Is Kept Up,” San Francisco Chronicle, September 8, 1907, 40.
Chinese Fishermen-The First to Fish Commercially

Though the Italians eventually ruled the fishing industry, the Chinese started commercial salt-water fishing in 1850 or 1851. Due to discrimination and many laws created to thwart their success, by the early twentieth century very few Chinese were fishing San Francisco Bay.79

Like many men who arrived on the shores of San Francisco Bay during the gold rush, the Chinese came seeking their fortune in the gold fields but came out empty handed, so they turned to work they had done in their home country, in many cases fishing, to make a living. One of the first fishing villages in San Francisco was located in Rincon Point, where the base of the Bay Bridge stands today.

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The Chinese were successful, and by the 1880s were contributing several hundred thousand dollars annually to the fishing industry.\textsuperscript{80} Their success, coupled with strong anti-Chinese feelings, led to numerous racist laws that specifically targeted their fishing community.

In 1860, a monthly tax of four dollars was instituted by the State legislature, specific to Chinese fishermen, who brought in about twenty to thirty dollars a month during the fishing season.\textsuperscript{81} State Senator Richard F. Perkins later initiated a repeal of this unfair tax. A meeting of the all-Italian Fishermen of the Bay of San Francisco in 1862 resulted in the publishing of a broadside that protested the repeal. The Italians stated that this tax was necessary to protect white fishermen (not all Americans agreed that Italians were white at this time) from the “encroachment of the Mongolians.”\textsuperscript{82}

Continuing to make things difficult for Chinese fishermen, the state legislature passed a law in 1905 forbidding shrimping during the months when they were abundant, in addition to the export of dry shrimp to China, where ninety percent of the catch was sent. Due to the restrictions imposed on them, the population of Chinese fishermen began to decline even as the number of Portuguese, and especially Italian, fishermen, was flourishing. Many Chinese were forced to abandon fishing altogether.\textsuperscript{83}

One of the last Chinese fishing villages was located in Point San Pedro, nestled in a small cove located in Marin County, across the Bay from San Francisco. In the 1880s at the height of the shrimping industry, it was home to 500 Chinese residents. It is now part of the California State Parks and is known as China Camp. The Quan family settled there in the late 1880s and

\textsuperscript{80} Armentrout-Ma.
\textsuperscript{81} Armentrout-Ma.
\textsuperscript{82} Richard H. Dillon and Lynn L. Davis, North Beach: The Italian Heart of San Francisco (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1985), 84.
\textsuperscript{83} Armentrout-Ma, 144.
Quan Hung Quock built a general store on this secluded beach in 1895. The last shrimper and last remaining resident of the historic fishing village, Frank Quan, died in 2016, at the age of 90. As Chinese fishing declined, the Italian fishing population increased.

**The Fishing Fleet**

Around the turn of the century feluccas soon gave way to small boats with engines called Monterey Clippers or affectionately, “putt-putts,” for how their engines sounded. Engines meant that the fishermen could go out further past the Golden Gate to fish, fish longer days and provide power to haul in nets. In 1920 there were five hundred Monterey Clippers in San Francisco, mostly built and maintained by the Italian American community in Fisherman’s Wharf. These are the boats in Fisherman’s Lagoon, mostly retired from commercial fishing, but lend the harbor historic charm that the modern fishing fleet lacks. [Figure 2.10]

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Blessing of the Fleet

The Madonna del Lume celebration occurs every year in October and was once the biggest celebration for the Italian American fishing community, outside of Columbus Day. The celebration originated in the Sicilian town of Porticello and is celebrated to honor the Virgin Mary who, as the story goes, guided lost fisherman safely back to shore with a light that appeared from a mysterious source. Put on every year since 1935, this celebration has a court
made up of teenage girls and their retinue and a procession that tarts from Sts. Peter and Paul’s church makes its way down Columbus Avenue to the chapel in Fisherman’s Wharf.

On the first Sunday of October, with a few exceptions including the COVID pandemic, the Blessing of the Fleet and the parade of the Madonna del Lume has taken place. This tradition allows the community to acknowledge and pay respect to the fishermen who have lost their lives at sea. Though the Italian American community has mostly moved away from the North Beach area, this tradition has managed to hang on. Rooted at the Sts. Peter and Paul Church, which overlooks Washington Square Park and is the religious center of the Italian American community in North Beach, the event is now also frequented by the Latino and Asian communities that live in the area. The Madonna del Lume tradition is kept alive by selecting a queen and court of teenage girls every year.

Figure 2.11: The Madonna del Lume Queen and her Court, 2022. Source: Author.
The queen and her attendants, along with the Green Street Mortuary Band, floats, church members, interested onlookers and tourists walk from the church down the wide street of Columbus Avenue to the historic fishing fleet about a mile away. It is a once-a-year experience and I was once able to join in, walking down a four-lane street with cable cars, all the way to Fisherman’s Wharf. The procession lands at the diminutive non-denominational Fisherman’s Chapel that is tucked behind the piers in the Fisherman’s Wharf harbor. The celebration used to draw thousands of people and on a sunny day in October 2022, there were maybe a hundred and fifty or so people that walked slowly behind the band. By the time we arrived at the chapel, chairs were set up outside for attendees, there were about seventy-five participants and onlookers. The teenage queen gave her speech, a rushed and mumbled affair, and there was the singing of the Italian anthem, but when it came time for what used to be the whole point of the festival, the blessing of the fishing boats, just the priest and his helper walked over to the handful of brightly painted, historic Monterey Clippers that are moored and proceeded to bless them. [Figure 2.12]

Figure 2.12: Blessing of the San Francisco fishing fleet in a ceremony, Fisherman’s Wharf, ca.1940, looking north from Jefferson Street. Note F.E. Booth in background, which later became part of Fishermen’s Grotto restaurant. Source: California Historical Society and University of Southern California; https://doi.org/10.25549/chs-m9712.
This story shows how the Italian American community in North Beach and Fisherman’s Wharf, though vastly shrinking, is still trying to keep their traditions alive and it shows how an event that used to be so meaningful to a community is now just an event that goes through the motions, a theatrical recreation of what once had deep meaning. As a spectator witnessing this event, even participating in it, I can glimpse a community trying desperately to keep their heritage visible to those willing to watch or take part in. What is the importance in these events? What kind of value does it bring to the community at large even if the community is no longer a majority stakeholder? Perhaps these events bring added value to the area, showing what helped to build this community, making those witnessing the parade and the float and the teenage court walking down the street in their fancy dresses and sneakers ask why this event is occurring and what it all means. It is yet another way to engage the community in understanding what helped build this place that they live in and love, and why they should care about their neighborhood and city. Though the Blessing of the Fleet and the Queen and her court are representative of the history of North Beach and do not convey some of the hardships experienced by the community, they do help to remind those witnessing the event to delve deeper into the community’s past.

**Italians During World War II**

Fishing had been going well at the start of the 1940s for the Italian and Sicilian American community. Sardines were plentiful and money was good. However, the United States was about to enter into the World War II and life was about to change for many, especially a few

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87 By this time, fishermen were a majority Sicilian, but for the sake of clarity I will be referring to both groups as Italian unless otherwise required to differentiate.
immigrant groups. Immediately after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States declared war on Japan, and President Roosevelt signed Proclamations 2525, 2526 and 2527. These would, respectively, allow the United States to detain potentially dangerous non-citizens, or “enemy aliens” of Japanese, German and Italian ancestry. By this time the majority of the Italian American population in San Francisco was American born or naturalized citizens. However, there were a number of Italians with pro-fascist leanings, so along with individual Japanese and Germans, Italians were also called in for questioning. The next governmental action to have grave consequences for these communities, and especially devastating for the Japanese community, was Executive Order 9066.

Executive order 9066 was quickly drafted and signed by President Roosevelt on February 19, 1942, and though the order is loosely worded and does not name a specific racial group, it allowed for the removal and incarceration of “any and all persons” that lived in areas that were considered vulnerable to attack, which primarily meant the West Coast and specifically near the Pacific Ocean. Due to racist hysteria, people of Japanese ancestry were rounded up within a couple of weeks of the order being signed. Italians and Germans were supposedly headed for the same fate but this action was blocked by Washington and only the Japanese population, American citizens and non-citizens alike, were sent to camps.

In San Francisco there were 12,000 Italian non-citizens that were now considered “enemy aliens.” By June of 1942, 1,500 Italians had been detained. The California coastline was deemed vulnerable to attack and enemy aliens were required to register at the post office, carry a pink

90 Fichera, 140.
booklet that held their photo and fingerprints, as well as adhere to a curfew that kept them in their homes from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. They were also forbidden to go near the water. This meant that if they were fishermen or worked near the water, such as restaurant workers or garbage collectors, they were likely to lose their jobs.91

Dave D’Amato, a San Francisco native and fourth generation Italian American, who still lives in North Beach, spoke about his family’s own struggles during World War II. His grandfather Onofrio D’Amato, whom Dave never met, was one of these fishermen who was forced to give up his livelihood and his two boats, the Sea King and the San Pedro.

My grandparents were not naturalized citizens, they bought property and stuff, but they'd never learned English or applied to be[come] naturalized citizens…When the war came along, he, and Italy, was on the wrong side…in the war…If you were a fisherman, you had to go out in a big group and you were chaperoned by the Coast Guard or the Navy…If you weren't a citizen, you had to have a family member or somebody who was a citizen with you on the boat, and if you didn't, you were not allowed to even go near Fisherman's Wharf. So for him, he was basically shut out. And they were forced to relinquish the boats at that point.92

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91 Fichera, 143, 146.
92 Takahara, Dave D’Amato Interview. Personal, October 31, 2022.
With the United States entering the war, Onofrio’s American-born sons, who fished with him, joined the military to fight. This meant he no longer had the workforce of his family. Dave stated that his grandfather wasn’t allowed to work, which sent him into a depression, “that might have caused his… early demise. Unfortunately, I think he suffered [from] mental illness from not being able to work or do anything, and having his whole livelihood, stripped from him.” 93

Requisitioning boats from fishermen had been part of the navy’s preparation for war. They had put into place a contingency plan to defend the West Coast in case of an attack from

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93 Takahara, D’Amato Interview.
Japan. By the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor there were 1,500 fishermen of Italian ancestry in the San Francisco port and they ran most of the fishing boats on the West Coast. The navy had hoped to use them for mine sweeping among other things. This quickly put an end to most fishing on the West Coast and the lucrative sardine catch that was happening between San Francisco and Monterey bays. Ironically, the United States government would soon initiate a campaign to boost food production after hobbling both the agricultural and fishing industries by placing Japanese Americans, many of whom worked in agriculture, in incarceration camps, and stripping the primarily Italian American fishing industry of their boats. The Agricultural Department put out a poster to help get the word out: “Fish is a Fighting Food: We Need More.” [Figure: 2.14] The boat seizures crippled the canning and reduction fishery industries in both San Francisco and Monterey.

Though the treatment of the Japanese American community was considerably more harsh than what either the German or Italian American communities experienced, as the Japanese were forced to leave their homes and businesses and put into incarceration camps, the effect on many of the Italians who worked in the fishing industry or along coastal areas was devastating, resulting in loss of jobs and community standing that created lasting emotional trauma for many in the community.

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95 DiStasi, 80.
Figure 2.14: “Fish is a Fighting Food: We Need More,” 1943. U.S. Office of War Information. Artist: Henry Koerner. Source: Hennepin County Library.
Famous Italian American Food Businesses

Not all Italians were farmers or fishermen; many worked in the food industry. From the produce market, businesses emerged that catered directly to Italians and the San Franciscan community at large. Italians often ran businesses as greengrocers, with corner produce stores in storefronts on the first floor of apartment buildings. There were numerous Italian restaurants that Italian and non-Italians alike patronized. Another area of employment that many Italians found work in was food manufacturing. In Erica J. Peters’ “San Francisco: A Food Biography,” she states that according to the Italian bureau of statistics, in 1886, about seven thousand Italians were living in San Francisco and many were in the food industry:

The Bureau counted five Italian firms in wholesale imports, twenty-two food retailers, ten fruit wholesalers, seventy-three fruit and vegetable shops or vendors, eighty-five vintners or wine dealers, forty-eight wine and spirit shops, fourteen butchers, twelve trattorie, seven pasta manufacturers, four confectionery makers, seven bakers, three delicatessens, two dairies, and one dealer in chocolate and coffee.96

Strange that there is no mention of fishermen among this list. Most were small mom and pop run enterprises, but a handful became some of the most famous food companies in the country, brands that became household names in the twentieth century: Ghirardelli Chocolate, Del Monte Foods, and Rice-A-Roni.

Ghirardelli Chocolate

Born in Italy in 1817, Domenico Ghirardelli moved to Lima, Peru in his early twenties to open a confectionary store. In 1847, Ghirardelli’s American neighbor, James Lick, decided to move his piano business to San Francisco, taking with him six hundred pounds of chocolate he bought from Ghirardelli and planned to sell. Upon his arrival the chocolate quickly sold, and

Lick urged Ghirardelli to move to San Francisco. In 1849, in the early part of the Gold Rush, Ghirardelli arrived in San Francisco and soon opened shops in Stockton and San Francisco. In 1893, Ghirardelli’s sons, who then ran the business, relocated the factory to the Pioneer Woolen Mills building on 900 North Point Street in Fisherman’s Wharf, where they built a group of red brick building that became icons of the neighborhood.\(^97\) In 1963 the Golden Grain Company, the producers of Rice-A Roni, bought the Ghirardelli chocolate business. When Ghirardelli moved the factory out of the building, shipping heir William Matson Roth bought the property in hopes of, “conserving the historic character of the city rather than just investment for profit.”\(^98\) Landscape architect Lawrence Halprin and architect William Wurster were hired to reimagine the Ghirardelli property as a shopping destination. Opening in 1964, it is considered one of the first successful adaptive reuse projects of a factory site in the United States.\(^99\)

**Del Monte Foods**

In the 1880s, Mark Fontana, born Marco Fontana in Genoa, Italy, saw all of the spoilage that happened at fruit stores.\(^100\) Knowing that fruit was not available on the East Coast during the winter months, he thought that canning the fruit would be a good solution to both problems. By the 1890s Fontana & Co. became the second largest cannery in San Francisco, and by 1909 the cannery was the largest fruit and vegetable cannery in the world.\(^101\) By 1917, Fontana & Co had

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97 Pioneer Woolen Mills was an early business on the San Francisco waterfront. Built in 1862 by William Sebastian Mooser, it is one of the city’s oldest buildings and on the National Register of Historic Places. For more information see the National Archives Catalog https://catalog.archives.gov/id/123861254.


become the California Fruit Canners Association, comprised of many canneries and fruit packing plants in half a dozen states under the new name, Del Monte, which had been one of the many companies that joined the Association.\textsuperscript{102} Peaches and other fruit were processed, largely by Italian women, at the cannery until 1937.\textsuperscript{103}

After being used as a warehouse for many decades, the abandoned cannery was headed for demolition. In 1967, as with Ghirardelli Square, the Cannery, as it came to be known, was purchased and rehabilitated by a local investor, who turned it into a commercial space filled with restaurants and shops.\textsuperscript{104} The rehabilitation of the Cannery and Ghirardelli Square helped launch the adaptive reuse movement in the United States.\textsuperscript{105}

\textit{Rice-A-Roni}

Golden Grain Macaroni Company was founded in 1912 by two Italian American families, the De Domenico and the Ferigno families. The De Domenico family was originally from Sicily and the Ferigno family from Campania. This was a partnership formed by marriage. Originally the company was called Gragnano Products, but the name was changed to Golden Grain Macaroni Company during World War II to sound less Italian.\textsuperscript{106} In 1958 they developed Rice-A-Roni from an Armenian inspired pilaf dish learned from a neighbor, that was part rice

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[103]{Cinel, \textit{From Italy to San Francisco}, 232.}
\footnotetext[105]{Ghirardelli Square,” The Landscape Architecture of Lawrence Halprin (The Cultural Landscape Foundation), accessed November 16, 2022, \url{https://www.tclf.org/sites/default/files/microsites/halprinlegacy/ghirardelli-square.html}.}
\end{footnotes}
and part capellini pasta, or macaroni, hence the name Rice-A Roni. Thanks to a very successful nationwide marketing campaign and a very catchy jingle, this product became known as “The San Francisco Treat.”


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107 “Macaroni” was what most Americans, including Italian-Americans, called pasta until the 1970s. In the 1980’s a rise in the usage of the word “pasta” occurs when Italian cuisine started to be viewed as more upscale. For more information see this discussion [https://english.stackexchange.com/questions/595185/when-and-why-did-the-word-pasta-become-commonly-used](https://english.stackexchange.com/questions/595185/when-and-why-did-the-word-pasta-become-commonly-used), as well as *The Italian American Table: Food, Family and Community in New York City* and *How Italian Food Conquered the World*.

**Early Italian Restaurants**

In the lower part of the city are numerous Italian restaurants, few of which are really first-class if prices indicate such grades...One of these Italian houses is famed for being the place in which (it is said) the best macaroni outside of Italy is served before the guests. This nourishing dish is here cooked in a great variety of ways; and traveled people, gourmands and blasé diners-out go to the obscure little house to enjoy a new sensation...But for a truly Apician banquet, give an infrequent guest the six courses of macaroni served in six different styles, with one course of mushrooms, and red wine *a discretion*—and he may truly say: “I have dined to-day.”

-Restaurant Life in San Francisco, 1868. Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine

Like many foods that arrive with a diasporic community, it is often a limited number of dishes that come to represent the culture at large in its new country. This tends to erase the origin and variety of foods that were developed over hundreds of years and allow the expression of regional pride through providing the traditional dishes from immigrants’ homelands. It is understandable that this happens. Countries can be large, complex and filled with many regions. Often an immigrant group that settles in a new country is from a specific region or two, giving precedence to foods from those areas, and then what becomes popular is self-selected by what the host country finds appealing and how the immigrant cooks adjust for the new country’s tastes, and this is how we, as the host country, come to think of the recently-arrived people’s food. Such was the case for Italian food in America. Until the second half of the twentieth century Italian food was thought of as foreign or “ethnic” food, a term that first appears in 1959 and is now considered a problematic way to describe non-Western European food. In the 1980s Italian food started to transition away from the category of “ethnic” food and into the

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realm of what many would have considered elevated cuisine, climbing the ranks to surpass the popularity of long-venerated French food.

The Italians who landed in San Francisco came primarily from four different regions in Italy: Genoa in Liguria, Lucca in Tuscany, Cosenza in Calabria, and Palermo in Sicily.\(^{111}\) This meant that the food traditions they carried with them varied from region to region, bringing a variety of cooking styles and ingredients. With more cream-based dishes and fresh noodles in the north and more tomato-centric dishes and dried, tubular pastas in the south, foods that we think of as “Italian food” hail from regions all over Italy. From the region of Liguria, the Genoese brought pesto. Olive oil came primarily from Lucca in Tuscany. Calabria is known for its chili peppers, and Sicily for its extensive use of seafood.

The early restaurants that started out as places for the Italian community to gather and eat food that reminded them of home, eventually began to be discovered by outsiders, namely bohemians, and in turn, by everyone else.

\textit{1852-Tam O’Shanter}

One of the earliest Italians to set up a restaurant in the growing town of San Francisco was Frank Bazzuro from Genoa, who in 1852, opened a restaurant in the abandoned ship, the “Tam O’Shanter.” Purchased for fifty dollars, the ship, one of the hundreds left in San Francisco Bay during the frenzy of the gold rush, provided a novel setting to serve plentiful and cheap Dungeness crab to a growing city.\(^{112}\) This restaurant also may have been the first place to serve


\(^{112}\) Gumina, “Provincial Italian Cuisine.”
cioppino, San Francisco’s iconic stew.\textsuperscript{113}

\textit{1859-Campi’s}

In 1859, Giacomo Campi, who was Swiss, and John Mauletti, who was Italian, opened a coffee stand and restaurant on the corner of Sansome and Merchant (now Grant). They served French and Italian food until closing in 1917. Food historian Erica Peters, states that the restaurant “educated San Franciscans about the importance of olive oil in Italian cuisine.”\textsuperscript{114}

Considered to be the “most important” of early Italian restaurants and a gastronomic rival to the French restaurant Maison Dore, it catered to a more socioeconomically diverse group, enjoying “high repute among epicures as well as trenchmen.”\textsuperscript{115}

\textit{1888- Sanguinetti’s}

Sanguinetti’s restaurant was located on Davis Street. Its chief clientele were fishermen from the Union Street Wharf, which predated Fisherman's Wharf, and it was also popular with bohemians. There you could get a bowl of minestrone, an entree and a bottle of wine for twenty-five cents. Sanguinetti's was owned by Stefan Sanguinetti and had low ceiling beams, dark walls, and sawdust on the floor, as well as musicians, all giving the place a special atmosphere. Artists and intellectuals were drawn to the “exotic” and inexpensive food and it is suggested that they introduced Italian restaurants to the middle and upper classes by portraying them in their literature and artwork.\textsuperscript{116}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[113] Doris Muscatine, \textit{A Cook’s Tour of San Francisco: The Best Restaurants and Their Recipes} (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), 327.
\item[115] Gumina; Dillon, \textit{North Beach}, 134.
\item[116] Gumina.
\end{footnotes}
Started in 1886 Fior d’Italia is, according to its website, America’s oldest Italian restaurant. Founded by Angelo Del Monte, originally from Genoa, it has served the city’s diners in numerous locations since its founding. Its appeal extended beyond the Italian community. In 1921, the San Francisco Chronicle noted that “plenty of good Americans, of puritan or cavalier stock for generations, like Italian cooking as well as anybody else…” Fior d’Italia was considered the finest Italian restaurant in San Francisco from when it was established into the early twentieth century.

Figure 2.16: The original 1886 menu.
Source: The Fabulous Fior-Over 100 Years in an Italian Kitchen.

118 Peters, San Francisco: A Food Biography, 128.
119 Peters, 130.
Early 1900s-Coppa’s

Housed in the storied Montgomery Block Building, Coppa’s became the most popular Italian restaurant in San Francisco before the 1906 earthquake. Built in 1853, the Montgomery Block Building, fondly referred to as the “Monkey Block,” was the largest commercial building west of the Mississippi, and came to be the center of bohemian culture, as it offered studios and apartments for writers including Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Ambrose Bierce, Robert Louis Stevenson, Jack London, George Sterling, and Emma Goldman.\textsuperscript{120} The restaurant’s popularity was largely due to Giuseppe Coppa’s culinary skills and affordable pricing that attracted an artistic clientele, which in turn attracted the rest of San Francisco. For fifty cents you could get salad, pasta, entree, crusty sourdough bread, black coffee, and a bottle of wine. Most notably, the interior was playfully decorated with frescoes painted by the artists in exchange for a table.\textsuperscript{121} When the restaurant became too popular with the general public, the bohemians moved on.

\textsuperscript{120} Harvey Smith, “New Deals Arts and Programs During the Depression,” FOUNDSF, accessed March 6, 2023, https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=New_Deal_Artists_and_Programs_During_the_Depression.

\textsuperscript{121} Richard H. Dillon and Lynn L. Davis, \textit{North Beach: The Italian Heart of San Francisco} (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1985), 135; Gumina, “Provincial Italian Cuisine.”
These and the many other Italian restaurants introduced the population of San Francisco to Italian cuisine making it a staple and popular food whereas in many other parts of the country at this time it would have been considered exotic. “Italian proprietors laid the groundwork for a restaurant industry,” writes Deanna Paoli Gumina, “which contributed to San Francisco's recognition as a gourmet city.”\(^{122}\)

\(^{122}\) Gumina, “Provincial Italian Cuisine.”
Chapter 3: Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9

There is something about the smell of salt air in San Francisco that sets one's appetite off on a wild chase that ends only at Fisherman's Wharf. No matter how hungry you have become in hill-climbing, cable car riding or window gawking they can cope with your hunger.

--Henry Evans, *San Francisco’s Fisherman’s Wharf*¹²³

*Introduction*

In February of 2022, when I was beginning my research into this thesis, I knew I wanted to focus on one particular restaurant, Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9. It is known to be the first full-service restaurant in Fisherman’s Wharf. Opened in 1935, it was in business for eighty-one years and run by the Geraldi family until they were forced to sell the business in 2016. Though the business was bought, and the name was changed to The Grotto, the iconic exterior remained unchanged. The interior and the menu were mildly revamped, and the new owners maintained that it was still the same business. I reached out to Anthony Geraldi, the fourth-generation restaurateur and youngest family member to have co-owned Fisherman’s Grotto No. 9. Anthony and his father Michael had run the restaurant up until its sale in 2016. I interviewed Anthony three times between February 2022 through February 2023. I interviewed his father, Michael Geraldi, once in 2023. Through my interviews I hoped to document a portion of the Geraldi family’s cultural legacy and their contribution to the creation of Fisherman’s Wharf through their restaurant. What follows is a summary of the interviews and is not meant to be a complete history of the Geraldi family or of the restaurant, but insight into how the restaurant came to be and its role in the creation of the Wharf, including who came to eat as well as who worked at the restaurant through its eighty-one years in business.

Figure 3.1: Crab vendors on Taylor Street looking north. F.E. Booth and Pier 45 buildings in the background ca. 1920s. Source: OpenSFHistory/wnp27.6313.
How the Restaurant Began

Born in 1890 in the small fishing village of Sciacca on the island of Sicily, Mike Geraldi would come to San Francisco and eventually open the first full-service restaurant on Fisherman’s Wharf, helping to create one of the most visited tourist attractions in the United States. He arrived in San Francisco in 1904, two years before the great earthquake, at the age of fourteen, along with his eighteen-year-old brother. They had left Sicily and their family to escape poverty that much of southern Italy was experiencing. Once in San Francisco the teenage Mike worked for a number of years helping to maintain and repair the fishing boats that belonged primarily to Sicilian fishermen, eventually saving enough money to buy his own fishing boat. He fished for 26 years and then transitioned to selling fish and crab on the sidewalk of Taylor Street which ran north to south along the inner harbor of Fisherman’s Wharf. [Figure 3.1] Mike occupied stall number 9, which was the last of the stalls on the street. His stall, like all of the others, consisted of a prep counter in a small building, a crab pot, a large cauldron on the sidewalk filled with boiling sea water with a fire underneath, and wooden tables to lay the cooked crab and other seafood out on. Stall number 1 was at the very corner of Jefferson and Taylor streets, where Taylor Street becomes a pier. Salvatore Guardino operated stall Number 1 and was supposedly the first fish monger to operate a fish stall on port property. The fish stalls continued sequentially up the street, with Cresci Bros. at number 2, A. Sabella at number 3, Alioto’s at number 8, and finally, Mike Geraldi at number 9.

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124 The majority of this chapter is compiled from interviews I conducted in 2022 and 2023 with the last owners of Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9, Anthony and Michael Geraldi, unless noted.
126 Fishermen’s Grotto Recipe Book, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.
128 Presumably stalls 4-7 were occupied by other seafood vendors, but I was unable to determine who was on the site at the time.
Visiting the Wharf, you could buy paper cones of crab meat to eat from fish vendors and then walk along the wharf watching the fishermen mending their nets, working on their boats and unloading their catch. Anthony’s cousin, Michael Sabella, whose family also opened a fish market and a restaurant on the Wharf, recalls what the early scene down on the wharf might have been like when vendors would sell the day’s catch on the sidewalks that ran along the Wharf. The Sabella family had stall number three on Taylor Street that would later become the Sabella & La Torre restaurant:

There were always plenty of wood scraps around that could be collected to cook the crabs and shrimp at stall number 3. In fact much of the Wharf was still lumber yards and train tracks. After filling the cauldron with seawater, Antonino set the fire underneath and went back to see what Papa and the other fishermen had brought back from his bay, the Marin Headlands, and Monterey Bay... By the time he returned to the stall, the water was boiling in the cauldron. He started with the bay shrimp which only took a quick dip in the pot to cook. Next went the crabs. The sound of the crabs hitting the scalding water sounded like the crabs were screaming, but Antonino knew they couldn’t because they had no vocal cords. The whistling sound came from steam escaping their shells... The streets filled with the intoxicating, heady aroma from the bright-orange cooked crabs as they were removed from the cauldron. Antonino was careful to stack the crabs on their backs to keep the water in and the crab moist.\textsuperscript{129}

Geraldi, like all of the other vendors, not only sold boiled crab and fresh fish to housewives and curious locals, he made food for the fishermen. His grandson, Michael Geraldi, recounted that more than one fisherman suggested he open a restaurant saying, “You’re feeding us, why don’t you feed the public?” Encouraged, he decided to open a restaurant with table-side service. This had never been done before in Fisherman’s Wharf.

In 1935 Geraldi, along with investor Art Belcher, built and opened the first full-service restaurant on Fisherman’s Wharf. During the early years of the restaurant, Belcher, who the Geraldi family believes was Jewish, was the only Fishermen’s Grotto proprietor referenced in a

newspaper article that mentions the restaurant and its “Annex” on Treasure Island, in 1939.\textsuperscript{130} [Figure 3.2] Running from February 1939 through September of 1940, the Golden Gate International Exposition was staged on the manmade Treasure Island, to celebrate the building of the Golden Gate and Bay Bridges.\textsuperscript{131} Fishermen’s Grotto had a restaurant as well as two chowder stands at the Exposition, that Belcher appeared to be overseeing.\textsuperscript{132} There is no mention of Belcher after 1940 and the Geraldi family states he was only involved in the early years.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{figure32.png}
\caption{Early Fishermen's Grotto business card ca. mid-late 1930s. \textit{From the collection of Anthony Geraldi.}}
\end{figure}

Mike Geraldi’s name first appears in the San Francisco Chronicle in a 1939 article, but not attached to Fishermen’s Grotto, and is grouped with other “merchant or restaurant men” of Fisherman’s Wharf.\textsuperscript{133} Geraldi was not to remain just a “restaurant man.” He was soon to make a

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{130} San Francisco Chronicle (San Francisco, California), July, 1939: 23.
\textsuperscript{132} San Francisco Chronicle (San Francisco, California), April 7, 1940: 80.
\textsuperscript{133} San Francisco Chronicle (San Francisco, California), September 23, 1939: 6.
\end{flushright}
name for himself with Fishermen’s Grotto restaurant and would come to be thought of as “one of the most celebrated restaurateurs in the history of Fisherman’s Wharf,” and one of the founders of today’s more tourist-focused Fisherman’s Wharf.134

Building and Site History

Because the Port had built wharves, the migration of restaurants from North Beach to Fisherman’s Wharf began as the wharves shifted from a solely industrial environment to place where tourists and locals could buy and eat crab cocktails from vendors. The act of placing the cauldrons for boiling shrimp and crab on the sidewalk of Taylor Street led to the Italians situating themselves in a specific place, allowing them to be known for their food and to earn a living and gain wealth. This accumulated wealth then allowed the once street vendors to build permanent businesses, often in just a matter of ten to fifteen years. They created an environment that changed the visual character of these wharves, from steaming cauldrons to small stores with counter seating or you could grab and go. They eventually expanded those small stores into full-service dining.

Built in 1918, The F.E. Booth Packing House, a two-story reinforced concrete building, was built to be a fish packing house and market. It was constructed in the Italian Renaissance style with a hipped, red-tile roof, and a curved arcade entryway on the building’s southeast corner. [Figure 3.3] The building’s namesake and lessee, Frank Booth, was known to be the “founder of the sardine industry in California.”135

134 Baccari, San Francisco’s Fisherman’s Wharf, 136.
135 Corbett, 181.
By 1920, on the corner of Jefferson and Taylor Streets, a one-story wooden building was built next to the harbor that lapped up against Taylor Street. It had five stalls for fish vendors. A few years later, three more stalls were built. Gerald’s stall was on Taylor Street next to an empty lot between the F.E. Booth building and the fish stalls in the one-story buildings. [Figure 3.4] He may have even moved his stall around on Taylor Street. In Figure 3.6., his cart can be seen further down the block closer to Jefferson. It is not clear, even to his family, if Gerald always had a permanent spot on Taylor Street during his days as a vendor and perhaps he even shared a kitchen in one of the eight stalls. [Figure 3.5]

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136 Corbett, 180.
Figure 3.4: F.E. Booth building and empty lot where Fishermen's Grotto (arrow) would later be built. Looking east from Jefferson Street. Source: San Francisco Fisherman's Wharf, Alessandro Baccari Jr.

Figure 3.5: Mike Geraldi ca. 1934 at his crab stand, looking south on Taylor Street. This same cart can be seen in the photograph below just right of the lamppost. Source: Fishermen's Grotto Facebook page.
These fish stalls offered up prepared food to eat on the premises or to go, but the places were small and casual. “There was mostly counter service where you could stand and spoon up your crab or shrimp cocktail with a crisp oyster cracker or two and perhaps a bottle of beer,” writes Henry Evans in his charming 1957 pamphlet, *San Francisco’s Fisherman’s Wharf*. To open the first full service restaurant, Geraldi and Belcher decided they needed to build a larger space than what the stalls offered. As they were on Port property, Geraldi and Belcher did not own the land, nor own the building, but leased it from the Port, as did everyone who had businesses on Port property. Nestled between fish stalls and the F.E. Booth building was the empty lot where Geraldi set up his crab stand and would become where he and Belcher decided to build their restaurant.

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In 1935, Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9 finished construction of its two-story, 155 seat restaurant and opened its doors, offering “Fish Dinners,” a first on the Wharf. 138 From a photograph dated 1935, the original two-story building is vaguely Mediterranean in style, and has what appears to be an asphalt tiled side-gabled roof, with four arched French-door windows and one double-hung window on the second floor. Because of the awnings on the first floor, and the cropped photograph, it is hard to make out the window and entrance details. In front of the restaurant are tables for cooked crab and other seafood, as well as the crab pots that seem to be fixed in place and made out of brick or faced with tile, no longer the metal cauldrons from earlier years. [Figure 3.7]

![Figure 3.7: Fishermen's Grotto shortly after it opened in 1935. Source: Fishermen's Grotto Facebook Page.](image)

Mike Geraldi’s restaurant became a very popular destination on the Wharf, with other

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138 The number of seats is stated as 180 in the HRE for Fishermen’s Grotto. I have chosen to go with the number provided to me by the original co-owner Anthony Geraldi. Knapp Architects, Draft Historic Resource Evaluation: Fishermen’s Grotto, 2851 Taylor Street, San Francisco, CA (Prepared on behalf of tenant Chris Henry for Port of San Francisco and the San Francisco Planning Department, 2017), 25.
Sicilian fish vendors such as the Sabella, Alioto and Castagnola families following suit and opening up restaurants of their own. Not much is known about what happened to the business relationship between Belcher and Geraldi other than Belcher’s name no longer appeared on menus after a few years. Geraldi had only fourteen years to grow his business and establish his legacy as he died suddenly at 58 years of age in 1949. During that time his restaurant made it on to the esteemed Duncan Hines list of recommended restaurants, appearing in the 1941 edition of Duncan Hines’ best seller *Adventures in Good Eating: Good Eating Places along the Highways of America.* [Figure 3.8] Fishermen’s Grotto even sold copies of his book for many years.

![Fishermen's Grotto](image)

*Figure 3.8: Review of Fishermen's Grotto in Duncan Hines' 1941 'Adventures in Good Eating.'*

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139 Duncan Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating: Good Eating Places along the Highways of America*, 8th ed. (Bowling Green, KY: Adventures in Good Eating, Inc., 1941), 47. Before Duncan Hines was known for cake mixes, he was the first to write guides on where to eat while motoring across the United States—an American version of the Michelin guide. For more information see *Duncan Hines: How a Traveling Salesman Became the Most Trusted Name in Food*, or Nicole Jankowski, “Duncan Hines: The Original Road Warrior Who Shaped Restaurant History,” NPR, March 26, 2017, https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2017/03/26/520866833/duncan-hines-the-original-road-warrior-who-shaped-restaurant-history.
When Mike Geraldi passed away, his son Nino Geraldi, who was one of eight children, took over the restaurant. Though many of Geraldi’s other children worked at the restaurant, he made Nino the General Manager prior to his death. Nino married Beatrice Sabella, his cousin, in 1948. Her family had the fish market A.Sabella (now Sabella and La Torre) that was also on Taylor Street and her father Antonino went on to open the restaurant also called A.Sabella, on the southwest corner of Jefferson and Taylor Streets, not on Port property. I was not able to track down the exact date the full-service A.Sabella restaurant opened, even though Michael Sabella, a chef and Sabella family member, has stated it is 1929 in his book Recipes Change. His dates are a bit loose, and he seems to be referring to the stall on Taylor Street and not the restaurant. After a fire in 1964, the Sabellas rebuilt their restaurant from the ground up in the New Formalist architectural style. It has three stories and when it was in operation had a dance club called the
Capri Room on the bottom floor and the restaurant on the top. After Mike Geraldi opened his restaurant, many of the Sicilian fish vending families also opened full service restaurants. According to Anthony and Michael Geraldi, the date of when Fisherman’s Grotto No. 9 opened was 1935, but not when Mike Geraldi started his stall business. They claim that many of the other restaurants put down the start date of their stall businesses as the founding of their restaurants, and therefore it appears that many of these full-service restaurants are older than they are. For the most part it appears that no other restaurants dispute Fisherman’s Grotto as being the oldest sit-down restaurant on the Wharf. The families may argue over who was selling fish first, but as there were few records other than the permits handed out to stall occupants, we may never know who was exactly first to sell cooked crabs to passerby.  

After Mike Geraldi’s passing, Nino carried on with the restaurant as the general manager and decided that the building next door that had been the F.E. Booth fish packing house, and then for a few years the Vista Del Mar restaurant, could be leased from the Port to expand Fishermen’s Grotto. [Figure 3.10] Merging the original two-story building with the F.E. Booth building would more than double the size of his restaurant, eventually making it one of the largest restaurants in San Francisco at 18,796 square feet.  

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140 Sabella, Recipes Change. 36.
141 The Vista Del Mar was the Alioto family’s other restaurant that they opened for a couple years until 1952 when the Geraldis took it over. It was owned by Ignacio, Joseph, and Sal Alioto.
Figure 3.10: Fishermen's Grotto ca. 1940s. Source: Anthony Geraldi.

Figure 3.11: Fishermen's Grotto ca. early 1950s, center. The F.E. Booth building, right, is now the Vista Del mar restaurant. Source: Anthony Geraldi.
Combining the two buildings that were stylistically different took finessing. [Figure 3.11] The F.E. Booth building had a curved arcade at the southeast corner of the building and the design solution that was employed to join the two buildings was to create a faux gable-front with a bay window and chimney that bridged the two buildings. [Figure 3.12] The curve of the F.E. Booth building remains but can only be seen from inside the building on the second floor. It is hidden behind a false wall where the Geraldi family installed a fish tank. In order to feed the fish and access the tank, they installed a door in the wall and behind this wall is where the curve of the original building remains visible.

Figure 3.12: Fishermen's Grotto ca. 1958 after the two buildings were joined in 1953. Source: Anthony Geraldi.

Inside the Restaurant

The interior of the restaurant reflects the different decades it took to build over fifty years and was an important aspect to the identity of the restaurant. As the restaurant consists of
two buildings that were connected together in 1953, the two interiors are distinct from one another. The interior of the original two-story building that was constructed in 1935 and seats 155 guests has a Venetian theme with striped canal mooring poles or “Pali di Casada,” that frame the built-in wooden booths, painted wooden plank ceiling and multi-colored quarry tile floors.\textsuperscript{143} [Figure 3.13] The addition of the Pali di Casada motif was carried through to the exterior of the building. Not originally on the exterior of the building in 1935, the mooring poles appeared along the sidewalk that runs in front of the restaurant sometime in the late 1930s or early 1940s, and remain a visual hallmark of the restaurant. Though the family was Sicilian and not Venetian, they used the widely recognizable striped poles to tie their restaurant to Italy and perhaps the perceived romance of Venice.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{venetian_room.jpg}
\caption{The Venetian Room. The interior of the original dining room.}
\label{fig:venetian}
\end{figure}

When the Geraldi family took over the lease of the F.E. Booth building in 1953, recently the Vista del Mar restaurant, they added the Grotto Tavern on the first floor that filled in the space between to the two buildings. This was a small room with a wraparound bar. Behind the Grotto Tavern were office spaces and storage rooms accessible from the gift shop that was located on the first floor of the F.E. Booth building, now the new addition to Fishermen’s Grotto. The second floor of the building where the formal dining room and the Fireplace Lounge are located, is a mixture of design styles; “The freewheeling, eclectic array of materials, colors, finishes, and forms makes it appear the interior was remodeled in parts, multiple times, with an eye to adding something new in each section or space instead of creating a unified whole.”¹⁴⁴

[Figure 3.14] Indeed, the family updated and added to the restaurant over the next sixty plus years to accommodate the changes they needed to make. The lounge, located on the northeast side of the building, is mid-century in style, and it seems it was part of the earlier 1953 renovation. Michael Geraldi says he can only remember it ever looking the way it still does. The ceiling in the lounge has beams with wooden herringbone boards and diamond-shaped wall paneling with padded vinyl insets, along with a brick fireplace on the east wall close to where the fish tank used to be. The curved wooden bar runs along the south wall and stops just before an archway the leads into the “Florentine” dining room. [Figure 3.15] The dining room has beamed ceilings and large picture windows along the south and western sides as well as another smaller bar half way into the dining room on the north side. In the 1980s, the dining room was extended out over a one-story existing building, making the space significantly larger and as mentioned earlier, one of the largest restaurants in San Francisco.

Figure 3.14: Fireplace Cocktail Lounge ca. early 1950s. Source: Anthony Geraldi.

Figure 3.15: Florentine Dining Room, looking southwest, ca. early 1950s. Source: Anthony Geraldi.
Imported Giftwares Shop

On the first floor of the building, next to the Tavern, was the Imported Giftwares Shop, which was run until the late 1980s by Nino Geraldi’s sister Eleanor. After she died, the shop was neglected and frequently remained closed and only opened up when customers would inquire about it or needed access to the elevator, which was located in the gift store.

The shop sold many hundreds of souvenirs depicting Fisherman’s Wharf and San Francisco, as well as items from other countries. [Figure 3.16]

Figure 3.16: Imported Giftwares Shop.
Source: Fishermen’s Grotto Recipe Book.
In about the early 2010s, removing old carpet and discovering painted concrete floors and vintage deadstock items. He threw out a lot of “junk” that had accumulated, painted, cleaned, bought shelves and added lightbulbs to the old fixtures. Anthony pointed out that there were collectors from Colorado and as far away as New York who would come to the store once a year and buy many of the now collectible items.
There were hand-painted serving trays made in Japan, depicting familiar scenes of San Francisco; cuckoo clocks from Germany; Murano glass from Italy; leather belts with whip stitching and tiny colorful beads that spelled out “San Francisco”; highball glasses with “Fishermen’s Grotto” stenciled in gold across the surface; mugs, keychains, notepads tucked into a leather sleeve, combs and nail file sets, all stamped with the image of the “Little Fisherman,” the Fishermen’s Grotto mascot. Anthony decided he wanted to bring back the gift shop after it had languished for almost twenty years. He set about cleaning up the space in about the early 2010s, removing the old carpet and discovering painted concrete floors and vintage deadstock items. He threw out a lot of “junk” that had accumulated, painted, cleaned, bought shelves, and added lightbulbs to the old light fixtures. Anthony pointed out that there were collectors from Colorado and as far away as New York who would come to the store once a year and buy many of the now collectible items.

*The Little Fisherman*

The image of the “Little Fisherman” was synonymous with Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9. The pipe-smoking fisherman whose large-nosed profile is topped with a Sou’Wester hat, wearing a rain slicker, never without his fishing pole and dangling fishy catch, can be found painted on the side of the restaurant and rendered in neon high above the building. [Figure 3.17] The mascot, created by a friend of Mike Geraldi’s, was painted on the building in 1935 and found its way onto menus, glasses, silverware, plates, coasters, matchbooks, saltshakers and the carpet. [Figure 3.18] I even found that some people got tattoos of him. [Figure 3.19]
Figure 3.17: The Little Fisherman being painted on Fishermen’s Grotto, ca 1930s. 
Source: Fishermen’s Grotto Facebook Page.

Figure 3.18: Vintage Little Fisherman souvenirs on eBay. Source: eBay.
Often, when Mike Geraldi would go to the Safeway market after work, he’d be wearing his jacket that had the Little Fisherman embroidered on it, and people would stop and talk to him and say, “Fishermen’s Grotto! Fishermen’s Grotto! You work at Fishermen’s Grotto!” and proceed to tell him how much they loved his restaurant. Even though the restaurant is no longer owned by the Geraldi family, is now called “The Grotto,” and there are no more items sold with the Little Fisherman’s likeness, the neon signs of the salty mariner sit high above the roof of the restaurant and glow visibly through the fog.

Neon Signs

One of the larger neon signs in San Francisco is the one atop Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9. It spans the width of the façade and is made up of three signs and is held up above the roof line by a metal armature. [Figures 3.13 and 3.20] The sign has changed over the years as the building expanded. It appears to be the same sign as it was in the 1950s when the two buildings merged.
The sign of the Little Fisherman that faces south was lifted up higher than it had been when the Alioto’s No. 8 restaurant, directly south of Fishermen’s Grotto, added a second story and their own neon signs. There is a sign on the west side of the roof that faces the inner lagoon as well as a sign on the south wall that faces Jefferson Street.

Figure 3.20: Looking north on Taylor Street are restaurants including Sabella & LaTorre, Alioto's and Fishermen's Grotto. Source: OpenSFHistory / wnp28.3582.

The family regularly maintained the signs understanding that they were a significant feature of their restaurant as well as widely recognizable. The Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9 restaurant, along with a few other Fisherman’s Wharf signs and buildings, have been replicated at Universal Studios in both Florida and Japan. [Figure 3.21] The former executive director of the Fisherman’s Wharf Community Benefit District pointed out, “Once you’ve been copied in a

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theme park, I think you can pretty much say you’re iconic.”

![Universal Studios Japan](https://secretsanfrancisco.com/universal-studios-japan-san-francisco/)

**Figure 3.21:** Universal Studios Japan, accessed August 3, 2023.

**Tourists and Fishermen’s Grotto**

After Fishermen’s Grotto opened the first sit-down restaurant, the other Sicilian fish vendors quickly followed suit, opening their own full-service restaurants on Taylor and Jefferson streets: A. Sabella’s, Alioto’s, Castagnola’s, and DiMaggio’s. A little later came Sabella and LaTorre, Guardino’s, Pompei’s Grotto, Exposition Fish Grotto, Tarantino’s, Neptune Fish Grotto, the Franciscan, Cappuro’s and Scoma’s. [Figures 3.22 and 3.23] Many of these restaurants survived into the twenty-first century.

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Figure 3.22: Vintage menus from Fisherman’s Wharf: Alioto’s, A. Sabella’s, Castagnola Brothers and DiMaggio’s. Source: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Figure 3.23: Map of restaurants and attractions in Fisherman’s Wharf ca. 1960s. Source: Fisherman’s Wharf Merchants Assoc. pamphlet.
As the Wharf became more of a draw for locals, a place people could stay longer to have a meal, a more elevated lunch or celebratory dinner, as well as take in the picturesque sights of fishermen mending nets, more and more tourists came to the area from out of town. Along with Duncan Hines’ recommending Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9 to his readers, in the early 1940s before World War II, which likely brought in tourists, it was featured as one of the places where winners of the “Queen for A Day” radio and television show dined for lunch.147 [Figure 3.24]

![Figure 3.24: Mike Geraldi with "Queen for a Day" winner Catherine Frye, 1948. Source: Anthony Geraldi.](image)

According to Alessandro Baccari, author of *San Francisco’s Fisherman’s Wharf* and founder and president of the Fisherman’s Wharf Historical Society, the restaurant was one of the first in San Francisco to participate in a trade with local radio stations for airtime.148

147 “Queen for A Day,” was a radio, then television show that ran from 1945 though 1957 on the radio and 1956 through 1964 on NBC and then ABC television. “Queen for a Day,” Wikipedia, June 30, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queen_for_a_Day.

The heyday of Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9 was in the 1950s and 1960s. The wait was often long to get in and the restaurant was open until two in the morning. Most of the customers were still locals during this time period, but there were diners from out of town, especially during the summer months from June to October. Michael Geraldi, grandson of the founder Mike Geraldi, started working the restaurant’s crab pots on the sidewalk when he was around twelve years old. By the time he was sixteen he started working inside the restaurant helping his dad Nino seat customers. “It was packed,” Mike recalled. “People would be waiting in line, you know, so they’d have to wait in the bar. There was always a waiting line. A lot of people in the bar, a ton of smoke…Everybody in those days smoked when they went to the bar. And it was bad…if you don’t like smoke, it was bad.” When Mike turned twenty-one he learned how to tend the bar and did that job until he was about twenty-three, when he became a host and began managing the restaurant alongside his father Nino:

The weekends were always packed. Really, really busy. I know because I had to work at the desk. And they’d be waiting in lines and I had to take the person's name, you know, on the list. And I’d go home crying every night because they would be so mean to me. Because you know, they’d ask you, “How long do I have to wait?” I'd say, “Approximately thirty to forty minutes,” and as soon as I went over the forty minutes they’d come out yelling," You told me thirty to forty minutes! It's been one hour!" It was hard for a young guy, you know, in his early twenties to get yelled at like that, all the time. It was so busy. You did the best you could. And my father,…he said, "Don't ever tell them it's going to be too long. I don't want them to leave."…But I remember people waited an hour, an hour and a half sometimes.

The popularity of the restaurant attracted the attention of celebrities from the local to the A-listers. Elizabeth Taylor, Perry Como, Ronald Reagan and Muhammad Ali were all guests at Fishermen’s Grotto. [Figure 3.25] Ali even took time to joke with one of the employees who

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149 The August 25, 1951 menu states that the dining rooms are open from 10am to 2am.  
150 Emi Takahara, Interview with Michael Geraldi, personal, April 18, 2023.  
151 Emi Takahara, Interview with Michael Geraldi, personal, April 18, 2023.
worked at the crab stand in front of the restaurant saying, “You look just like Joe Frazier!” while putting up his fists up in a boxing stance, which amused everyone.

![Image of Nino Geraldi with President Ronald Reagan. Source: Fishermen's Wharf Grotto Facebook Page.](image)

Figure 3.25: Nino Geraldi with President Ronald Reagan. Source: Fishermen's Wharf Grotto Facebook Page.

At its busiest, the restaurant would serve about a thousand diners a night, the dining room turning over three or four times. These high numbers didn’t last for long. In 1978, Pier 39, an outdoor shopping mall, was built a few blocks away from the restaurant and central Fisherman’s Wharf. Where old docks once stood, Pier 39 was developed with the idea that it would revitalize the Fisherman’s Wharf area and bring in tourists and more customers. It originally had fifty stores, twenty-three restaurants, a diving pool, bumper cars and street performers to attract people.152

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Fishermen’s Grotto and other established businesses saw business drop off after Pier 39 opened, as Pier 39 advertised heavily on television and was seen as a clean, family-friendly destination in an area that was perceived as neglected and worn out. Business for the Geraldis eventually bounced back, but they never had the hour or hour and a half waits they had in the 1960s, although they could still fill the restaurant up, especially with the increase in tourism starting in the 1970s and 1980s. After Anthony and Michael Geraldi sold the restaurant, Anthony said he reflected a lot about the business and who their guests were over the years, how visitors came mostly from San Francisco in the 1930s, ‘40s, ‘50s, and ‘60s. Then in the 1970s, more people started to come from other countries as air travel became more accessible, and the demographics were always changing:

I remember when I was a kid [in the 1980s], you know, summer nights, were just all Europeans and Japanese. But throughout the 90s, I guess the Japanese had an economic crisis. Right? So, there's less and less Japanese tourists. Yeah. So, then it started to like, the Japanese started to tail off. And then I think, kind of like, in line with 2000-ish, turn of the century, turn of the millennium, maybe less European tourists as well?… And then of course, the Chinese. So when the Chinese economy is booming. So early 2000s til’ now. Big, big, you know, tour groups and a big portion of our business was Chinese.153

As the tourist base had become more international in the past fifty or more years, Anthony noted that during the last few years they were running the business, he noticed another customer that was becoming more frequent:

I really realized one of the huge demographics of people that were coming were like [from] Central California. So it became like a big destination for like, you know, people that were dying of heatstroke in the Central Valley in the summertime, and need to like, take a weekend trip to San Francisco. And, you know, the fancy place on the water was the Wharf. Right? Like, they didn't know so much… What are some of the big [restaurants] nowadays? Aqua or Kokkari? Right? Real fancy type places. Their idea of like a fancy weekend in the city was Fisherman's Wharf. So that was really, you know, a big demographic, what you’d call weekenders, I guess, who would come in from drivable distances.154

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153 Emi Takahara, Interview with Anthony Geraldi, personal, February 9, 2022.
154 Takahara, Interview with Anthony Geraldi.
As food tastes changed and the decades-old restaurants’ menus and interiors remained relatively the same, Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9, along with many legacy restaurants, appealed to those with long memories, who remember going as a child with their grandparents, or to a couple who went on their honeymoon, or the very few diners seeking a certain nostalgic experience. It has long been assumed that San Franciscans never go to the Wharf. The appeal was not there for many of the younger generations who, especially in the Bay Area, the birthplace of Chez Panisse and the California Food Revolution, are obsessed with elevated food experiences. The bar has been set very high. But had locals really stopped going to the Wharf? “You always sort of hear this idea that locals don't go to the Wharf,” said Anthony reflectively. “But, you know -- it has such a history and reputation -- that if one person from the City went to the Wharf once per year, that added up, you know. It's like every day, it's locals, every day. Every single day. You know, having spent my entire life there up ‘til the age of 38. Every day, it's locals, locals, locals.”

Working at Fishermen’s Grotto

Fishermen’s Grotto, like most of the early restaurants on the Wharf, was a family affair with family members always working. When Mike Geraldi died and his son Nino took over the restaurant, family members helped run the business – including Nino’s four siblings. When the third generation was old enough, they all got jobs at the restaurant too. Michael worked alongside his father Nino, running the dining rooms, while three of his cousins preferred to work the crab pots outside. Anthony, who started at the restaurant when his grandfather Nino was still running it, was the fourth and last generation to work the restaurant. The family was aided by a dedicated crew of cooks, servers and bartenders, many who worked at the restaurant for decades.

155 A discussion of legacy businesses is included in the Conclusion.
The Family

Nino Geraldi, the founder’s son, nurtured Fishermen’s Grotto until the very end of his life. “I can remember him just sitting there eating sand dabs the day before he died.” said his son Michael. “He loved it. He loved the business.” Nino waited on tables and sometimes even bussed and cleaned tables until he no longer could. Suffering from both heart bypass surgery and a leg amputation, he still managed to go to work. “As soon as he recovered, “Michael recalled, “and when he learned how to walk with a prosthesis, he came back to work and he did his best. It was a little bit sad because a couple of times it fell off when he was walking.” He ran the business, with help from his siblings, for fifty-two years, but outlived them all.

Figure 3.26: Clockwise: Eleanor Geraldi, Nino Geraldi, “Queen for A Day” winners Ellis Brooks, Mrs. E. Brooks, Elise Bransford, Fishermen’s Grotto owner, Mike Geraldi, and winner Geraldine Swigart, September 27, 1947. Source: Anthony Geraldi.
Some longtime employees affectionately called him “grandpa,” as a number of his workers stayed with him for decades. On the day of his funeral, the obituary noted that the funeral party drove by Fishermen’s Grotto and paused to, “let Nino spend a few more minutes at the place he devoted his life to.”

![Image](image-link)

Figure 3.27: L to R: Hugh Williams, Marie Williams, Nino Geraldi, Roberto Geraldi - the older brother of Mike Geraldi who came over on the boat. October 13, 1947. Likely another publicity photo.
Source: Anthony Geraldi Collection.

When Nino died, Michael, along with his son Anthony, took over running the three dining rooms that made up the bulk of the business. Michael’s three cousins remained in charge

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of the crab pots out in front of the restaurant. These family members worked different shifts, overlapping for just a few hours each day.

Arriving at around six in the morning, the cousins would set up the crab stands that were located underneath the restaurant’s awning. There were cauldrons for cooking crab and shrimp as there had been for over a hundred years, but now were made out of stainless steel. Counters, sinks and refrigerated display cases where seafood was on display was the domain of the cousins. In the morning they would meet with the cooks and the purveyors and then do the buying for the restaurant, ordering fish, shellfish, and crab from the seafood wholesalers, as well as the produce. After that they’d go out and work at the crab stand until about two in the afternoon. Though the crab stands are an iconic fixture of the Wharf, for Fishermen’s Grotto they only made up about ten percent of its revenue. Their profit was primarily driven by the dine-in customer, serving approximately 400,000 meals a year.

Michael and Anthony would come in around eleven in the morning to manage the dining rooms, working with both the front- and back-of-house staff. Father and son had both grown up at the restaurant, spending a lot of time there when they were kids and then working as young teenagers. Anthony started around fourteen or fifteen as a host, wearing an ill-fitting, oversized men’s blazer to help him look the part. He waited tables throughout college and eventually came to co-manage the dining rooms with his father once he inherited a portion of the business and became a partner. As a digital native, he introduced and took on jobs that no family member had done before, including internet marketing, website design and programming the point-of-sale system. Once Anthony was helping run the dining rooms, his father felt free to spend more time greeting and talking with customers on the front patio located next to the crab stand. The patio had once been a “neglected” area where there were racks of postcards and souvenirs. Anthony
explained why around 1995 they decided to remove those items:

When San Francisco banned smoking indoors, people who wanted to smoke had to sit outside. So, we took out the card stands and built the outside dining area. And we were actually the first restaurant on the Wharf to do that. Because we wanted to give the smokers a place to do that. In those days, I mean, Europeans were such a big part of business, and they were all smokers. 157

Michael spent a lot of his time socializing with customers, paying special attention to regulars and being “the face” of the restaurant. Michael lit up when he talked about being with familiar patrons. “The most important thing is that I was up in front and people recognized me…With me it’s you know, ‘Come on, sit down with me! Let's talk.’ Almost every night I had two or three different parties that wanted me to talk to them, sit down with them. They loved that, to be recognized by the owner, you know. They’d bring their friends and introduce ‘em to me.”

The Geraldi family created lasting bonds not only with customers, but with also their workforce, many of whom stayed with them for decades.

Figure 3.28: Left, Anthony Geraldi with Dungeness crab. Right, Michael Geraldi and his friend, Major League pitcher Gaylord Perry. Source: Anthony Geraldi.

157 Takahara, Interview with Anthony Geraldi, February 24, 2023.
Employees Over the Years

Working in a restaurant kitchen is very hot and very hard. You’re on your feet, often eight to twelve hours a day with few breaks, and the pay is usually minimum wage, if you’re lucky. It has long been the space of recently arrived immigrants needing minimal language skills to earn money. Kitchens are one of the places where undocumented workers and those willing to do work Americans will not do can be found. In urban areas as many as 40 percent of restaurant workers are undocumented. Staff can be easily mistreated and taken advantage of by unscrupulous employers who know it is hard to find work elsewhere. Perhaps it says something about the employers at Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9 that their staff stayed for many decades.

When Mike Geraldi opened his restaurant, the kitchen staff was primarily Italian. By the time Michael started working at the restaurant in the early 1960s, Frank Pipia, who was respectfully referred to as Chef, had been hired by his grandfather, and was still working in the kitchen. Michael never got to meet his grandfather as he died before Michael was born, something he says he always really regretted. Chef worked for Michael’s dad Nino as well, finally retiring when he was about eighty years old. “Kind of strange,” Michael observed, “we have a burial plot in a cemetery. It has like four or five different stalls. And right across is Chef. He's right across from my father. So they're still together.”

After Chef retired, most cooks, came from the Guangdong (formerly Canton) region. Anthony, who was born in 1978, said that almost all of the cooks were Chinese, from his earliest memories until he was well into his twenties. He told me that they were like family to him. “I grew up with these people,” he said emphatically. “They are like uncles to me, you know?”

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[Figure 3.29] When he was around seven or eight years old, he started to go into the kitchen and “boss everybody around.” In return they taught him swear words in Cantonese. Paul Chung, Mr. (Tit) Lee, and Bobby were some of the cooks with whom Anthony was closest.

These cooks were there for over thirty years, eventually retiring in their late sixties or early seventies in the early 2000s. Anthony pointed out that many front of the house staff stayed even longer. “I mean, we had waitstaff, and bartenders, and busboys, even-- they were there for thirty, forty, even fifty years. I mean, it was incredible.” 159 One bartender, Nang, who I met while having a drink at the Fireplace Lounge, was there for over thirty years. He worked as a postal

159 Takahara, Interview with Anthony Geraldi, February 24, 2023.
worker during the week and would bartend at Fishermen’s Grotto on the weekends. While working at one place for the duration of a career is far less common today, there were more waiters and restaurant workers who made restaurant work specifically at one restaurant their career, and many immigrants still make restaurant work their career. Though the restaurant retained the employees they had hired years earlier, things started to shift. The last fifteen to twenty years at Fishermen’s Grotto, the kitchen staff became predominantly Latino, primarily from Mexico, and to the puzzlement of the Geraldis, never stayed at the restaurant for very long.160 There were to be a lot of changes for the family and staff.

Figure 3.30: "Raymond" (Man Fu Tse), busboy for thirty plus years, with customer. Source: Anthony Geraldi.

Selling their Legacy

I’ve seen it firsthand now. You know, there's the saying, “that most family businesses don't make it past the third generation.” And I guess you kind of see why. [You] get the founder, and he's motivated, works his butt off. And then the second generation [saw] that and carried that on. And the third generation is just kind of spoiled and takes it for granted.

--Anthony Geraldi, fourth generation Fishermen’s Grotto restaurant owner\textsuperscript{161}

The most dramatic changes occurred during the last sixteen years of Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9 was open. Nino’s death, along with economic challenges, changes in tourism and especially challenges within the family were significant contributors. Having spoken with a handful of restaurant owners in Fishermen’s Wharf, the latter issue seemed to be a common thread among family-owned restaurants, many of which were or are presently run by fourth, third- or second-generation owners. There was a lot of in-fighting that made running a business challenging, especially with so many descendants involved. Fisherman’s Grotto was no exception.

Nino's not having designated his son Michael as the general manager before he died resulted in lack of clear leadership and led to numerous challenges and power struggles among the family members. “The restaurant kind of lost its way,” lamented Anthony. “…After my grandfather died. It kind of lost its way.”\textsuperscript{162} As Nino got on in years, Michael did most of the heavy lifting and running of the dining rooms, which brought in the majority of the income to the restaurant. Michael assumed he would be named the general manager of the restaurant, but it was never made clear by his father. When his father died suddenly, no one had been appointed to be

\textsuperscript{161} Takahara, Interview with Anthony Geraldi, February 24,2023.
\textsuperscript{162} Takahara.
in charge. For sixteen years the family carried on. Through the dip in tourism resulting from the effects of the terrorist attacks on 9/11, through the economic downturn of 2008, and through Port construction in 2010 that made it hard for customers to access the restaurant for two years. The desire of one of the owners to sell the restaurant, while the others did not, led to the 81-year-old Fishermen’s Grotto closing its doors.

The restaurant was owned by three parties: One third was Anthony and his father; another third was the three cousins who ran the crab stand out front; and the final third was a cousin, who wanted to sell. This cousin, someone who was involved with the restaurant sporadically, pushed hard for the sale. Anthony, the youngest of all the owners and the only fourth generation Geraldi running the restaurant, emphatically did not want to sell, telling his parents, “We can’t sell our legacy!” He would wake up nights in a cold sweat:

My father and myself,...we didn't want to sell the restaurant. We had no interest in selling the restaurant. We wanted to do it forever. I wanted it to do forever...My three cousins did not want to sell the restaurant. They just sort of assumed that that's what they were doing their whole life. They would just die [there], essentially[laughs]. You know, nobody ever talks about retiring or anything like that. It's like, “We just go run the restaurant. That’s what we do.” 163

Anthony went so far as to secure a loan, thinking he might be able to buy the business from the other family members. In the end, he decided against it. His dad Michael and his three cousins, who were in their sixties, did not want to get mired in an expensive legal battle with the cousin who wanted to sell. In June of 2016, the Geraldi family sold their restaurant.

Significant financial investments had been made over the many years the Geraldi family was in business at 2851 Taylor Street. All of the additions to the buildings, renovations, signage and maintenance could not necessarily be recouped in the sale of the business as it, as well as all of the businesses on Port property, leased the buildings from the Port, paying monthly rent plus a

163 Takahara, Interview with Anthony Geraldi, February 09, 2022.
percentage of sales. Most of the historic restaurants on the Wharf are run by multiple generations of families, and disputes amongst family members, common in any family-run business, seem to bring about the end of the businesses. Six years after selling Fishermen’s Grotto, Anthony was somewhat at peace with the decision the family had made, especially after the COVID pandemic struck and he saw the devastation that befell many of the Fisherman’s Wharf restaurants. He was reflective of the impact his family had made and the hand they had in creating the Fisherman’s Wharf we know today:

I think to …be part of such an important family with such an important history, in such an impactful city… I think I didn't realize that throughout my younger years. But now, it's like, wow, this is this is really special…I want to be able to contribute to keeping that story [of Fishermen’s Grotto] alive...I think people don't realize that…there was nothing here [ in San Francisco] until 1850. And, you know, fast forward 1850 to 1935. That's not that much time, like 80-85 years. The city was only 85 years old when my …great grandfather started this restaurant. When he got here, the city was only 55 years old. Like, I'm almost 55! …What a small city it was…what the atmosphere was like when he arrived, and how far it's come from that point to now...Like, it really isn't that long of a time in the grand scheme of things. But yet, you know, history can get lost.  

He wanted to make sure the story of his family and what they had built was told so people, and San Francisco, did not forget.

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164 Minimum rent in December of 2015, shortly before the Geraldi family sold the business, was $27,990/mo., according to the Port of San Francisco’s Monthly Sales & Rent Report. Port of San Francisco, *Monthly Sales and Rent Report December 2015*, 1. sfport.com.
165 Takahara, Interview with Anthony Geraldi, February 09, 2022.
Chapter 4: Fishermen’s Grotto Culinary History and Evolution

[F]oodways can help to ground tourism in the everyday. By turning normally routine activities, such as shopping, cleaning up, and storing foods, into tourist sites, we can more easily contrast and negotiate the sense of difference with the familiar.

--Lucy Long, *The Food and Folklore Reader*

**Introduction**

In the 1920s and 1930s, while cuisine was helping to define who most Italian Americans were in America, the Fisherman’s Wharf restaurant proprietors knowingly skirted this development.\(^{166}\) This choice was likely made to succeed in the restaurant business catering to a burgeoning tourist spot, and a way to set themselves apart from their fellow Italian restaurateurs in North Beach. Though San Francisco had a relatively long history of having Italian restaurants, some of the earliest in the country, the Italian-run restaurants that opened on the Wharf in the 1930s did not outwardly promote themselves as Italian, or Sicilian; instead, they were advertised as seafood restaurants. Perhaps it was because the Wharf was just outside the main area of North Beach, the predominantly Italian area of the city, it attracted a more diverse group of people who came to the water’s edge to buy seafood and watch the ships come in. Most Americans were not that familiar with Italian food in the 1930s, as it was still considered “ethnic,” and made more sense to the restaurants to cater to a broader American palate. In this chapter I will examine Fishermen’s Grotto menus through the years, looking at what food was offered customers and how the family presented, or refrained from presenting, their Italian/Sicilian heritage through their food. I will also discuss a few classic dishes that have their origins in San Francisco that gained popularity largely at Fisherman’s Wharf.

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Menus and Food through the Years

In the beginning, menu inserts were hand typed daily at Fishermen’s Grotto. The November 18, 1936, menu, the year after they opened, was strictly seafood, the exception being a choice of an egg or cheese sandwich in the sandwich section. Most of the fish and shellfish was locally caught or came from the California coast. “Our fish and shellfish is always fresh,” the 1936 menu stated, “directly off the boats and kept alive in our own traps.” [Figure 4.1] In later menus they would advertise that the fish was caught off their own boats. Only lobsters and some oysters came from the East Coast. The dishes that were offered were prepared in a fashion that was popular across the country at the time. Most dishes leaned French or sounded French, as French food was considered to be the highest expression of cuisine, even if the dishes were not necessarily of French origin: à la King, à la Newburg, à la Creole and à la Meunière. These preparations consisted of butter and cream mixed together with different ingredients. Other popular items such as clam chowder (both Boston, cream-based, and Coney Island, tomato-based), abalone and frog legs (technically not seafood), as well as other dishes that likely originated in San Francisco, the oyster “cocktail” and Crab Louis Salad, were on the menu.

The only mentions of an Italian preparation are the “New York Scallops, Italian Style,” the “Fried Crab Legs à la Italiano,” and “Chioppino,” the latter, understood (at least locally) to come from local Italian fishermen. “Chioppino” (early on spelled a few different ways, is currently spelled “cioppino”) already appears to be a well-known local dish as it has its own section on the menu and could be ordered four different ways: Fisherman’s Special, Crab and Clams in Shell, Rock Cod and Shellfish.
Cioppino and Italian Dishes

One of the richest gastronomic experiences a person can have, and few aside from fishermen are ever lucky enough to have it, is to be treated to a cioppino made on the boat, as the fish are caught. Fresh? Almost still wiggling. Break off a piece of good bread (fine for sopping up that last bit of juice) and pour yourself a glass (or more likely a mug) of some good white wine and you have a feast that will never be forgotten.

--Henry Evans, *San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf*

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Cioppino feels like celebration food. Consisting of fish, Dungeness crab, shellfish and shrimp in a robust, tomato-based broth, this dish is considered a San Francisco creation born from the diasporic culinary traditions of Italian fisherman. There is much lore surrounding the origins of cioppino. The most popular, and apocryphal, is reminiscent of the “stone soup” folktale, where each fisherman contributes a fish or a crab they have caught, perhaps some shrimp, clams or vegetables, all with the urging call of “Chip in! Chip in!” Coming from native Italian speakers, the story goes, a vowel was added to the end and “chip in” became “cioppino.”

However, in the Ligurian region of Italy, where most of the early fishermen in San Francisco were from, there is a fish soup called “ciuppin” that is the likely predecessor of cioppino. Erica Peters, a food historian and author of *San Francisco: A Food Biography*, points out that it was the San Francisco fisherman’s addition of spicy chili peppers that makes cioppino, though a food of the Italian diaspora, distinctly San Franciscan.

Peters discovered the earliest printed recipe in *The San Francisco Call*, published in 1901 and written by Harriet Quimby, journalist and future aviation pioneer:

> Whoever goes out in a fishboat, if they have the good fortune not to be sick, you should insist on having a dish of “Chespini.” This is the way to make it. My authority is a scrap of soiled paper written in Italian. Translated, it says: “Put into kettle half glass of sweet oil, one clove of garlic, two large tomatoes, two chili peppers, one glass of white wine; Prepare fresh fish, cut in small squares, drop into the sauce and cook 3 minutes; Serve hot.” It really tastes much better than it sounds.

According to Peters, the last line suggests that this was a dish unfamiliar to anyone who was not a fisherman and therefore this was the “moment of invention.” A few years later in 1906 the first “formal” recipe could be found for “Chippine” in the post-earthquake *Refugees’ Cook Book.*

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169 Taylor, “Golden State Plate.”
171 Taylor, “Golden State Plate.”
As the dish’s popularity spread, and appeared on menus in most of the Italian run
restaurants along the Wharf, recipes for cioppino popped up in more and more cookbooks. In
Helen Brown’s, 1953 *West Coast Cook Book*, she ends her recipe for cioppino with a note that
hints at the actual origins of the dish, “One story says that San Francisco’s fishermen did not
introduce cioppino to California, but that an Italian named Bazzuro, who ran a restaurant on a
boat anchored off Fisherman’s Wharf, is responsible. What's more, it was supposed to have been
an older recipe, well known in Italy. This back in the 1850s. I refuse to believe it!”

Figure 4.2: From the 1936 Fishermen's Grotto menu. Source: Anthony Geraldi.

Cioppino was one of few dishes that represented the Italian or Sicilian heritage of the
Wharf-side restaurateurs on the menu. There were a couple of dishes that were called “Italian” or
“IItaliano” (mentioned earlier), and likely included tomatoes and garlic, the latter ingredient used
sparingly in most “American” foods until later in the second half of the twentieth century for fear
of being odiferous and marking food too “ethnic.” Michael Geraldi spoke about a dish on the
menu that referenced his family’s Sicilian roots. “There was one recipe,” Geraldi remembered
fondly, “for a sauce called Siciliano sauce. It was basically chopped tomatoes, and olives, garlic,

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is referencing Bazzuro’s restaurant on the “Tam O’Shanter” ship which I wrote about in Chapter 2.
173 Cinotto, *The Italian American Table*), 94-95.
onions. It was a really, really good sauce...[I had it] mostly on like halibut or sea bass. Like thirty or forty years ago. I used to eat that at least two or three times a week.”

**Wartime and the Mid-Century**

Six years after the 1936 menu, by October 11, 1942, when the United States had been in World War II for almost a year and San Francisco had become a major wartime port, the menu looked much the same. During the war there was some anti-Italian sentiment and immigrant Italians who were not naturalized citizens were considered “enemy aliens” and were banned from going near the shoreline along the West Coast. Perhaps surprisingly, there is one item, “Crabmeat Cakes, Italienne” on the menu during this time. Non-seafood entrees appear: Steak, ham and pork chops. These meats are listed under the “Victory Dinners” section and include a choice of local fish, with french fried, shoestring or boiled potatoes and a “Grotto” salad, for eighty-five cents. California wines, an industry being led by Italian Americans at this time, are also being suggested, “WINE...Adds to the pleasure of good food.” Gin Fizzes are so popular they have their own section in the drinks menu.

By 1951, the war over almost six years, not much had changed with the menu. “Victory Dinners,” that were probably introduced during World War II, remain. Cioppino seems to have moved away from center stage with only one offering of “Crab Chioppino,” though there is also “Bouillabasse a la ‘Grotto’,” which was likely cioppino.

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174 Helen Evans Brown in her 1952, *West Coast Cook Book*, waxes enthusiastic about the glories of garlic, politely portraying West Coasters as ahead of the curve when it comes to the bulb, and acknowledging the non-white, immigrant community for introducing this potent allium: “Few West Coast cooks can get along without garlic...This love of garlic comes to us naturally, for we inherit it from the Mexican in us, and from our Italian and Chinese ancestors as well. Blessed, we think, is garlic.”
The 1970s

Though abalone and frog legs still remained on the menu until 1971 and the menu remained relatively the same since 1936, there were few additions that point to what people were consuming in the early 1970s. Chicken finally appears on the menu, next to the steaks and the chops. “We didn’t have a lot of steaks and stuff like that,” Michael Geraldi recalled. “Hardly any chicken or steak. Mostly just seafood. Seafood and Italian food…They wouldn’t hardly ever ask for steak or chicken. We had that in the later years…if you sold two or three a day, you’d be lucky. People didn’t come down here for that.”

Figure 4.3: Cover of 1971 Menu. Source: San Francisco History Center, SF Public Library.

175 Emi Takahara, Interview with Michael Geraldi, personal, April 18, 2023.
Another addition, signifying a cultural shift, was the introduction of the “Child’s Plate,” which consisted of either Filet of Sole, Spaghetti with meat sauce or Hamburger Steak. The cocktail

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section expanded significantly and offered a multitude of colorfully named drinks including the Gold Cadillac, Pink Squirrel, Blue Fog and the Grasshopper.\textsuperscript{177} The “Victory Dinners” were renamed “Fishermen’s Dinners” but still offered the same fish, potato and salad combinations for $4.50.

\textit{Clam Chowder and the Wharf}

Fishermen’s Grotto had stiff competition in the clam chowder department. Every restaurant, café and even some bars on the Wharf, served clam chowder. This New England cream-based staple has become synonymous with being eaten near the ocean, even if it isn’t the Atlantic Ocean. Fishermen’s Grotto sold clam chowder from the very early days and took immense pride in the family’s popular creation. Michael spoke of the chowder with gusto:

[Our] clam chowder was different from anybody else's. [My grandfather] had his own recipe and we never gave the recipe out, even when we had to sell the restaurant. We still have it. Anthony still has that recipe. It was locked in a safe and then he took it when we left. Many, many, many, many times, thousands of people would say how good it was, “It was the best!”\textsuperscript{178}

Even though clam chowder is especially popular in the United States, on both coasts, people come from all over the country, and the world, specifically to San Francisco’s Fisherman’s Wharf to have a relatively new San Francisco treat: chowder-in-a-sourdough bread bowl. Almost every restaurant on the Wharf gives the option of ordering chowder in a regular bowl or a sourdough bread one. “We did it,” claims Dan Giraudo, owner and CEO of the 174-year-old Boudin Bakery, when asked where this creation might have come from. “I know it was [created] in the early [19]80s or late 70s. In that time frame because we opened up [a café in


\textsuperscript{178} Takahara, Interview with Michael Geraldi.
Fisherman’s Wharf in 1974,” he explained. ¹⁷⁹ Though the Boudin Bakery is famous for its sourdough bread, and also considered the oldest continuously running business in San Francisco, it had not been making clam chowder for nearly as long as Fishermen’s Grotto, which had its champions. “The chowder,” Michael Geraldi pointed out, “was one of the two things that people came down here for. That and the Crab Louis were the two most popular dishes.”

**Crab Louis**

Crab Louis (also, Louie) like Cioppino, has its origins in San Francisco and had been on the Fishermen’s Grotto menu from its earliest days. This seafood salad pairs local Dungeness crab with a spicy, creamy dressing atop a bed of iceberg lettuce. It is thought to have originated in 1908 at Bergez-Frank’s Old Poodle Dog, a famous restaurant that had origins in the late 1850s. The dish was apparently named after chef Louis Coutard, who was a partner in the restaurant and created a special of crab legs with chili sauce.¹⁸⁰ Versions of the salad spread throughout the city. I found it on every Fisherman’s Wharf restaurant menu I had access to, from the 1930s through the 1970s, and it remains a popular menu item at most classic restaurants in San Francisco. Louis dressing, a spicy cousin to Thousand Island dressing, proved to be popular enough that Fishermen’s Grotto, in the early years, offered the dressing “To Take Home” by the pint or half pint. Fishermen’s Grotto offered shrimp and lobster salads with Louis dressing as well, but Dungeness crab was the traditional favorite.

For much of the twentieth century, it wasn’t uncommon for restaurants, especially those of some renown, to create souvenir booklets that showcased some of their signature recipes. Though Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9 never shared their recipe for clam chowder, they did give up

¹⁷⁹ Emi Takahara, Interview with Dan Giraudo, personal, March 14, 2022.
the recipe for their Louis dressing but called it “Chef’s Special Salad Dressing” instead. Also in the booklet is the recipe for their “Cioppino Sauce.” [Figure 4.5] The only thing that changes in the recipe from the late 1940s version to the late 1990s version, is “Chippino” loses the “h.”

![Recipe for Cioppino](image)

*Figure 4.5: Recipe for Cioppino. Source: Fishermen's Grotto Recipe Book.*

Most of the menu remained the same for the eighty-one years the Geraldi family ran Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9. They stayed true to Mike Geraldi’s original vision, and rarely wavered. “People like a certain item,” Michael Geraldi explained, “you never change it. Never.”

Keeping true to the menu meant keeping the same or similar seafood on the menu even as availability for products changed due to overfishing or challenges related to climate change. Even after they no longer used their own fishing boat for catching Dungeness crab and fish, they got a majority of their seafood from local seafood wholesalers who work out of Pier 45, located right behind the restaurant, and allowing for almost always fresh ingredients. “Eighty to ninety
percent of the fish we sold was always local,” Anthony Geraldi pointed out. “Those boats at the Wharf are still operational,” he continued, referring to the boats in Fisherman’s Harbor. [Figure 4.6] “A lot of people don't think they are, but there's a lot of commercial fishing that goes on in this area.”

Figure 4.6: Commercial fishing boats in Fishermen's Lagoon. Source: Author.
CONCLUSION

On March 16, 2020, London Breed, the mayor of San Francisco, issued a shelter-in-place order for San Francisco. The COVID-19 pandemic had arrived in Northern California, and the Bay Area was the first region in the nation to order residents to stay home.181 Many businesses closed for weeks, even months. Restaurants were hit especially hard, chiefly those that focused on experiential dining, did not offer take-out service, or have any outdoor space to serve customers when they did re-open. Restaurants that catered to tourists were totally devastated. Their customer base disappeared, as no one was able to travel. Fisherman’s Wharf, before the pandemic, typically saw fifteen to sixteen million tourists a year, and of those millions only about twenty percent were locals from the Bay Area.182 When restaurants were allowed to re-open again during the pandemic, many of the historic, family-run Fisherman’s Wharf restaurants remained shuttered. As I write this, almost half of these restaurants, the majority in business for over fifty years, have permanently closed. [Figure 5.1] These restaurants, the anchor businesses of Fisherman’s Wharf, are the physical framework upon which one of the most visited destinations in the country was built. As Randall Scott, Executive Director of the Fisherman’s Wharf Community Benefit District said, “Food built Fisherman’s Wharf!”183

183 Emi Takahara, Interview with Randall Scott, October 24, 2022.
Though it is too late for the restaurants that have already closed, the remaining businesses and the Fisherman’s Wharf community can utilize existing preservation tools, ranging from local to federal protections, to both help maintain the cultural integrity of the area and more clearly illuminate the tangible and intangible heritage of the neighborhood.

**Preservation Protections and Strategies**

**Local Protections**

San Francisco stands at the forefront of the historic preservation movement. A progressive planning department working closely with a robust non-profit advocacy sector has allowed the city to develop tools to help safeguard San Francisco’s cultural heritage. There are currently three programs funded by the City that could help protect Fisherman’s Wharf or
qualifying businesses that reside in the neighborhood: the Landmark Designation Program, the innovative Legacy Business Program, and most recently the Cultural Districts Program.

Landmark Designation Program

To help maintain the “unique and irreplaceable” assets of the city, San Francisco has adopted into their planning code the Landmark Designation Program (LDP), under Article 10 (Preservation of Historical Architecture and Aesthetic Landmarks), and is overseen by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).\(^\text{184}\) The aim of Landmark designation is to, “protect, preserve, enhance and encourage continued utilization, rehabilitation and, where necessary, adaptive use of significant cultural resources,” with the hope that these landmarks will help foster knowledge of the past.\(^\text{185}\) Under this initiative the city is given the authority to designate Landmarks or Landmark Districts in order to protect buildings, districts, places, or objects. These designations can offer two notable protections for resources. The first disallows any exterior alteration of a building without review and approval of the HPC. The second allows for the HPC to hold demolition permits for known cultural resources up to six months to allow for alternatives for demolition.\(^\text{186}\) Along with these protections there may also be the opportunity for owners of buildings take advantage of tax benefits such as the Mills Act, the California Historic Tax Credit Program or the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program.\(^\text{187}\)

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An excellent candidate for Landmark designation is the iconic Fishermen’s Grotto building (now The Grotto). As the first full-service restaurant in Fisherman’s Wharf that brought more people to the area and prompted many of its fish vendor neighbors to also open restaurants, it led the way in helping to create a world-famous tourist attraction.

Utilizing the Landmark Designation Program could be a steppingstone to help garner the support and awareness required to have the community and the city pay closer attention to an area which is not only a revenue producing powerhouse, but rich in cultural heritage.  

Fisherman’s Wharf could also be considered for designation as a Landmark District to maintain the historic aspects of its appearance, help find creative uses for the existing historic buildings without destroying the character of the Wharf, and bring awareness to its rich Italian/Sicilian and culinary heritage.

Legacy Business Program

This is our homemade angel hair pasta with fresh local crab, that we pick ourselves. The boat pulls in the back there. They call me. I go down and pick them up. Throw them in the water. Put them on your table.

-Paul Capurro, Capurro’s Restaurant

Among the City-led preservation programs discussed, the Legacy Business Program (LBP) is the most accessible and the first of its kind. The LBP caters to both Legacy Business owners and the communities they serve. The City recognized that Legacy Businesses are cultural

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188 As the Fishermen’s Grotto building, and all of the buildings on the north side of Jefferson Street, are considered Port property, it is likely that some of the protections listed above may not apply. However, the Port has its own set of guidelines for Historic Preservation and has three National Register Historic Districts that have utilized Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits; “Port Historic Resources,” Port Historic Resources | SF Port, accessed August 26, 2023, https://sfport.com/node/4965.
institutions that maintain San Francisco's unique character and living history as it has prioritized promoting the visibility of these businesses successfully through its dedicated website.  

The LBP was founded in 2015 and is run by the Office of Small Business. To qualify as a Legacy Business applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Nominated by the mayor or city supervisor.
- Demonstrate that they have operated for thirty years.
- Contributed to San Francisco’s history and identity.
- “Committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms.”

The Legacy Business Registry soon followed. Serving as a valuable resource, the Registry offers Legacy Businesses tools to sustain their enduring presence with promotional support, strategic marketing assistance, grants for small businesses and rent stabilization, as well as educational programs. Understanding that local businesses “are the bedrock of local neighborhoods and a draw for tourists from around the world,” the City would do well to encourage qualifying businesses in Fisherman’s Wharf to apply for Legacy Business status.

Though Fisherman’s Wharf has some of the oldest-running businesses in San Francisco, very few have joined the LBP. With the recent spate of restaurants closing in the Wharf, Scoma’s and the nearby Buena Vista Café are the only remaining Legacy Businesses restaurants. It is not clear as to why so few restaurants have applied. Perhaps their hesitation is due to the significant application process or, pre-pandemic, it might be attributed to their location within the City’s tourist epicenter. Making this point, Paul Capurro, a fourth generation Sicilian American and owner of Capurro’s Restaurant stated, “I always used to say, ‘Well, you know, I've been here a

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192 “About,” San Francisco Legacy Business.
long time. I got a lot of locals that come to my restaurant. A lot of locals.’ I was only kidding myself…I can't survive without tourism. I am a tourist based business. Period!”

Nevertheless, there are several restaurants that could qualify for the Registry, including Capurro’s, Sabella & LaTorre, The Franciscan, and Cioppino’s. Seeking Legacy Business status would be a wise choice for these establishments. This recognition could potentially raise awareness of Fisherman’s Wharf’s Italian/Sicilian cultural heritage and culinary traditions.

_Cultural Districts Program_

A recently formed program whose purpose is centered specifically around cultural heritage is the Cultural Districts Program (CDP). Established in 2018, the CDP serves as both a place-making and place-keeping initiative, dedicated to the preservation, reinforcement, and promotion of cultural communities. Shaped collaboratively by the Board of Supervisors and the community, a Cultural District is defined as, “A geographic area or location within San Francisco that embodies a unique cultural heritage.” The program currently has ten Cultural Districts in San Francisco:

1. Japantown Cultural District - Est. 2013
4. Transgender Cultural District - Est. 2017
5. Leather & LGBTQ Cultural District - Est. 2018
6. African American Arts & Cultural District - Est. 2018
7. Castro LGBTQ Cultural District - Est. 2019
8. American Indian Cultural District - Est. 2020
9. Sunset Chinese Cultural District - Est. 2021
10. Pacific Islander Cultural District - Est. 2022

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193 Emi Takahara, Interview with Paul Capurro, personal, March 14, 2022.
The program is a partnership between the community and the City, overseen by the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development, the Office of Economic and Workforce Development, SF Planning and Arts Commission. The mission of the CDP is to:

- **Stabilize:** Preserve and promote diverse communities' cultural assets, events, and way of life.
- **Strengthen:** Amplify and support the communities' cultural traditions and improve the quality of life for its members.
- **Streamline:** Coordinate City and community information, partnerships, and resources.196

As previously discussed in earlier sections, Fisherman’s Wharf has many aspects of cultural heritage. And though I have focused on its historic restaurants, it is an area worthy of a Cultural District designation on account of early and substantial Italian/Sicilian presence. Under the CDP’s plan are “stabilization strategies that fall within six focus areas.” One of the six focus areas is Cultural Heritage Preservation. This protection states that the strategy is to “Preserve and develop cultural and historic buildings, businesses, organizations, traditions, arts, events and district aesthetics.”197

There is no current nomination underway for Fisherman’s Wharf to become a Cultural District.198 However, this does not mean that Fisherman’s Wharf stakeholders, along with the help of the Fisherman’s Wharf Community Benefit District, could not begin the process, and eventually succeed in creating the recognition this area deserves.

196 “The San Francisco Cultural Districts Program.”
197 “San Francisco Cultural Districts - Sfmohcd.Org.”
198 Frances McMillen, Correspondence to Author, August 22, 2023.
Federal

At the federal level, Fisherman’s Wharf could attain protective status through inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, potentially as a Historic District or, more significantly, a Traditional Cultural Property. Such designations could make a formidable impact, not only on the national (and local) perspective of Fisherman’s Wharf, but also the implementation of safeguards that would maintain its visual identity and distinct cultural heritage.

National Register of Historic Places

Enacted in 1966 under the National Historic Preservation Act, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is a list of buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts that are considered worthy of preservation. The purposes of the Act, as stated by the California State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) are, “to insure that properties significant in national, state, and local history are considered in the planning of federal undertakings; and to encourage historic preservation initiatives by state and local governments and the private sector.” Though a listing on the Register is primarily honorary, there can be economic incentives like tax credits, a reduction in property taxes, access to grants, as well as an opportunity for the State Historic Building Code.

Fisherman’s Wharf is sandwiched between two Historic Districts included in the NRHP. The Aquatic Park Historic District lies directly west of the last building on Jefferson Street--often considered the informal boundary of Fisherman’s Wharf. Starting at the end of Taylor

200 Polanco, “National Register.”
201 Polanco, “National Register.”
Street, the Port of San Francisco Embarcadero Historic District appears to include the majority of
the Fishermen’s Grotto building within its boundaries before moving north to include Pier 45,
and east along the waterfront.202 The section that constitutes Fisherman’s Wharf is the only break
in Historic Districts along the northeast waterfront. Perhaps this anomaly can be attributed to its
reputation as a tourist trap, and might explain why it has been overlooked for a nomination.203
But the Embarcadero Historic District, the more logical choice between the two districts, could
be amended to include Fisherman’s Wharf, thus allowing it this federal protection. However,
Fisherman’s Wharf embodies enough significance to be nominated for its own Historic District.
Additionally, I would recommend, as I did earlier with the City of San Francisco Landmark
Designation Program, that the Fishermen’s Grotto building be nominated to the National
Register of Historic Places as an individually listed resource.

Designating either Fisherman’s Wharf as a Historic District or the Fishermen’s Grotto
building as a building on the National Register, would offer a degree of protection, but more
likely its primary effect would be to illuminate the cultural heritage residing in these important
places.204 There is, however, another designation within the NRHP that centers on a location's
ties to cultural practices, and traditions known as a Traditional Cultural Property.

202 “Map of Historic Districts: DataSF: City and County of San Francisco,” Map of Historic Districts | DataSF | City and County of San Francisco, accessed August 28, 2023, https://data.sfgov.org/Geographic-Locations-and-Boundaries/Map-of-Historic-Districts/y75h-nbt2. The boundary appears to cut off the L-shape portion of the building but that may be a mapping error and not completely accurate.

203 This recent article states that by using data from TripAdvisor, it was revealed that Fisherman’s Wharf is considered the number one tourist trap in the United States.; Devan McGuinness, “Are These Really the Biggest Tourist Traps in the United States?,” Fatherly, August 23, 2023, https://www.fatherly.com/news/are-these-really-biggest-tourist-traps-united-states.

204 In 2016, the Embarcadero Historic District was included on the list of 11 Most Endangered Historic Places in the U.S. “Embarcadero Historic District,” Embarcadero Historic District | SF Port, accessed August 28, 2023, https://sfport.com/node/6543.
Traditional Cultural Property

The National Park Service defines a Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) as:

A property that is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) based on its associations with the cultural practices, traditions, beliefs, lifeways, arts, crafts, or social institutions of a living community. TCPs are rooted in a traditional community’s history and are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community.205

What sets TCPs apart from other types of historic properties on the National Register is the recognition of the living cultural heritage of a community. It acknowledges the importance of preserving not just the physical aspects of the property, but also the cultural traditions, stories, and practices associated with it. These properties might not always have traditional architectural or physical features that are typically associated with historic places, but they are valued because of their intangible cultural aspects.206

While historically associated with Native American and Native Hawaiian sites, TCP designations are now extending their reach to a broader range of places.207 This expansion is evident through the inclusion of new sites such as the Tarpon Springs Greektown Historic District (Florida, 2014), and the Fishtown Historic District (Michigan, 2022). Both of these TCPs provide nomination examples that are for non-Native resources, and could be used as a template for Fisherman’s Wharf. The Tarpon Springs TCP was instrumental in “understanding the importance of use in a TCP: All properties having any direct connection to persons of [Greek] decent, culture, or activities are considered contributing regardless of the date of construction or

physical integrity as usually applied in historic district National Register nomination proposals.\textsuperscript{208} The nomination also states, in regards to architecture, “Alterations over time that reflect or reinforce the cultural values of the Greek residents are considered significant.”\textsuperscript{209} The Fishtown Historic District bears numerous resemblances to Fisherman’s Wharf, except that it has a population of around 400 residents. There is a working waterfront with an active commercial fishery and fishing vessels. Tourism is the driving force behind the local economy and there is a collection of both mid-century and vernacular wood-clad buildings.\textsuperscript{210} A TCP designation for Fisherman’s Wharf would emphasize its value by looking at its historic resources differently and shifting focus to the lived experiences and cultural practices of the past and present communities.

The City and the Fisherman’s Wharf community need to come together if they want to keep Fisherman’s Wharf as a vital draw for tourists and locals alike. The Wharf has always had its challenges, and there will always be a developer looking for a way to revitalize the area. Prior to the pandemic, both the City and business owners seemed to take for granted that their cash cow was infallible. Somewhere the Port and the city lost sight of what Fisherman’s Wharf could be. “No one is curating the Wharf. And I think it needs some curation,” said Randall Scott, current president of the Fisherman’s Wharf Community Benefit District. The City needs to start thinking of Fisherman’s Wharf as not only a money maker, but as a cultural draw.

The protections I have discussed, if implemented, will help raise awareness for both locals and tourists, so that the Wharf is not just a tourist trap but a potentially vibrant, culturally rich area full of historically significant restaurants and bars, businesses, and cultural events. If implemented, these tools might solve part of the problem, revealing that there is so much more to

\textsuperscript{208} Sommers.
\textsuperscript{209} Sommers.
\textsuperscript{210} National Park Service and Laurie Kay Sommers, Fishtown Historic District Traditional Cultural Property § (2021), 5-6.
the Wharf than t-shirts and the left-over chowder in a bread bowl that the seagull is stabbing at.

Creating inviting reasons to come to the Wharf would be in everyone’s best interest.
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Letter to Frances McMillen. Correspondence to Author, August 22, 2023.


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Takahara, Emi. Interview with Anthony Geraldi. Personal, November 9, 2022.


Takahara, Emi. Interview with Michael Geraldi. Personal, April 18, 2023.

Takahara, Emi. Interview with Dan Giraudo. Personal, March 14, 2022.

Takahara, Emi. Interview with Dave D’Amato. Personal, October 31, 2022.


Takahara, Emi. Interview with Randall Scott. Personal, October 24, 2022.


## APPENDIX A

### Fisherman's Wharf Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>What Happened</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4000-6000 years prior to 1769</td>
<td>Ye'amu of the Ramaylush Ohlone inhabit the northern tip of the San Francisco peninsula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1542</td>
<td>California coast explored by Janu Rodriguez Cabrillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1769</td>
<td>Spanish expedition arrives in the Bay Area led by Gaspar de Portolá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1776</td>
<td>Mission Dolores and the Presidio founded in Yelamu lands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1777</td>
<td>The Yelamu were first native people to be baptized at Mission Dolores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1786</td>
<td>Last Yelamu &amp; Pruristac couples join Mission San Francisco community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810-1821</td>
<td>Mexican War of Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>Spanish rule in California ends with Mexican Independence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>California becomes a part of Mexico and trade with foreign ships allowed. Beginning era of &quot;hide and tallow trade&quot; 1822-1846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>William Richardson arrives in Yerba Buena and becomes its earliest Anglo inhabitant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1833</td>
<td>Spanish missions secularized by Mexican government, indigenous neophytes lose their promised land to Californios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>Pueblo of Yerba Buena founded. First building erected by William Richardson. Marker placed at 823 Grant Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>John Sutter arrives in California and builds outpost in the Sierra foothills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>William Leidesdorff, a ship's captain of Jewish and African descent, arrives in Yerba Buena. Considered a founding father of SF. Later to become the first African American millionaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 25, 1846</td>
<td>Mexican-American War begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 9, 1846</td>
<td>American flag raised at Yerba Buena (later San Francisco)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>William Leidesdorff builds the City Hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 30, 1847</td>
<td>Yerba Buena renamed San Francisco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 24, 1848</td>
<td>Gold discovered by James Marshall at Sutter's Mill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2, 1848</td>
<td>Mexican American War ends when Treaty of Hidalgo is signed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 12, 1848</td>
<td>Samuel Brannan announces gold discoveries in San Francisco, spurring gold rush in California and then to the Pacific Rim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>First reported Chinese arrive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Fisherman's Wharf Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>What Happened</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winter of 1848-1849</td>
<td>California Gold Rush begins!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848-1849</td>
<td>First Italian War of Independence, along with revolutions sweeping other European nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>February 24 / Domenico Ghiradelli arrives from Peru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>Italians and Sicilians arrive in SF, bringing with them their knowledge of building and sailing feluccas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850s</td>
<td>Black Point Cove, later to be called Aquatic Park, becomes an industrial area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850s-1860s</td>
<td>San Francisco Woolen Mill built (this is where Ghiradelli now stands). First woolen mill in California. Made uniforms for armies in Europe and blankets for the Union army during the Civil War.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>Frank Bazzurro, from Genoa, opens restaurant inside abandoned ship Tam O’ Shanter-serves crab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>Meiggs Wharf is built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>One of SF’s early restaurants, Campi’s opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>Achille Paladini started felucca fishing in San Francisco?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Campi’s restaurant opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860s</td>
<td>Crab began to be boiled in pots outside and eaten “al fresco”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>State Harbor Commission established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>Smelting operation + sulphur processing plant, as well as box factory and sardine packers opens in Aquatic Park area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>First Cable Cars invented by Andrew Hallidie. In 1888 the Powell-Mason Line; by 1891, the Powell-Hyde line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>The Colombo Market, one of the city’s first produce markets, established by Italian American vegetable gardeners on Davis St-becomes main produce district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Original Fisherman’s Wharf at Clay and Commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>Fisherman’s Wharf is moved to the India Docks at Union St</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>Caico Fisheries is established. Today John Caico runs the business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>Fior d’ Itaia restaurant opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Sanguinetti’s restaurant opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Area on the Wharf becomes “Italy Harbor”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>What Happened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>What would become the Red &amp; White Fleet Ferries founded by Tom Crowley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>Panic of 1893. Economic depression sweeps through the nation and lasts until 1897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 27 - July 4, 1894</td>
<td>The California Midwinter International Exposition-created to boost economy/Jan 27-July 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>Ghiradelli purchases the Woolen Mills and builds chocolate factory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>Buena Vista Cafe opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>Nunzio Aioto leaves Sant'Elia Sicily for San Francisco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900s</td>
<td>Monterey Clippers or “putt putts” begin to replace feluccas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Fisherman’s Wharf moves to current location between Taylor and Hyde Streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>A. La Rocca &amp; Sons Wholesale Fish Co. Leo La Rocca is known as the &quot;Crab King&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early 1900s</td>
<td>Coppia’s restaurant opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 18, 1906</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Del Monte Fruit and Haslett Warehouse built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Chinese shown launching from Wharf in Whitehall boats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Giuseppe Aioto starts fish brokerage firm SF International Fish Co. He had 6 bothers and 2 sisters who all came to SF and work in the business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910s</td>
<td>Salvatore Guardino sets up first stall on port property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Crab Fisherman’s Protection Association formed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Antonio Farina brought in to organize independent crab fishermen and establish Crab Fisherman Protection Association and go up against the Fish Trust. Also served cracked crab on boats during the Panama Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Stone seawalls built by Sate Harbor Commissioner to hold back mud and to use as wharves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Pier 43 Archway for ferries and Belt Railway built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Joe DiMaggio born to Sicilian parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Wedding of Ignazio Aioto and Frances Lazio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Panama Pacific Exposition. Runs Feb 20th-December 4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>What Happened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Ghiradelli sign mounted for 1915 Panama Pacific, so people on the train that ran past the waterfront could see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Achille Paladini was the first to commercially can tuna, smoke fish and operate cold storage in California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Rose and Nunzio Alioto marry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Belt Railroad trestle is built across Aquatic Park for the Panama Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>J-Wharves built. J-9 and J-10 built for fishing industry that are still in use today. A “way” or ramp, was built to help fishermen repair boats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Stalls for fish vendors are built on Taylor Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>A. Sabella Fish Market opens (Antonino Sabella)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>Nuzio Alioto opens Stall #8 on the Wharf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Pier 45 is built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Nunzio Alioto builds first building, “Alioto’s Fish Co” stand on Wharf that combined a fish stand and seafood bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Nunzio unexpectedly dies and leave his wife Rose to run the business, becoming the first woman to work on the Wharf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Mike Gerald opens No. 9 Fisherman’s Grotto Restaurant. First sit-down restaurant on the Wharf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>The Blessing of the Fishing Fleet begins. Held first weekend every October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Golden Gate Bridge opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Rose Alioto installs a kitchen and Alioto’s restauran is born. The Alioto history claims that Rose is the originator of “Cloppino”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Aquatic Park and Bath House (later Maritime Museum) open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Golden Gate Internation Exposition opens. Runs Feb-Oct 1939 + May-Sept 1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940s</td>
<td>Vista Del Mar Restaurant is opened by Ignazio Alioto along with Pietro Pinoni, one of SF’s leading restauranteurs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Fisherman's Wharf Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>What Happened</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 16, 1941</td>
<td>Fishing boats on West Coast belonging to Italian Americans, requisitioned by the U.S. Navy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 23, 1942</td>
<td>Purse seiner (fishing boats) are requisitioned from Monterey and San Francisco which devastates the sardine industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Antonio Tedesco and Linda Franceschi open &quot;Sausalito Cafe.&quot; Later it becomes &quot;Franceschi's&quot; and then &quot;Capurro's&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Pompei's Grotto opens. Frank and Marian Pompei. In 1913, Frank's father Mario, at the age of 16, arrived in San Francisco from San Benedetto d'Ancona, Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Fisherman's Wharf Merchants Assoc. formed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Original Wharf comes to and end(?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Bath House becomes the Maritime Museum and starts the country's first senior center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Fishermen's Grotto No. 9 adds the F.E. Booth (Vista Del Mar restaurant) building to the restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Longshoremen's Memorial Building built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962-1968</td>
<td>Ghiradelli Square considered the first commercial adaptive reuse project in the USA, spearheaded by Lawrence Halprin and William Wurster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>The Cannery, formerly the DelMonte cannery, is transformed into a shopping and dining destination. Designed by Joseph Esrick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>&quot;Mayor's Citizen's Committee for the Preservation and Beautification of Fisherman's Wharf&quot; formed due to neglect of the fishing industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Pier 39 opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Fisherman's Chapel built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>F-Line historic trollies established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Fisherman's Wharf Community Benefit District founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Fisherman's Grotto No. 9 sells restaurant to Chris Henry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 17, 2020</td>
<td>Mayor London Breed declares a citywide shutdown in San Francisco due to Corona virus pandemic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Fisherman's Wharf Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>What Happened</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>Alioto's, Nick's Light House, Pompeii's Grotto, Gaurdino's, Castagnola's, Tarantino's, Lou's all permanently closed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION
Fishermen’s Grotto 2851
Taylor Street
SAN FRANCISCO,
CA

January 17,
2017 DRAFT
PART 1 SIGNIFICANCE EVALUATION: TABLE OF CONTENTS
PART 1: SIGNIFICANCE EVALUATION

1. Introduction

This Part 1 Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE) for Fishermen’s Grotto, a restaurant at 2851 Taylor Street (lot 049 on Block 9900), was prepared by Knapp Architects on behalf of the tenant, Chris Henry, for the Port of San Francisco and the San Francisco Planning Department.\(^1\) The HRE evaluates the potential historical and architectural significance of this commercial building on Taylor Street on Fisherman’s Wharf. The building is listed in the San Francisco Property Information Map as B – Unknown/Age Eligible and therefore it has not yet been determined whether it is a historical resource for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This HRE concludes that the building at 2851 Taylor Street, Fishermen’s Grotto, is significant under Criterion 1 of the California Register of Historical Resources, but does not retain sufficient integrity to convey its significance and is therefore not eligible for listing.

The subject property is not located within a designated or identified historic district. A National Register Historic District, the Port of San Francisco Embarcadero Historic District, and a potential historic district, the Fish Alley Historic District, were identified in the vicinity of the subject property. This property was evaluated within the context of these districts, but it was concluded that it was not a contributing resource to either district.

This HRE, therefore concludes that the subject property neither appears individually eligible to the California Register nor is it a contributing resource to a designated or potential historic district. On this basis, this HRE does not evaluate impacts on historic resources that would be caused by the proposed renovations to the existing building.

Basic Property Information

a. Location: Address, Cross Streets, and Neighborhood

The subject property, Fishermen’s Grotto, is located at 2851 Taylor Street on the west side of Taylor Street between Jefferson Street and the Embarcadero. The property is located in the Fisherman’s Wharf portion of the North Beach neighborhood. The North Beach neighborhood is bounded by Broadway Street on the south. On the west, the neighborhood is bounded by Columbus Avenue, jogging west on Beach Street, then continuing north on Hyde Street. The neighborhood is bounded by the San Francisco Bay on the north and east sides.\(^2\)
Multiple buildings are listed under this parcel number and address according to the San Francisco Property Information Map. The building historically known as Fishermen’s Grotto is the only building being evaluated within this report.

b. Assessor Parcel Number

The property is comprised of lot 049 located on Block 9900 in the San Francisco Planning Map.3

c. Zoning District

The district is zoned C-2—Community Business. It is in a 40-X height and bulk district.

d. Current Historic Status

i. Previous historic designation or historic resource survey

According to the San Francisco Property Information Map, the property is not listed in:
The California Register of Historic Resources
The National Register of Historic Places
Article 10 of the Planning Code
Article 11 of the Planning Code
A California Register district
A National Register district

The California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park does not contain information about the subject property. The property was not included in the San Francisco 1976 Architectural Survey. The San Francisco Property Information Map indicates the property was included in the San Francisco Architectural Heritage Here Today Survey conducted in 1968. This building address was not listed in the survey index at the San Francisco History Center at the San Francisco Public Library.

ii. Eligible historic district and nearby HRERs

The property is not in a designated historic district or a previously-identified potential historic district. Nearby HRERs reviewed included: 2951 Hyde Street (2011.0282E) and Pier 47 Seawall Repair (2006.0476E). The HRER for 2951 Hyde Street was included in the Fish Alley Historic Resource Evaluation and Design Recommendations report by Architectural Resources Group (ARG) completed in 2001. The report identified a potential California Register historic district and an architectural character district within the vicinity of the property. The HRER for Pier 47 Seawall indicates the seawall is located near the potential Fish Alley Historic District.

The subject building is evaluated within the context of the potential Fish Alley Historic District later in Section 6 of this report.
2. Building and Property Description/Site History

a. Exterior Architectural Description

i. Site, Exterior Description, Construction Method

The subject building is located on the west side of Taylor Street, on the northern half of the block between Jefferson Street and the Embarcadero. The building is located in a commercial area on Fisherman’s Wharf in the North Beach neighborhood.

The building is comprised of two historically separate buildings, the original Fishermen’s Grotto and the F.E. Booth building, that were connected to form the present L-shaped building. The main façade of both buildings originally fronted Taylor Street. The original Fishermen’s Grotto building was rectangular with the long face fronting Taylor Street. The F.E. Booth building was also rectangular, but its long face fronted the Embarcadero. In 1953 the buildings were connected, forming the L-shaped building with its outer corner at the intersection of Taylor Street and the Embarcadero. The original Fishermen’s Grotto building formed the north-south leg of the building; The F.E. Booth building formed the east-west leg of the building. A one-story rear addition projects from the west façade of the north-south leg.

The building is bordered by a wide sidewalk on all sides with the exception of the north façade that directly abuts the Embarcadero and the south façade of the north-south leg that abuts Alioto’s Restaurant. On the east façade, a concrete sidewalk separates the building from Taylor Street. The inner (rear) portions of the building face the inner lagoon and are bordered by wood docks.

The two-story building has a combination roof. The roof over the north-south leg is flat with a mansard-like face covered with wood shingles on the east façade. The east-west leg features a truncated hipped roof covered with red clay tiles. The building features an outdoor dining area extending the length of the main (east) façade. The dining area is covered by fabric canopy supported by striped Venetian-style mooring poles. The canopy is divided into five alternating sections: gently sloped blue and yellow striped planes, and arched blue portions denoting the
building entrances. The building features two illuminated signs. On is extends above the roof line on the east façade featuring the restaurant’s name, Fishermen’s Grotto, flanked by a large no. 9
and the restaurants weathered fishermen icon. The second sign is located on the south façade of the east-west leg of the building. The sign features the restaurant’s name and no. 9. There are two exterior staircases leading to the second floor. One is located on the northwest corner of the east-west leg; the other is located on the west façade of the north-south leg. There is also a fire escape on the north façade.

Image 2 View looking west at the main façade. Faux mansard roof covered with wood shingles is visible on the left. The truncated hipped roof with red clay tiles is visible on the right.

The east façade is asymmetrical with three distinct zones. The southern zone features the most historically intact portion of the building. The first story features a covered corridor leading to the rear of the building and inner lagoon. Three equally spaced rectangular windows are located between the corridor and a large picture window. North of the picture window is a double-leaf door. On the second story, a small arched window is centered above the corridor. Three larger arched windows are centered directly above the rectangular fixed windows on the first story. Another arched window is centered above the large picture window. At the northern end of the zone is a small double-hung window. The narrow center zone of the east façade is distinguished by a faux-gable front and

Image 3 View looking north under the main facade canopy.
large bay window on the second story. On the first story is a large picture window, and double-leaf doors. The third (northern) zone consists of three, fixed windows
with transoms at the lower floor and a shallow faux-balcony at the second floor with two windows. A number of the windows on the east and north facades are blind, apparently because interior renovations have blocked them with walls.

The north façade is loosely divided into 13 bays, based on the fenestration pattern on the first floor. Starting from the east end, the first two bays are identical with a divided-light casement window with a divided light transom on the first floor. On the second floor are eight-over-eight, double-hung windows. Between the first and second bay on the first floor is a fixed, 2x3 divided-light window. Between the second and third bay on the first floor is a fixed, 3x2 divided light window. The next three bays on the first floor have openings that are centered within an arched frame. The third and fifth bays are fixed, 3x3 divided light windows. The fourth bay is a roll-up overhead door. On the second floor, an eight-over-eight, double-hung window is centered above the first floor openings in the third and fourth bay. Centered above the fifth and sixth bays, there appear to be previous window openings that have been filled in. A third filled opening is centered between the fifth and sixth bays. The seventh bay consists of a double-leaf door with 2x6 divided light transom window on the first floor, and a partially filled opening with a narrow fixed window on the second floor. The eighth bay has a large vent opening on the first floor. On the second floor are a double-leaf door leading to the fire escape and a large, fixed window. The next four bays are denoted by a wood arcade. The ninth bay does not have any openings on the first or second floor. The tenth bay does not have any opening on the first floor; a group of three awning windows are centered in the bay on the second floor. The eleventh bay is comprised of a double-leaf door located west of the center of the bay on the first floor with a small vent above. A second group of three awning windows is centered in the bay on the second floor. The twelfth and thirteenth bays feature a roll-up overhead door with

![Image 4 Image 5 View looking southeast at the north facade.](image-url)
The west façade of the east-west leg of the building does not feature any openings on the first floor. On the second floor are four fixed windows. The outer two windows are square, while the inner two are rectangular, approximately double the length of the square windows.
On the south façade of the east-west leg of the building the first floor is visually divided into three sections. The westernmost portion is divided into five equal bays by a wood arcade at the second floor line. A single-leaf door with a small vent above is located slightly east of center in the third bay from the west end, and a single-leaf door is centered in the fourth bay on the first floor. The center portion of this façade does not feature any openings on the first floor but does feature a large sign below the second-floor windows. East of the sign, there are two filled arch openings. A one-story projecting wing with a flat roof is centered in the second opening. The projection features a single-leaf door. On the second floor is a series of windows. The first five windows from the west end are fixed rectangular windows centered above the bays of the wood arcade. East of these windows is a group of three closely spaced fixed windows. These are followed by a group of six, closely
spaced fixed windows alternating between square and rectangular openings.  

*Image 6 View looking west along the south facade of the east-west leg.*
The west façade of the north-south leg of the building is divided into three levels. On the lowest level, from north to south is a large vent, two closely spaced square fixed windows, and five equally spaced fixed windows. On the second level are four equally spaced fixed windows. The two southern most are centered above the square fixed windows on the first level. A double-leaf door is centered above the first of the five fixed windows. Five equally spaced windows are centered above the remaining four fixed windows on the first level with the final above the corridor opening. There is a narrow, cantilevered balcony the full width of the third floor. On the third floor are two rectangular windows slightly north of the center of the first two fixed windows on the second floor. There is a single-leaf door above the double-leaf door on the second floor, slightly south of the center. Two small rectangular windows are located above the first two tall fixed windows on the second floor, and two fixed windows are located above the last two fixed windows on the second floor.
Image 8 View looking southeast at the one-story rear addition.
ii. Architectural Style and Primary Materials

The exterior of the building has been heavily altered. The building is clad in stucco and features a combination of wood shingle roofing, low-slope, and clay tile roofing. The windows are a combination of aluminum storefront, wood divided-light, and fixed windows. The doors are a combination of aluminum and wood with glass inlay, wood panel, and steel roll-up overhead doors. The building is simply dressed with flat wood trim around some of the windows and doors. The building features Venetian motifs, such as striped mooring poles and arched windows, but it does not reflect Venetian Gothic architecture or other definable architectural style. The wood arches at the second floor level on the west end of the east-west leg are difficult to characterize stylistically.

b. Interior Architectural Description

The interior of the building is divided into two zones: restaurant spaces which occupy both floors of the north-south leg and the first floor of the eastern portion of the east-west leg in addition to the entire upper level of the east-west leg, and industrial spaces which occupy the west portion of the first floor of the east-west leg. The restaurant spaces of the east-west leg and the north-south leg connect on the first floor, but they do not connect on the second floor. A service corridor connects the restaurant spaces to the industrial spaces on the first floor.

On the east elevation, there are two public entries to the restaurant spaces. Double doors lead into the north-south leg, where there is a small informal lobby which opens on its north side to the lobby in the east-west leg. A stair to the second floor separates this informal lobby from the balance of the first floor space in the north-south leg. A dining area with built-in wood booths in a Venetian style with spiral-striped mooring poles (some topped by lanterns) occupies most of the first floor, with a narrow leg extending east on the north side in the one-story west addition. This dining area has quarry tile flooring, in multiple zones with differing patterns and colors suggesting previous alterations of the space, painted walls in wallboard or plaster, and a painted ceiling that is also divided in sections of different heights with wood planks and wallboard. A series of service spaces along the north side occupies the remainder of the first floor of the north-south leg of the building. The open stair, with travertine treads and risers and ornamental iron railings and pickets, leads to the second floor, which has a dining room that is similar to the one on the lower level. A stair in the service

*Image 10 Lower level restaurant space in north-south*
spaces leads to additional service spaces on the third floor.
North of the entry on the east elevation described above, there is a second double door which leads into the lobby of the restaurant spaces in the east-west leg. This lobby opens to the south to the informal lobby of the north-south leg (described above); to a small private room directly opposite the entry, behind a four-panel glazed metal storefront; to a gift shop at the west end; and up five risers to a large raised landing at the northeast corner of the building where the main stair leads to the second floor. On the second floor, the large hall at the top of the stair adjoins a bar at the southeast corner of the east-west leg. The stair hall and the bar open at the west into a pair of long dining rooms that stretch along the south side of the east-west leg to the west end of the building. A portal with three openings defined by thick square columns and beams separates the two dining rooms, which are similar spatially but appear to have been remodeled separately because of their different imagery and detailing. A series of service spaces line most of the north wall of the building next to the dining rooms.

The public spaces in the east-west leg make extensive use of stained wood finishes, paneled or beamed walls and ceilings, and decorative motifs—but beyond that commonality, they present a notable array of styles, images, detailing, materials, and fixtures. Motifs include nautical themes (e.g. the wavy ceiling border in the dining room and the wave scroll molding on the portal between the east dining room and the bar), Classical (e.g. fluted columns, column capitals in the stair hall and dining room), mid-century contemporary (e.g. herringbone ceiling board and geometric wall paneling patterns in the bar), and Victorian or Belle Epoque (e.g. padded, quilted leather/faux
leather built-in upholstery, diamond-shaped wall paneling with padded faux-leather infill)—but the interior of the building as a whole could not be characterized by any one style or design school. The freewheeling, eclectic array of materials, colors, finishes, and forms makes it appear the
The interior was remodeled in parts, multiple times, with an eye to adding something new in each section or space instead of creating a unified whole.

The interior of the west part of the lower level of the east-west wing includes more than a dozen spaces which appear to be laid out purely for functionality, all of them utilitarian in design and materials. Floors are unfinished concrete for the most part, and walls and ceilings are plaster, wood planks, or sheet metal or impervious laminates (at food-handling stations and cold rooms). The building systems, including refrigeration lines and machines, are mostly exposed. There are storage mezzanines or platforms over some rooms, and a conveyor belt system, a glass-encased ship’s model, and multiple cold rooms attest to the space’s origin as part of Fisherman’s Wharf.

c. Site History

i. Development of the Site

The northern waterfront has evolved with shifting centers of industry, as new shipping wharfs and seawalls were constructed. Prior to the 1840s, the northern shoreline wrapped the base of Telegraph and Russian Hills, with Black Point Cove to the west and North Beach Cove to the east.4 The depth of the bay was too shallow near the coast, forcing the first major wharf in the area, Meigg’s Wharf, to extend 1,600-2,000 feet into the bay. Most boats moored at Yerba Buena Cove, but Henry Meigg constructed the long wood wharf to entice shipping and development of the northern area where his landholdings were located.5

In 1863, legislation was signed creating the Board of State Harbor Commissioners for San Francisco. Part of the State Harbor Commissioners’ responsibilities was to regulate the development of the port, and construction of wharfs, piers, and seawalls.6 The first project

4 City and County of San Francisco Department of City Planning. *Northern Waterfront Plan Findings Report*. On file at San Francisco Planning Department, 1987.

undertaken by the Board of State Harbor Commissioners was the construction of the great seawall to stabilize the shore. A two-and-a-half-mile portion, extending from the China Basin Channel to Fisherman’s Wharf, was completed by 1880.\textsuperscript{7}

The 1886-1893, 1889-1900, and 1905 Sanborn Maps show the area around the subject property underwater.\textsuperscript{8}

*Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1886. Annotated to show approximate location of subject building.*

By 1908, the Board of State Harbor Commissioners had constructed 23 piers along the waterfront.\textsuperscript{9} The 1913–1915 Sanborn Map shows the subject building was located on what historically was one of two wharfs constructed by the Board of State Harbor Commissioners in 1914. These wharfs created the inner lagoon, located directly behind the subject building.\textsuperscript{10} The area remained largely undeveloped, with the exception of the San Francisco Lumber Company located on the southwest corner of Taylor Street and Jefferson Street. A large portion of the northern shore is still underwater.\textsuperscript{11} The 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition resulted in the competition of the in-fill of the waterfront.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{9} Corbett, Michael R. “Port of San Francisco Embarcadero Historic District.” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, National Park Service, 2006


Fisherman’s Wharf gradually developed after the construction of the wharfs. The United States Custom House and Coast Guard Office was constructed in 1917. The F.E Booth building was constructed the following year. In 1920, a one-story wooden building with five stalls for fish markets was completed on Taylor Street. Within a few years, a second and third building were constructed adding four additional stalls, resulting in a total of nine stalls extending the length of Taylor Street from Jefferson Street to the F.E. Booth building. Pier 45 was constructed in 1924.13
13 Corbett, Michael R. *Port City: The History and Transformation of the Port of San Francisco, 1848-2010.*

Image 15 1936 Historical Aerial. Cropped to show a detail of the subject building. F.E. Booth building and Fishermen’s Grotto No. are visible as separate buildings. The remaining two buildings containing the first eight stalls are visible below the subject building.
Beginning in the 1930s, these stalls were converted into restaurants which adopted their names from the number of their stalls—hence the name Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9. The 1913-1949 Sanborn Map shows the area developed with a series of stalls, restaurants, and fishing industry related buildings.

ii. Development of the Building

The subject building was historically two separate buildings constructed on Fisherman’s Wharf during the first half of the twentieth-century. The F.E. Booth building was a reinforced-concrete building constructed in 1918, that operated as a fish-processing plant. The building was owned by Frank Booth of the F.E. Booth Company, best known as “the founder of the sardine industry in California, and the first cannery on Cannery Row.”\textsuperscript{16} In 1951 the building was converted into a restaurant. Within two years, Michael Geraldi purchased the building and merged it with Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9.\textsuperscript{17}

A large addition on the west end of the building was identified through comparison of the building footprint based on aerial photographs. The exact date of the addition is unknown.

17 Char Bennett, Lynne. “Grotto’s Ageless Appeal.” *San Francisco Chronicle* (San Francisco, CA), March 16, 2014.
The original Fishermen’s Grotto building was a two-story building that was built on the site of theeraldi family’s fish market stall no. 9. Building permit applications prior to 1952 were not available, but exterior alterations were documented through a series of historical photographs.

*Image 127 Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9, circa 1935. The iconic weathered fisherman is visible painted on the façade.*


*Image 138 Inner Lagoon, circa 1937. Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9 visible in the background with gable roof and signage.*

*Source: Maritime Museum Library Photograph Collection. View looking northeast at the Inner Lagoon.*
Image 149 Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9, circa 1940. Visible alterations to the building include new windows, new signage near painted fisherman, and a full-length canopy supported by striped mooring poles. The left most window is smaller, while the four larger windows are arched casement windows with railings. The F.E. Booth building is visible as a separate building on the right. Source: Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9, photo gallery.

Image 20 Fishermen’s Grotto, circa 1945. Visible alteration included the roof and fenestration on the first story. In the circa 1940 photo the roof was a cross-gable roof. In this photo, the roof resembles the faux mansard roof with wood shingles present today. The original entry was
centered under the third window from the left, in this photo the door is converted to a window, and an expanded entry is visible just right of the center of the building. Source: Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9, photo gallery.
Image 21 Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9, circa 1955. This photo was taken after the original Fishermen’s Grotto building and the neighboring F.E. Booth building were joined. The alterations included the addition of a faux-gable front with a large bay window and new signage. This is documented in the 1953 Building Permit Application. Source: Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9, photo gallery.
Image 22 Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9, 2016. Minimal alterations include new canopy.
## Building Permit List

### On File with City of San Francisco: Fisherman’s Grotto

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filing Date</th>
<th>Application No. [Permit No.]</th>
<th>Work Listed</th>
<th>Parties Noted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 9/9/1952    | 14922* [139367]               | Repairs to fire damage. Remove all damaged materials & replace with new involving carpentry, sheetrock, glazing, roofing & painting. Fire damage to roof & kitchen overhead. | Owner: State Harbor Board  
Contractor: Ira W. Coburn |
| 12/15/1952  | 151884 [137211]              | Install bar, terrazzo floors decorate walls. | Owner: N.L. Geraldi  
Contractor: R.H. Hausen |
Contractor: R.H. Hausen |
Contractor: Barnes Construction |
| 7/15/2002   | 201507222103 [1363829]      | Bathroom dry rot repair & stucco | Owner: Geraldi/City Property  
Contractor: Yama Construction |

### On File with City of San Francisco: F. E. Booth Building (Vista Del Mare)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Filing Date</th>
<th>Application No. [Permit No.]</th>
<th>Work Listed</th>
<th>Parties Noted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 9/05/1949   | 118329 [107806]              | Repair fire damage. Tenants Improvement only. No Construction work on building. | Owner: Vista Del Mare  
Contractor: Ira W. Coburn |
Contractor: State of California |
19 Vista Del Mar was the restaurant that opened in the F.E. Booth building in 1951.
On File with the Port of San Francisco

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filing Date</th>
<th>Permit No.</th>
<th>Work Listed</th>
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<td>1972</td>
<td>[162]</td>
<td>(n) Windows F.G.</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>[2374]</td>
<td>Flooring, dry rot $8,500</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>[5252]</td>
<td>Garden Fence around Patio Area $4099</td>
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<td></td>
<td>[4956]</td>
<td>Walkway repair pier</td>
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3. Focused Neighborhood Context

a. North Beach Neighborhood

The subject building is located in the North Beach neighborhood. When the Spanish arrived in San Francisco, the area was a valley of grass and sand between two hills, later known as Telegraph and Russian Hill. Beginning in 1847, the area was surveyed into streets and blocks to facilitate the sale of land. The North Beach neighborhood had been left nearly undeveloped at the time the street grid and lots were established, but a substantial portion of the neighborhood was developed by 1853. However, a direct route from the downtown business district was not established until 1873-1875, with the opening of Montgomery Avenue, later renamed Columbus Avenue.

Due to the primarily wood residential structures that comprised the neighborhood, the area was completely devastated by the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. The North Beach neighborhood is acknowledged as the first neighborhood to be fully restored after the Earthquake and Fire, largely due to loans provided by the Italian-American Bank. As soon as new building laws were passed, construction began in the neighborhood. The neighborhood was almost completely rebuilt by 1915. With limited room for additional building, the neighborhood largely maintains its 1915 appearance.

b. Fisherman’s Wharf

Fisherman’s Wharf is located at the northwest corner of the North Beach neighborhood along the northern waterfront area of San Francisco. The Fisherman’s Wharf area known today gradually evolved from a primarily commercial fishing area to an eclectic mix of fishing-industry-related uses and a tourist entertainment district. The area was primarily comprised of commercial fishing
manufacturing, warehouses, and maritime uses during the first half of the twentieth century. During the 1950s, restaurants were limited to the Inner Lagoon area along Taylor Street.\footnote{Architectural Resources Group. \textit{Draft Fish Alley Area Historic Resources Evaluation and Design Recommendations}. Prepared for Port of San Francisco, 2001.}

Italian and Chinese immigrants made fishing an important industry in San Francisco, beginning in the 1850s. Thousands of Chinese immigrated to California during a time of political unrest in China and a promise of gold in California. During the 1860s California saw an influx of Italian fishermen. The similar characteristics of the Californian and Italian coast and an abundance of natural resources drew Italian fishermen to the area.\footnote{Architectural Resources Group. \textit{Draft Fish Alley Area Historic Resources Evaluation and Design Recommendations}. Prepared for Port of San Francisco, 2001.}

The water near Meigg’s Wharf at the northern shore was too shallow for large shipping vessels to maneuver, but the area was always a thriving commercial fishing area. In 1872, the fishing industry was recognized as a major resource of the state, when land was set aside by the Board of State Harbor Commissioners for use by commercial fisherman.\footnote{Corbett, Michael R. “Port of San Francisco Embarcadero Historic District.” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, National Park Service, 2006.} The fishermen were moved to the foot of Union Street during the seawall’s construction but returned when the Board of State Harbor Commissioners set aside the present Fisherman’s Wharf area for commercial fishing use.\footnote{Corbett, Michael R. “Port of San Francisco Embarcadero Historic District.” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, National Park Service, 2006.} Crab, salmon, and sardines were the major catches, but the fleet also caught shrimp, oysters, and clams.\footnote{Architectural Resources Group. \textit{Draft Fish Alley Area Historic Resources Evaluation and Design Recommendations}. Prepared for Port of San Francisco, 2001.}

During the early twentieth century, most fishing was within the Bay Area, with limited boats fishing outside of the Golden Gate. Typical fishing boats were feluccas, based on Italian fishing boats. Due to rising pollution levels in the Bay and the introduction of gasoline engines, fishing grounds expanded beyond the Golden Gate, reaching as far south as Santa Cruz and north to Point Arena.\footnote{Corbett, Michael R. “Port of San Francisco Embarcadero Historic District.” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, National Park Service, 2006.} Along with gasoline engines came a new type of fishing boat, known as the Monterey Hull boats.\footnote{Architectural Resources Group. \textit{Draft Fish Alley Area Historic Resources Evaluation and Design Recommendations}. Prepared for Port of San Francisco, 2001.}

From the beginning, fishermen sold part of their catch directly from the boats, but by 1920, a series of one-story wood buildings were constructed for fish markets. The stalls were numbered one through nine. Fisherman Tom Castagnola expanded his fish market stall to include seafood cocktails.\footnote{Corbett, Michael R. “Port of San Francisco Embarcadero Historic District.” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, National Park Service, 2006.}

In 1935, Michael Geraldi, left his twenty-six year fishing career to establish the first full-service restaurant on the Wharf. Several other families, the Aliotos, the Sabellas and the DiMaggios, soon followed suit and opened their own restaurants.\textsuperscript{29}

During the 1960s, the success of the conversion of Ghirardelli Chocolate Factory and the Cannery row into a multi-use public oriented spaces stimulated additional tourist oriented development of Fisherman’s Wharf. Today, the area continues to offer both commercial fishing and tourist oriented uses.

4. Owner/Occupant History

a. Owners

The subject property is publicly owned by the San Francisco Board of Commissioners, historically known as Board of State Harbor Commissioners. The Board of State Harbor Commissioners was established in 1863 with the signing of the state’s “Act to Provide for Improvement and Protection of Wharves, Docks, and Waterfront in the City and Harbor of San Francisco.” The Act established that the Board of State Harbor Commissioners was to administer and develop the port. The Board of State Harbor Commissioners was comprised of three elected representatives that served four-year terms. In 1957 the Board of State Harbor Commissioners increased to five members and was called the San Francisco Port Authority. In 1969, control of the port was transferred from the state to the San Francisco Port Commission.\textsuperscript{30}

b. Occupants

This existing north-south leg of the building was constructed in 1935, by Michael Geraldi.\textsuperscript{31} Michael Geraldi was born in Sicily, Italy around 1891. He moved to the United States about 1907.\textsuperscript{32} Beginning at a young age, Geraldi sold baskets of fish that he earned helping fishermen unload their catches. After earning enough money, he bought his own fishing boat and set up a corner stand selling his catch of the day, and eventually crab cocktails and seafood chowder.\textsuperscript{33} In 1935, he left the fishing industry and built a two-story, 180-seat restaurant. The restaurant was the first full-service restaurant on the wharf.\textsuperscript{34} Michael Geraldi continued to own and operate Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9, until his death in 1949, when his sons took over the business.\textsuperscript{35}


5. **Designer and Builder**

Research and building permit records did not identify a significant designer or builder. The earliest building permits available date to 1952; the original building permit was not found. Research included various resources at the San Francisco Public Library History Center, California Historical Society, and online research.

6. **California Register Significance Evaluation**

a. California Register Criteria\(^{36}\)

The subject property was evaluated to identify its significance under the Criteria of the California Register of Historical Resources. The significance criteria allow listing of the following:

Criterion 1 (Event): Resources that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.

Criterion 2 (Person): Resources that are associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.
Criterion 3 (Design/Construction): Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values.

The following section examines the significance of the subject property for listing in the California Register under those criteria.

b. Individual Significance Analysis

i. Criterion 1

Under Criterion 1, Fishermen’s Grotto is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to local history. It is significant as the first full-service restaurant on Fisherman’s Wharf. The origins of the restaurant are tied to the early fish market stalls constructed around 1920. The stalls began as fish markets selling the day’s catch. By the early 1930s, these stalls began offering seafood cocktails and cracked crab. When Fishermen’s Grotto was constructed in 1935, restaurants were limited to these small stalls. In the years following the construction of Fishermen’s Grotto, other families began converting their stalls into restaurants. The construction of Fishermen’s Grotto was a significant event in the transformation of Fisherman’s Wharf from a primarily industrial area to a nationally recognized tourist entertainment district. The period of significance is 1935, when the original restaurant was constructed.

ii. Criterion 2

Under Criterion 2, Fishermen’s Grotto is not significant for association with important persons. The subject building represents Michael Geraldi’s active life, as a fisherman and restaurateur. However, mere association with the first full-service restaurant does not make the Geraldi family stand out as more significant than other pioneering families of Fisherman’s Wharf. Research into Michael Geraldi and the Geraldi family provided limited results. The Geraldi family was not found among biographical index in the San Francisco History Center at the San Francisco Public Library. In Historian Alessandro Baccari Jr.’s book *San Francisco’s Fisherman’s Wharf*, Michael Geraldi was identified in a photo caption as “one of the most celebrated restaurateurs in the history of Fisherman’s Wharf”, but was not listed among the “legends, heroes and celebrities” identified in the book. Other resources were limited to census records, a few newspaper articles, and the restaurant’s website.

iii. Criterion 3

Under Criterion 3, Fishermen’s Grotto is not significant for its architecture or as the work of a master. The original Fishermen’s Grotto building was constructed in 1935. At the time of its construction, it was not a notable example of a type, period, or method of construction; it did not
have high artistic values; nor is it the work of a master. The massing, façade composition, and
detailing do not reflect a specific style. A designer or builder was not identified for this property.
Since the building’s construction, it underwent several design alterations, including the addition
of Venetian motifs such as striped mooring poles and arched windows. These additions do not
transform the building into a representative example of Venetian Gothic Architecture, nor have
any of the alterations gained significance since their construction.

The F.E. Booth Building was constructed in 1920 in a Spanish Colonial Revival Design. The
building was constructed with smooth stucco walls, low-pitched clay tile roof with a semi-circular
arcade at the southeast corner of the building. Since its construction, the building has been altered to
the point it can no longer be considered the same building; it no longer conveys its original design
and style.

c. Historic District Analysis

i. Fish Alley Historic District

Fish Alley is located west of the subject property, between Hyde and Taylor Streets, north of
Jefferson Street. Fish Alley has historically been the center of San Francisco’s fishing industry. A
few resources were determined eligible as contributors to a California Register historic district
under Criterion 1. The district represents the boat building and finishing industries that developed
along Fisherman’s Wharf. The period of significance was defined as 1919 (date of construction)
to 1941 (estimated conclusion of boat building industry). The entire Fish Alley Study area was
recommended eligible as an architectural character district, with consistent construction methods
and building types.38

The subject building is not directly associated with the boat building or fishing industry and
therefore does not appear to be eligible for listing in the California Register as a contributing
resource of the district. The extensive alterations after 1941 would make the building a non-
contributory property if it were included in the district boundaries.

ii. The Port of San Francisco Embarcadero Historic District

The Port of San Francisco Embarcadero Historic District was listed in the National Register of
Historic Places in 2006. The District was determined significant under National Register Criteria
A, B, and C. It is significant under Criterion A in the area of Government at the state level for its
association with the Board of State Harbor Commissioners, an agency of the State of California,
and Commerce and Transportation at the national level. The district is significant under Criterion
B in the area of labor at the national level for association with Harry Bridges, a labor leader. It is
significant under Criterion C in the area of Engineering at the national level as a surviving example
of a once common type of port.
The subject building does not appear to be eligible for listing in the National Register as a contributing resource of the district. This building is not significant for association with the Board of State Harbor Commissioners, with Harry Bridges, or development of the Port.

7. Integrity

To determine if a building is eligible for listing on the California Register, the building must be determined significant under at least one of the four California Register criteria and retain sufficient physical integrity to convey this significance. Integrity is the evaluation of the survival of physical features from the defined period of significance. The integrity of a building is evaluated under seven aspects: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. These categories are defined as follows:

Location: the integrity of location refers to whether a property remains where it was originally constructed.

Design: the integrity of design refers to whether a property has maintained its original configuration of elements and style that characterize its plan, massing, and structure.

Setting: Integrity of setting refers to the physical environment surrounding a property that informs the character of the place.

Materials: the integrity of materials refers to the physical components of a property, their arrangement or pattern, and their authentic expression of a particular time period.

Workmanship: the integrity of workmanship refers to whether the physical elements of a structure express the original craftsmanship, technology and aesthetic principles of a particular people, place or culture at a particular period.

Feeling: the integrity of feeling refers to the properties ability to convey the historical sense of a particular time period.

Association: the integrity of association refers to the property’s significance defined by a connection to a particularly important event, person or design.

The subject building retains integrity of location, setting, feeling and association. The building remains in its historic location, in an urban commercial setting. The building has strong integrity of association. It has continued to operate as Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9 at Fisherman’s Wharf since its construction in 1935. The integrity of feeling is maintained by its proximity to the inner lagoon with moored boats, other family-owned seafood restaurants and stalls, with views of the bay, but has been compromised by significant alterations to the building itself. The integrity of design,
materials, and workmanship, of the original Fishermen’s Grotto building (1935) that was determined significant under Criterion 1, has been compromised through substantial alterations.
Through building permit records, historical photographs, and property research, multiple construction campaigns were identified. The Fishermen’s Grotto No. 9 website identifies five construction campaigns but does not specify the extent of the alterations. Based on historical photographs it appears the alterations to the building included new windows and doors, signage, roof, and canopy support by mooring poles. The most significant alteration to the building (documented in building permits) occurred in 1953 when Fishermen’s Grotto was expanded and connected with the neighboring F.E. Booth building, identified as Vista Del Mare on the building permit application. During the 1960s, a second expansion further increased the seating. These alterations occurred after the period of significance, and due to the extent of the alterations, the existing building does not contain the physical characteristics that convey the significance of the original Fishermen’s Grotto that Geraldi founded. The distinction between the original Fishermen’s Grotto and F.E. Booth building is not readily distinguishable on the interior or exterior of the building. Therefore, the building does not retain sufficient integrity to convey its significance.
8. **Bibliography of Works Cited and Archives Consulted**


Bolles John S. *Northern Waterfront Plan*. On file at San Francisco Planning Department, 1968.

California Historical Resources Information System. Historic Property Data File for San Francisco County. Northwest Information Center.

California Historical Society. Historic Photograph Collection.

City and County of San Francisco Department of Building Inspection. Records Management. Permit Record for 2851 Taylor Street.

City and County of San Francisco Department of City Planning. Architectural Quality Survey, 1976.


City and County of San Francisco Department of City Planning. Fisherman’s Wharf Area Plan. On file at San Francisco Planning Department, 1991.


Char Bennett, Lynne. “Grotto’s Ageless Appeal.” *San Francisco Chronicle* (San Francisco, CA), March 16, 2014.

Corbett, Michael R. “Port of San Francisco Embarcadero Historic District.” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, National Park Service, 2006


San Francisco History Center. San Francisco City Directories Online. 1936 to 1982. San Francisco History Center. San Francisco Historical Photograph Collections Online.


9. **Appendices**

a. Building Permit Application
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Approval Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Public Health</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>[Date]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Electricity</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>[Date]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Engineering</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>[Date]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Fire Prevention &amp; Public Safety</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>[Date]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Historic Resource Evaluation**

2851 Taylor Street
APPLICATION FOR BUILDING PERMIT
ADDITIONS, ALTERATIONS OR REPAIRS

Location: 2851 Taylor St

Total Cost: $400.5

Number of stories: 3

Basement: No

Present use of building: Residential

No. of families: 8

Proposed use of building: Residential

No. of families: 8

Type of construction: 1, 2, 3, 4, or 6

Building Code Occupancy Classification: Residential

Any other building on lot: Yes

(Must be shown on plot plan if answer is Yes)

Does this alteration create an additional floor of occupancy? Yes

Does this alteration create an additional story to the building? Yes

Electrical work to be performed: Yes

Plumbing work to be performed: Yes

Ground floor area of building: 2040 sq. ft.

Height of building: 28 ft.

Detailed description of work to be done:

Repair fire damage

Tenants improvement only

No construction work on building

Supervision of construction by: Jadwne Arch

Address: 2851 Market St

General contractor: Jadwne Arch

Address: 2851 Market St

Architect: Jadwne Arch

California Certificate No.

Engineer: Jadwne Arch

California Certificate No.

Owner: Jadwne Arch

Address: 2851 Market St

Owner's Authorized Agent to be Owner's Authorized Architect, Engineer or General Contractor.

PERMIT OF OCCUPANCY MUST BE OBTAINED ON COMPLETION OF HOTEL OR APARTMENT HOUSE PURSUANT TO REG. 908 SAN FRANCISCO BUILDING CODE.
Historic Resource Evaluation
2851 Taylor Street
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application is hereby made to the Department of Public Works of San Francisco for permission to build in accordance with the plans and specifications submitted hereewith and according to the description and for the purpose hereinafter set forth:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Location: 2851 Taylor St. S.F.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Total Cost: $2,800.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) No. of stories: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Basement: Yes or No: Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Present use of building: Commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) No. of families:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Proposed use of building: Commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) No. of families:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9) Type of construction:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10) Building Code Occupancy Classification: 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11) Any other building on lot: Yes or No: Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12) Does this alteration create an additional floor of occupancy: Yes or No: Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13) Does this alteration create an additional story to the building: Yes or No: Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(14) Electrical work to be performed: Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(15) Plumbing work to be performed: Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(16) Height of building: 30 ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(17) Ground floor area of building: 520 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(18) Detailed description of work to be done: Repairs toFire Damage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(19) Remove all damaged materials and replace with new.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(20) Involving Carpentry, Sheetrock, Sheet Metal, Painting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(22) Engineer: California Certificate No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(23) No. of persons employed:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(24) Owner: State: Harbor Bond (Phone: 941-8700)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address: Ferry Bldg. S.F. Calif.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(25) Permit of Occupancy must be obtained on completion of Hotel or Apartment House pursuant to Sec. 808 San Francisco Building Code.</td>
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215
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application No.</th>
<th>52244</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building Type</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of Stories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposed Use of Building</td>
<td>Hotel &amp; Restaurant</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of Stories</td>
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<td>Building Code Occupancy Classification</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does this alteration create an additional story to the building?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electrical work to be performed</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing work to be performed</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground floor area of building</td>
<td>5000 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above application is hereby made to the Department of Public Works of the City and County of San Francisco for permission to build in accordance with the plans and specifications submitted herewith and according to the description and for the purpose hereinafter set forth:

(1) Location: 2851 Taylor St.
(2) Total Cost: $4800.00
(3) No. of stories: 2
(4) Basement: Yes
(5) Present use of building: Restaurant
(6) No. of families: None
(7) Proposed use of building: Hotel
(8) No. of families: None
(9) Type of construction: 3
(10) Building Code Occupancy Classification: No
(11) Any other building on lot: No
(12) Does this alteration create an additional floor of occupancy? No
(13) Does this alteration create an additional story to the building? No
(14) Electrical work to be performed: Yes
(15) Plumbing work to be performed: Yes
(16) Ground floor area of building: 5000 sq. ft.
(17) Height of building: 32 ft.
(18) Detailed description of work to be done:

Hotel, restaurant, floors, debris, walls

No portion of building or structure or scaffolding used during construction, to be closer than 6 ft. to any wire containing more than 500 volts. See Sec. 380, California Penal Code.

Supervision of construction by R.K. Hansen. Address: 95 Rochambeau Ave.


I hereby certify and agree that if a permit is issued for the construction described in this application, all the provisions of the permit and all laws and ordinances applicable thereto will be complied with. I further agree to save San Francisco and its officers and employees harmless from all costs and damages which may accrue from use or occupancy of the sidewalk, street or sidewalk space or from anything else in connection with the work included in the permit. The foregoing covenant shall be binding upon the owner of said property, the applicant, their heirs, executors and assigns.

Owner: R.K. Hansen. Address: 95 Rochambeau Ave. (For Contact by Bureau)
Application is hereby made to the Department of Public Works of San Francisco for permission to build in accordance with the plans and specifications submitted herewith and according to the description and for the purpose hereinafter set forth:

(1) Location. 2851 Taylor St.

(2) Total Cost $4,000.00

(3) No. of stories. 2

(4) Basement. No

(5) Present use of building. Restaurant

(6) No. of families. None

(7) Proposed use of building.

(8) No. of families.

(9) Type of construction. 3

(10) Building Code Occupancy Classification 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5

(11) Any other building on lot. No (Must be shown on plot plan if answer is Yes.)

(12) Does this alteration create an additional floor of occupancy. No

(13) Does this alteration create an additional story to the building. No

(14) Electrical work to be performed. Yes

(15) Plumbing work to be performed. Yes

(16) Ground floor area of building. 1,500 sq. ft.

(17) Height of building. 32 ft.

(18) Detailed description of work to be done.

Remove concrete posts, metal rail.

New front porch

Communication desired.

Comment: Suggested growth to Victor C. Men.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information to be furnished by all applicants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING BUILDING</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING AFTER PROPOSED ALTERATION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Important notices

- No alterations shall be made in the structure of the existing building that will add or change the existing building's use or extent.
- No portion of the existing building shall be enclosed for purposes other than those for which it was originally occupied.
- No additional use shall be made of the existing building.
- No structure shall be added to the existing building.
- No existing structure or addition shall be altered to change the existing building's use.

### Notice to applicant

- The permit issued is subject to the conditions of the permit, and any violation of the conditions of the permit shall result in the revocation or suspension of the permit.
- The permit issued is subject to the conditions of any other permit or authorization issued for the same structure.
- The permit issued is subject to the conditions of any other permit or authorization issued for any other structure.
- The permit issued is subject to the conditions of any other permit or authorization issued for any other use.

**Date of application:**

- December 21, 2016

**Application number:**

- 1800-00190

**Owner:**

- 2851 Taylor Street

**City of San Francisco**

- Department of Building Inspection

**Director:**

- Tom C. Hui

**Plan review:**

- Exempt

**Address:**

- 2851 Taylor Street

**Phone:**

- 415-871-7028

**Notice:**

- The permit issued is subject to the conditions of the permit, and any violation of the conditions of the permit shall result in the revocation or suspension of the permit.
- The permit issued is subject to the conditions of any other permit or authorization issued for the same structure.
- The permit issued is subject to the conditions of any other permit or authorization issued for any other structure.
- The permit issued is subject to the conditions of any other permit or authorization issued for any other use.

**Date of application:**

- January 17, 2017

**Application number:**

- 1800-00190