

Port Walk #13



The Wharf's First Fleet

If you had looked out over the Bay from here anytime between 1850 and 1914, The colorful boats would have been traditional Italian sail-rigged feluccas in the 1800s, gasoline-powered Monterey clippers after the turn of the twentieth century.



Felucca

Immigrants from Genoa, Italy, were the first to use these small boats. Built between 1850 and 1900, feluccas could be identified by their triangular sails, which were later augmented by motors. Crew members cast long lines or nets to catch salmon, rockfish, herring, sardines, crab, and shrimp. On the larger feluccas, fishing crews often stayed out for days at a time, sleeping in cramped quarters below deck.



Monterey Clipper

Installing a one-cylinder Hicks gasoline engine on a felucca, a Tuscano fisherman named Giuseppe Camillone pioneered a new boat design in the early 1900s. Stable and seaworthy, with a distinctive clipper bow to deflect spray, Camillone's Monterey clipper quickly became the most popular type of boat at Fisherman's Wharf. A few still remain, fishing for crab, salmon, and squid.



Salvatore (Sal) Alioto, Fisherman's Son

“This is the Monterey fishing boat Virginia loaded with six tons of herring. The Cavallo brothers, Paps, Danny, and Carlo – who were also known as the ‘Yukon Gang’ – used gill nets and pulled up the nets full of fish by hand. There was a lot of competition between the Virginia and the Golden Gate, run by my Nonno Antonio and my father Joe, who was also called ‘Joe the Cop.’ My Nonno had our boat built in 1928 and it is still located in the same slip in Fisherman's Wharf.”