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**Everett R. Jodrey
and Gloucester's State Fish Pier**
by Karen Kallio Orlando

Everett Jodrey speaking at the State Fish Pier
dedication in October, 1938.

Everett R. Jodrey and Gloucester's State Fish Pier

BY KAREN KALLIO ORLANDO

Gloucester has flourished as a fishing port for many centuries, and many of our dedicated citizens proudly contributed to improving and maintaining the industry here. One of Gloucester's most vigilant and impassioned promoters was the "Father of the State Fish Pier," Everett R. Jodrey. A consummate advocate for Gloucester, Jodrey carried the voice of the fishermen as far as Washington D.C. to secure Gloucester as a location for the pier. As one of only four such planned facilities, the pier came with hundreds of thousands of dollars in revenue and jobs for the port's most significant industry, allowing it to continue and thrive into the 21st century.

Everett Jodrey was born in Gloucester on April 8, 1889, to Peter and Anna (Turner) Jodrey. At the time of his birth, electricity had just come to Cape Ann, allowing for the first trolley cars to travel the city streets in 1890. Howard Blackburn was preparing for a trip across the Atlantic, and the greatest era of Gloucester's fishing industry was still to come.

Jodrey grew up on Duncan Street, downtown, and spent his life there. He endeavored toward business at a young age, shining shoes and nailing salt cod drums on the wharf after school. For his efforts, Jodrey carried a scar on his left middle finger. Later he married Ella Florence (Hinckley) Jodrey and had two children, Harry and Dorothy.

Eventually, Jodrey became a barber and opened a shop on Duncan Street. Nearly all of his customers were fishing captains and crew. One clever idea was to sell each customer a shaving mug with his name on it, encouraging return business with the novelty. The going rate was \$2 for a shave, haircut, shampoo, and massage. Jodrey's shop remained in business for 20 years and he developed strong relationships with the waterfront



Everett and his wife Ella Florence,
circa 1930s.

workers, ship owners, and captains. At one point, he employed five barbers to take care of the many customers in town, all related to the booming fishing industry. Their concerns and struggles were his own, and he championed their causes at every opportunity.

Around 1918-20, Jodrey noticed a drop in business and dust collecting on the fishermen's shaving mugs. The new Boston Fish Pier had been completed in 1910, and the boats were unloading their catches there, making trips back to Gloucester less frequent. Jodrey recognized that something needed to be done to bring the fish landings back to Gloucester. For that to happen, large-scale refrigeration was necessary. Thus, the effort to build Gloucester's own fish pier was born.

Jodrey spent nearly two decades promoting the fish pier. In 1933 he joined a Gloucester delegation that sailed all the way to Washington D.C. on the schooner *Gertrude L. Thebaud* to meet with President Roosevelt, who personally went to the pier to meet them. The delegation lobbied for Public Works Authority funds, which were eventually granted to the State for the project. While in Washington, the crew and lobbyists were invited by Mrs. Roosevelt to the White House, where, according to the tale, she was presented with a large halibut.



CAPE ANN MUSEUM

Everett Jodrey stands top row, center, with the Captain and crew of the schooner *Gertrude L. Thebaud*, and other Gloucester representatives on the steps of the U.S. Capitol, in support of American Fisheries, 1933.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts provided \$660,000 and the City of Gloucester gave the remaining \$100,000 for the project. The pier was built at the end of Parker Street on eight acres of the inner harbor, filling in areas that connected it to what was Five-Pound Island. The little island became the site of the first cold freezer and refrigeration units used for storing and packing fish in Gloucester. The pier was finally completed in October of 1938. Jodrey spoke at the dedication ceremony and was named the "Father of the Fish Pier."

Jodrey was involved in the International Schooner Races, often sailing on the *Gertrude L. Thebaud* against the Nova Scotian *Bluenose*. In 1938 he served as the Chairman of the races held in Gloucester. In a grand show of Gloucester's fishing glory, the *Thebaud* tied up at the new pier for the dedication with veteran and current crew, captains, and prominent citizens aboard.

Jodrey turned in his barber's scissors for fish-net twine when he became the New England manager for the R.J. Ederer Company, also on Duncan Street. His work there was motivated to provide the best nets for the boats. It is said that Jodrey removed some of the carpet in his office so the visiting customers wouldn't be embarrassed to walk in with their fishing boots on. In his role at the Net and Twine, Jodrey helped many a fishing family in hard times, especially during the Depression years, by providing meals at his home and small provisions to those in need. He also helped many skippers get started in the business. On particularly hot summer days, Jodrey was known to send out for ice cream for all of his workers to enjoy and get a brief respite from the heat.



Gov. James Michael Curley signing a Bill for \$660,000 in funds to build the Pier.



Everett Jodrey speaking at the State Fish Pier dedication in October, 1938.

Jodrey was also a lively character among the waterfront community, and everyone knew of his delight in singing for impromptu audiences. He sang formally with the choir of the First Baptist Church, but one did not have to be a church member to hear his rich baritone voice. Bathers at Good Harbor Beach would be treated to a song or two and even the “Star-Spangled Banner” if the Red Sox were playing on the radio. One of Jodrey’s favorites was the aria from the opera *Pagliacci*, sung most afternoons with full dramatic embellishment to his audience of office workers.

Throughout his life, Jodrey was often called upon to speak in support of fishermen’s causes. In the 1940s and 50s, he wrote many articles for the local *Gloucester Daily Times* about actual events of interest to the fishing community called “Tales of the Sea.” The stories always involved the experiences of the local fishermen and their families’ day-to-day lives. The stories succeeded in focusing attention on fishing and the importance of fishing in the community. Jodrey also held many civic roles over the years, all with the aim of helping and promoting the Gloucester fishery and the welfare of its citizens. He was involved with the Master Mariners, the Gloucester Community Pier Association (as President), the Fishermen’s Institute (as President), The Fishermen’s Widows and Orphans Aid Society (also as President), Tyrian Lodge AF & AM (Freemasons), and the Aleppo Shriners Temple in Boston.

Everett Jodrey died in 1972, having witnessed so many changes to the waterfront, yet always an advocate for the good of the fisherman.

In 1985 a plaque was placed at the pier, officially dedicating it to Everett R. Jodrey. In 1992 it was rededicated and officially named the “Everett R. Jodrey State Fish Pier.” After falling into



Everett Jodrey on right with granddaughter Debra in middle and Frank DeMarco (Debra’s father) on left. All were enjoying Good Harbor Beach, one of Everett’s favorite places. Circa 1956.



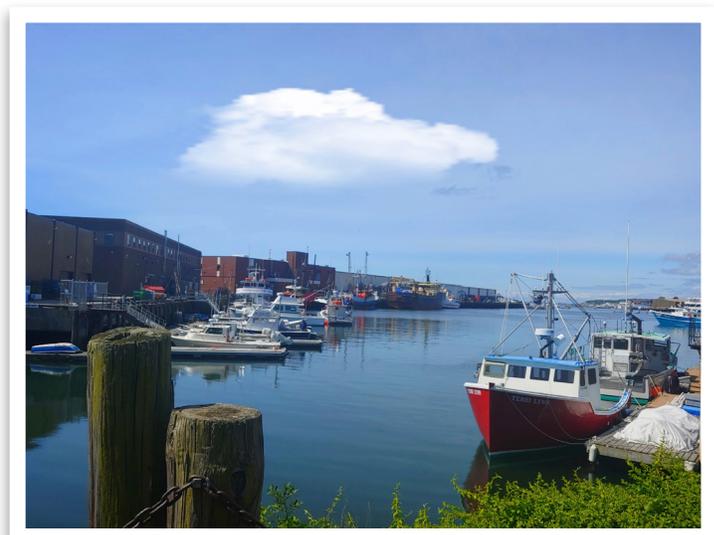
Everett R. Jodrey Bill Signing:
 Back Row - left to right - Dorothy Jodrey DeMarco (daughter), Mayor Richard Silva, State Senator Richard Buell, Debra A. Ryan (granddaughter), Bob Ryan, Michelle Ryan (great-granddaughter), Patricia Fiero, State Representative;
 Front Row: Governor Michael Dukakis, Cynthia Ryan (great-granddaughter) and Sherri Jodrey Ryan (great-granddaughter).

some disrepair, the pier was overhauled in the early 1990s, expanded, and modernized to meet 21st-century requirements. It was reopened in 1993 and celebrated as a state-of-the-art facility. In 2016, about \$1.1 million was authorized by MassDevelopment to rehab the rooves, docks, and cold storage units.

The Jodrey State Fish Pier now stands as a centerpiece for commercial fishing in Gloucester and the Commonwealth. If not for Everett Jodrey’s commitment and diligence, the fishing industry in Gloucester may have met its demise a century ago; however, it persevered with an active pier. While the industry has met an endless barrage of challenges in the years since Jodrey’s efforts, Gloucester is still active today as “America’s Oldest Seaport.”



2022 photo of the Everett R. Jodrey monument at the State Fish Pier.



A peek at the northwest side of Jodrey Pier, 2022.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KAREN KALLIO ORLANDO

PHOTO COURTESY OF TERRY WEBER MANGOS

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Dedication Brochure. “Everett R. Jodrey” 1985, 1992. Courtesy of the family of Everett R. Jodrey.

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