

from a **History of the Redondo Beach Pier** – by Maureen Megowan

There have been 7 piers constructed on the Redondo Beach shoreline over the years. Between 1889 and 1903, three piers were constructed to service freight activity when Redondo Beach was competing against the San Pedro harbor for dominance.



Wharf 1 was constructed at Emerald Street in 1889.



Wharf 2 was just south in front of the Hotel Redondo (Photo from hotel garden circa 1900)

Wharf 3 was built south of Wharf 2 near Sapphire and Topaz Streets in 1903. The Sante Fe railroad provided rail service to the piers. Violent storms in 1915 and 1919 destroyed Wharfs 1 and 2, and diminishing freight deliveries led to the removal of Wharf 3 in 1926.



Redondo Piers with Hotel Redondo on the hill

Redondo Wharf No. 3 — 1904-1926 by Ken Jones

An Angler's History of Redondo Wharf No. 3



Redondo's Wharf No. 2 and Wharf No. 3

Wharf No. 3, a wooden wharf, was built during 1903 at Sapphire Street. It would receive its first shipment in January 1904 and primarily be used as a wharf for the lumber industry during much of its life. It would last until 1926 when the lease of the Pacific Railroad was rejected by Redondo Beach.

As with Wharf No. 1 and Wharf No. 2, Redondo's original wharves were commercial working wharves used primarily for coastal shipping. As such they vied with the wharves at San Pedro and the Long Wharf at Santa Monica for shipping dominance (although the McFadden Wharf in Newport Beach was another competitor and it was often used by the Santa Fe when storms would damage the Redondo wharf). However, commercial shipping began a steady decline in the new century and the wharves at Redondo, like most of the commercial wharves in California, would see a drop in usage and revenue. However, tremendous change would take place to Redondo Beach itself, as well as its railroads and wharves, before Wharf No. 3 was destroyed in the mid 1920s.

The Endless Pier 1915-1927



The "Endless Pier" as it would have looked when new

With the destruction of Wharf No. 1 in 1915, and the deteriorating condition of Wharf No. 2, many in Redondo Beach began to consider the idea of a new pier—a pleasure

pier. Although Redondo had, since the opening of Wharf No. 1 in 1889, gained fame for its various wharves, all had been commercial wharves that “allowed” visitors to walk the wharves and anglers to fish from them. But none were built as “pleasure piers,” piers reserved for locals and visitors seeking pleasure—fishing, strolling, relaxing over the ocean, etc.

However, Santa Monica had constructed a huge concrete pleasure pier in 1909 gaining tremendous publicity and attracting thousands of visitors. Hermosa Beach had constructed a new concrete pleasure pier in 1914. Manhattan Beach had formed a “Pier and Beach Association” in 1914 and was studying plans for a new pleasure pier. Long Beach had a long history of pleasure piers and the Pine Avenue Pier that opened in 1904, when combined with the nearby Pike amusement area, was a major competitor to Redondo as far as a seaside attraction.

In addition, by 1915 the shoreline between Venice and Ocean Park was the home to a number of huge “amusement piers” that in terms of sheer size, and amusements offered, were in a class all their own. The Venice Pier (1905), Ocean Park’s Horseshoe Pier (1905), Bristol Pier (1907), and Fraser’s Million Dollar Pier (1910) led the list. Plans were already underway to build the Loeffler Pier that would adjoin the Santa Monica Pier when it opened in 1916.

Given the competition for tourists, there was little doubt a pleasure pier was needed. There was also little doubt that something was needed to make the Redondo pier stand out (although it certainly would already stand out as far as the fishermen were concerned).



Pleasure Pier and remains of Wharf 2 in front of Hotel Redondo with Hermosa Beach and Manhattan Beach piers at top of picture. Picture probably taken after 1919 storm damaged the pleasure pier and severely damaged Wharf 2



Early 1926 Aerial View showing Pleasure Pier, and Wharf 3 after destruction of Wharf 2 between the two in 1919. The 1919 storm also destroyed three quarters of the western end of the pier and the observation building at the end of the pier. Wharf 3 was removed in 1926. This picture was taken before the construction of the Monstad pier adjacent to the southern part of the Pleasure Pier in late 1926.



In 1916, a municipal pier referred to as the “endless pier” was constructed in a “V” shape to replace the destroyed Wharf 1. A 450-foot long northern leg began at the former location of the old Wharf No. 1. At the western end of the northerly leg stood a 160-foot x 200-foot platform. From this platform, the Pier headed back to shore just south of the Bathhouse on the 450-foot southern leg.



The Redondo Beach waterfront in 1916 showing, in the immediate foreground, the remains of Wharf No. 1 destroyed in 1915, the “endless pier”, Wharf No. 2, with a steamer alongside, and in the

distance partially obscured by haze is Wharf No. 3, also with ships alongside. (William A. Meyers Collection).



In November 1925 Captain Hans C. Monstad constructed a pier adjacent to the endless pier to provide landings for all fishing boats and pleasure crafts operating in Redondo Beach, including the gambling ship "The Rex". By 1938, the pier had been extended to 450 feet.



The Redondo Beach waterfront in 1926 showing the newly built Monstad Pier

The 1919 storm that destroyed Wharf 2 severely damaged the endless pier, and ultimately the pier was demolished in 1928 and a new wooden horseshoe shaped pier was constructed in 1929. By connecting the west end of the Monstad Pier with the center of the Horseshoe Pier in 1983, the Fishing Promenade provided more space for sport fishing.



Redondo Beach Pier in 1980. Note Monstad Pier on left. It was connected at the end of the pier to the horseshoe pier in 1983.

January 1988 storms battered the Pier, and destroyed the Fishing Promenade. In May 1988, fire destroyed most of the Horseshoe Pier. After many years of public debate about the future of the Pier, the reconstructed concrete Redondo Pier opened in 1995. Architect Edward Beall designed shade structures that symbolize the sails and masts of the old sailing ships that visited Redondo. The new Pier connected the 1925 Monstad Pier, the remainder of the 1929 Pier, and the location of the 1889 Wharf No. 1.



Redondo pier today

In 2012, the Redondo Landing building at the entrance to the pier was renovated. The city has recently acquired the Pier Plaza and International Boardwalk leaseholds in King Harbor, and now owns a 15-acre stretch of property from Torrance Boulevard to Portofino Way. In January 2013, the city entered into an exclusive negotiating agreement with El Segundo's CenterCal Properties to redevelop the **15 acres** of city-owned land on the Redondo Beach waterfront, including the Redondo Beach Pier. The project is expected to take several years and cost between \$150 and 200 million. The City and the developer are continuing to hold public meetings to receive public input as to the future design. Ground breaking is not expected to occur until at least 2015.