

# RANCHO BODEGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Gleason Ranch

*by Susan Teel - 2016*

A few months ago, I received an inquiry from the Sonoma Coast Visitors Center regarding how Gleason Beach got its name. I too have been curious about Gleason Beach, but in previous searches, I had been unable to obtain information. I did some additional Google searches and found a living descendant of William Edward Gleason for whom Gleason Dairy Ranch was named. Gleason Ranch is located at 6000 Highway 1 in Carmet, CA and was registered as a Sonoma County Historic Landmark, #119, in 1982. The coastal side of Highway 1 was named Gleason Beach, after William Edward Gleason. (Date is Unknown)

William Gleason was born in County Clare, Ireland on October 15, 1839. He passed away on February 4, 1906 in Sonoma County, California USA. William was the son of Michael and Honoria O'Brien Gleason. William immigrated to the United States with his parents in 1844. He married Ann Melahan in 1864 and they had eight children. The first United States record I found for William was his voter registration on July 1, 1867 for the Bodega Township, Sonoma, California, United States. It is believed that William settled on what became known as Gleason Dairy Ranch in either the late 1850's or early 1860's.

Ann Gleason passed away in 1882. William married Bridget McGee on January 14, 1884. William and Bridget had seven children. William, Bridget and some of their children moved to the old Platt Ranch, comprising 615 acres in the early 1890's. I found a wonderful photograph taken of the family about 1896, at what was called Scotty Creek Ranch. This photograph is available for viewing on the Sonoma Heritage Collections website. I am not sure if the Ranch was named after the Scotty Creek that flows under Highway 1 and enters the Pacific. There is a Scotty Creek Beach, named after Scotty Creek, and it is located halfway between Bodega Bay and Jenner.



Sonoma County Library circa 1900

**Gleason Ranch**

## GLEASON RANCH

After William Gleason moved from Gleason Ranch, his son, David Patrick Gleason, managed the Ranch. David moved the dairy ranch just east of Bodega, CA in 1912. The location is 14301 Bodega Highway. David married Kathryn Carson and they had six children. The ranch was later owned by one of David's and Kathryn's sons, Edward (Teddy) Gleason who married Grace Fenk. Teddy and Grace had two children, Richard and Barbara. Later when Teddy became ill, the cows from the dairy ranch were sold to pay his health care bills. The ranch lay "dormant" from 1969-2008, as Grace didn't want her children and her grandchildren to continue to operate the dairy ranch. She wanted her off spring to be educated and to have "regular" jobs.

When Grace passed away in 2005, Barbara, who Tony Prebilich, bought out Richard Gleason's share of the ranch. In 2008, Barbara and Tony moved from their home in Santa Rosa and began to operate a poultry ranch, specializing in Sonoma Red, heritage and pastured chickens. Barbara and Tony were assisted on a part time basis by their daughter, Nancy Prebilich, and their other daughter, Cindy Holland, her husband and their three children. When Tony unexpectedly passed away on August 10, 2010, Barbara, her children and grandchildren were devastated. Tony had been the carpenter and the mechanic for the ranch. To make a difficult situation even worse, Barbara passed away on March 2, 2011. Her family said she died of a broken heart; never recovering from Tony's death.

Nancy, Cindy and her family worked hard to continue to raise and sell their chickens. At one time, they were selling the chickens to Oliver's Cotati and Stony Point markets, the Bodega Bay Lodge's Duck Club Restaurant, the Sonoma Mission Inn, John Ash and Co. and at local farmers markets. Eventually, financial resources became strained and that strained the relationship between Nancy and Cindy. The ranch was sold in 2013 to a young couple who bought the approximately 90 acres for about \$2 million. When the ranch went, Cindy and her family moved to Mississippi. Nancy moved to a home on a one-acre lot near downtown Sebastopol on another property that has been in her family for generations. She raises a small number of animals. From 2008 to 2013, when the ranch was sold, a film maker, Morgan Schmidt-Feng followed the Prebilich families as they went about their days working on their farm. The film is entitled, "On Her Own". RBHS hopes to get Nancy to preview the film in the near future.

