



# *Butcher Boy*

## Restoring a Regional Treasure - the 1902 West Coast Work Boat

In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a growing demand in West Coast harbors for work boats of a rugged type that could perform a variety of tasks. One of the general types that found favor in San Diego was the double-ended salmon boat. Sometimes referred to as day boats, they were snug craft indeed. Generally speaking, a craft of this type was about twenty-five feet long, flush-decked and with three small hatches. The smallest hatch, farthest aft, was where the helmsman sat. Amidships was the fish hatch, and forward was a hatch either for fish or, for those boats that sailed with more than one man, a pair of bunks. Many of these boats were sailed by one man who had to handle the tiller, the sheets and other lines all at once. It required no small skill at seamanship to do so.

Other jobs lay at hand besides fishing. In those far off days many windjammers—American, British, German and others—beat around Cape Horn from the eastern seaboard or Europe and sailed up to West Coast ports. By the time the men on board reached a port like San Diego, they had probably been many weeks at sea, subsisting on weevily bread and salted horsemeat. Some fresh meat, in place of the standard seagoing fare, would be of great interest to them.

Hence, the employment of the so-called meat boat in San Diego Bay and other harbors. Meat boats took fresh meat to the square-riggers that hauled in and anchored out. *Butcher Boy* was one of the names commonly given to such boats, and there were more than one of that title at San Diego in various periods.

Charles S. Hardy, known locally as "Boss" Hardy, operated the Bay City Market among other interests. Hardy decided that his market must have its own meat boat to get meat to the potential customers riding on their anchor chains off



*Butcher Boy* sailing in earlier years.

Spanish Bight or Dutch Flats. This was in 1886; a year earlier, when he had opened his market, Hardy had gone a-peddling to the square-riggers in a Whitehall boat. So it came about that Hardy's first *Butcher Boy*, about which little is known, was built and served the Cape Horn fleet when they visited San Diego for some 15 years.

By 1901 Hardy, in need of a new meat boat, approached Manuel Goularte, a native of the Portuguese Azores who ran a boatyard on the San Diego waterfront. The boat that rose in the Goularte yard between January and April 1902 was 29 feet, 11 inches long; 8 feet, 6 inches in beam; and had a draft of 2 feet, 7 inches. She carried 604 square feet of sail in her big mains'l and jib. The spars of the new *Butcher Boy* measured as follows: mast, 35 feet, 9 inches; boom, 30 feet, 9 inches; gaff, 13 feet, 6 inches; bowsprit, 10 feet, 1 inch. She was framed in oak, planked with cedar, and copper-fastened throughout.



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She carried a long bowsprit, a low overhanging boom, a small cabin forward on her flush deck, a main fish-hold (or fish box) amidships, and at the stern a small hatch or cockpit, on the edge of which the helmsman sat. Her mast was spruce, stepped seven feet from the bow.



Bill Fisher, shipwright and volunteer, attaches the toe rail to *Butcher Boy's* deck.

*Butcher Boy* carried 2,000 pounds of lead outside on her shallow keel. The lead ran her entire length and projected two inches abaft the forward edge of the rudder. Her flush deck plus her cabin made her an exceedingly comfortable boat. Years later, the two hatches were joined to form a roomy cockpit, and the cabin was enlarged and extended aft. This arrangement gave her a four-berth capacity below by running two of them out under the cockpit seats.

Meat-boat work was more a matter of delivery than soliciting orders. The Cape Horn captains were all acquainted with "Boss" Hardy by this time and placed orders at the Bay City Market almost while their anchor chains were still roaring out the hawsepipes. *Butcher Boy*, took aboard meat on the waterfront (Hardy's Market was at Fifth and Broadway), then set her sails and sped forth on her errands. It is easy to picture the lean-faced crew of a "lime-juicer" just in from Callao or Valparaiso, lining the bulwarks as *Butcher Boy* came alongside, necks craning, eyes searching, mouths watering for the fresh meat about to be slung aboard.

Around 1905, Hardy decided to sell *Butcher Boy*. His reason for doing so was doubtless purely economic, and very probably had something to do with the fact that steam-powered boats were rapidly taking over all sorts of harbor work. Her second owner was Kent Hamilton, a well-known San Diego yachtsman. The sloop now entered upon her long career as a private yacht. Hamilton partly rebuilt *Butcher Boy*, although his modifications were minor. Hamilton became Commodore of the San Diego Yacht Club and he and *Butcher Boy* vied for the Lipton Cup Trophy in

these waters. *Butcher Boy* took part in a famous match against the yacht Detroit off the Hotel Del Coronado in 1905. This match, for which Detroit was shipped to San Diego, was handily won by the visiting vessel, which was larger, faster, and built from the keel up for racing. *Butcher Boy* put up a sturdy battle, however, and dogged Detroit's heels most of the way. Although not designed for racing, she had shown promise.

*Butcher Boy* finally passed from Hamilton's hands into those of several other San Diego yachtsmen, including newsman, and later a key *Star of India* supporter, Jerry MacMullen, who purchased the boat in 1917 when he was twenty and owned her until 1930. He never tired of singing her praises. It was in 1930 that *Butcher Boy* left her San Diego birthplace and home for 41 years and took up moorings in Los Angeles. She was purchased in 1935 by Grant Allen, who later on confessed that he and a buddy planned to sail her to the South Pacific and live the romantic life as portrayed in various Hollywood films. They voyaged as far as the Isthmus at Catalina Island where better sense prevailed, and they returned to San Pedro. In September of that year Allen resold her making enough profit to resume his education at U.C. Berkeley.



Volunteer Eileen Stevenson took on much of the painting as she was especially good at fitting into small spaces.

After Allen had her for that glorious summer, *Butcher Boy* was owned successively by three other Los Angeles area yachtsmen. In 1940 she was acquired by Roland "Rollie" Kalayjian, a jolly sailor of Armenian descent, who decided to make some changes to her. Rollie rebuilt parts of the boat, raising the freeboard and making other modifications. The boat was originally equipped with a centerboard; this was now long gone, and in its place Rollie installed a rocker fore-and-aft keel from the forefoot to the sternpost. He also added between 600 and 800 pounds of lead ballast. *Butcher Boy* still had her original cast-iron

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ballast blocks in place between her floor timbers; the blocks appeared custom-made for the boat and were fitted with lifting rings. Rollie said they fit very snugly into place, further evidence of the careful workmanship that went into her construction. On the chain-plate bolts, Rollie found old slot-machine tokens doing duty as washers. In the argot of *Butcher Boy's* youth, these were dubbed Chinese coins and gave rise to a long-circulated, but unfortunately false, story that she actually had Chinese money embedded in her innards.



Volunteer John Kessler uses clamps to help bend the new ribs to the frame.

During the period 1940-48, while the boat was in Rollie's hands, he kept her at San Pedro. She participated each May in a race from that port to Coronado, and she was kept in trim with mid-winter regattas at San Miguel Island. Rollie sold the boat to one Al Upton, who moved her back to Los Angeles waters until 1952, and then sold her to another party at which point the history of the boat becomes murky for some sixteen years. It is known that she remained under private ownership in the Los Angeles area, presumably at San Pedro.

In 1971 veteran San Diego yachtsman Joe Jessop heard that she was still in existence somewhere in Los Angeles and he began a personal search. He finally heard that *Butcher Boy*—or what seemed to be *Butcher Boy*—was at Playa del Rey, lying quietly in the basin. He and Ken Reynard (the man who supervised restoration of the bark *Star of India*) took a jaunt north from San Diego to see whether this really was the fabled *Butcher Boy*. At first sight, they were dubious. She was a double ender, all right, but she just didn't look 70 years old. Closer inspection, and comparison with various documents revealed that, yes indeed, this was the famous *Butcher Boy*. She now sported a trunk cabin with "all the discomforts of modern conveniences," according to Reynard. "There were three cramped bunks, a head that only a dwarf could use, a four-cylinder Gray Sea Scout engine that was not easily

reached, and other annoyances." As a final touch, there was a Princess telephone, "about as useful as radar on a dugout canoe," groused Reynard. The boat's owner at this time was a faraway bank. Funding for *Butcher Boy's* purchase for the Maritime Museum was raised by the *Star of India* Auxiliary. Jessop and Reynard arranged an inspection haul-out, and after further negotiation Reynard obtained control of the boat from the bank and decided to sail her to San Diego where a proper haul-out could be done. After a 41-year hiatus *Butcher Boy* was on her way to her ancestral home via Catalina. She carried with her two pounds of bacon—performing again a service she had not done for sixty-five years. Jessop and Reynard also packed a few other necessities along with a hand-me-down set of sails and a Sea Scout engine, and they were off on their journey.

The next day around 1:45 p.m. they were off Point Loma, having averaged about 6.7 knots under sail, in only a moderate but fair wind. "Her legendary speed was real!" commented Reynard. Reynard brought her safely in, to the stares of the curious and admiring, and ever since that day she's been part of the small-craft collection of the Maritime Museum and is on display.

*Butcher Boy* represents the last flourish of the west coast salmon boat, a development that began in the 1860s. She is among the last few harbor work boats in existence dating from the turn of the century. Work boat, racing yacht, and pleasure craft, she symbolizes a parade of colorful moments in West Coast maritime lore.



Volunteer Tim Stephens drills a hole to mount a new deck support.

Photo credit John Leighton

\*Excerpt from the MMSD 2017 Docent Training Manual, Chapter 10.



# BACKGROUND

According to Raymond Ashley, Ph.D., K.C.I., President/CEO of the Maritime Museum of San Diego, “*Butcher Boy* will re-emerge onto San Diego Bay, as beautiful and spirited as the day she was launched 100 years ago, ready to provision with a bit of the past and carry mariners back to our roots. *Butcher Boy*, originally commissioned in 1902, and first built as a workboat and a yacht, is the oldest locally built example of either.” Plans call for *Butcher Boy* appearances at regional Opening Yacht Club ceremonies and sailing competitions including the Ancient Mariner’s Sailing Society Yesteryear Regatta and San Diego Yacht Club Lipton Cup.



*Butcher Boy* was commissioned in 1902 to be the fastest boat on the water, because she needed to be. Built to deliver fresh provisions to the large vessels that could not enter San Diego Bay, she would not be economical unless she could make fast runs to weather from the downtown waterfront to the Coronado Rhodes. From her modest beginning, *Butcher Boy* was destined to become a distinguished San Diego legend, both as the region’s oldest workboat and oldest yacht – the symbolic ancestor of almost all the boats now seen at any time on San Diego Bay.

*Butcher Boy* has been in the Maritime Museum of San Diego’s possession since 1972 and though she has benefitted from partial rebuilds and efforts to stabilize her, by 2018 it was clear she was in need of a complete restoration or she would be lost to rot. In response to the Maritime Museum of San Diego’s appeal to save her, the maritime community came together to provide the funding needed for materials, and a group of volunteers gathered under the direction of Peter Wilson, former maintenance director at the Maritime Museum. In May 2018, she was moved from the display cradle at the Maritime Museum of San Diego to the Spanish Landing build site where restoration began.

Volunteer Steve Kessler performed the first task of carefully taking her lines and lofting them so that they could be recreated with new materials. In June 2019, the crew of carpenters began the careful task of disassembling her one board at a time. Slowly and carefully, the

restoration crew reframed her, keeping the original keel, but having to recreate nearly everything else, from bow to stern.



By March of 2019 the work crew was ready to lay hull planks and brought in shipwright Vince Sardina to assist. The last, “whiskey” plank was laid with a small celebration in September and the crew began work on the deck house, painting, and fiber glassing. By the beginning of 2020, riggers joined the group to install spars, hardware, lines and canvas while the finishing paint, varnish and waterproofing was completed. Unfortunately, Covid-19 closures required that *Butcher Boy*’s April 2020 relaunching to be postponed for nearly two years. Kept trailered and undercover, she is now finally ready to get back out on the water!



Volunteer George Sutherland preparing for launch.

Dr. Ashley adds, ‘we are forever grateful to the volunteers who restored *Butcher Boy*. We could have not completed this restoration without their donation of time and passion. The crew included volunteers David Clark, Terry Goodbody, Robert Granoff, Bill Fisher, Chris Frost, Ken Houseman, John Kerley, John Kessler, John Martin, Mac McQuinn, Dan McNaughton, Barbara Ring, Jeff Saar, Eileen Stevenson, Tim Stephens, George Sutherland, Rich Thorpe, Craig Wisner, Jim Winn, Bob Wisner, and John Leighton, who photo documented the volunteers work.’