

Port Walk #15

Banned from Fishing

Because Italy was at war with the United States during World War II, all non-citizen Italians were banned from working and living near the coast and were not permitted within 14 blocks of Fisherman's Wharf. Although this ban was not as drastic as the internment of Japanese Americans, it caused great upheaval and protest in the Fisherman's Wharf community, which was made up largely of Italian families, and the ban was lifted in less than a year.

Forbidden to Fish

Although they had lived here for decades, many of San Francisco's Italian fishermen were not citizens. Labeled "enemy aliens," approximately 1,400 Italians were forbidden to fish. The U.S. Navy confiscated 650 Italian-owned fishing vessels until the end of the war.

Dominic DiMaggio

"I was not the only son who came home from the war to find that their parents, or other members of their family, had suddenly become enemy aliens. I remember my father was forbidden from fishing or even visiting his friends at the wharf because it was in a prohibited zone. I do not know the extent, but I am sure my father was changed after his experience as an enemy alien. The number of people affected by these events will never be known and the effect on the Italian American community can never be measured."

- Excerpted from testimony, US Senate Judiciary Committee, October 26, 1999

Alessandro Baccari

"As a little boy, I witnessed the trauma of those of Italian origin who were not American citizens during the outbreak of World War II. At the time, my father had a photographic studio. To the studio came nearly a thousand Italians to have their photographs taken for placement on their alien registration papers. And, after their picture was taken, they would say in Italian, 'But I'm not a criminal. What have I done?' 'I've lived here for forty years; I love America.' 'Why do I have to be in at eight o'clock?' 'Why can't I go to my boat?' I never forgot their sadness, their tears."

- From *The Unknown Internment: An Oral History of the Relocation of Italian Americans During World War II*, 1990.

Joseph Maniscalco

"My Dad, Lorenzo, had a fishing boat when the war started, and he kept it docked at Fisherman's Wharf. But as the war came upon him he was very hurt. It was a great insult to him to have to be restricted from fishing. This was his livelihood. That twelve months when my father was restricted was really a tough period. The family was without sufficient income, and it was very hard financially for them. He couldn't comprehend. His boat was his life."

- From *The Unknown Internment*, 1990