

RANCHO BODEGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Rancho Bodega Ghosts: Believe It or Not

by Susan Teel - 2014

The Potter School House, located in Bodega, CA, is one of the most recognizable and historically significant buildings in Rancho Bodega. The School was built in 1872 on land donated by Sheriff Samuel Potter.



The School had sat empty and abandoned for some years after being sold at auction before Alfred Hitchcock arrived in Bodega Bay in 1961 as part of his search for his latest film, "The Birds", which became a true classic for the film world. It is widely accepted that the film saved Potter School from the fate that many of its contemporaries met.

The building remained empty after the filming of the "Birds" until it was purchased by Tom and Mary Taylor. He, a physics professor and she, an educator herself, moved their family there in 1966 with plans to open it to the public as a bed & breakfast inn. Daughter Leah - who now owns the building and opens it for public tours - tells of unusual occurrences inside their new home almost immediately after they moved in.



Young Leah would hear footsteps one night when no one else in the family was awake. The footsteps seemed to climb the stairs and then abruptly come to a stop. Seconds later she observed a rocking chair in her room begin to move on its own.

As an adult, Leah would watch the apparition of a little girl with shoulder-length hair appear to her. She described the girl as being surrounded by a "white aura" and speaking to her in a small girl's voice, saying simply, "Hi!" The sighting disturbed Leah to the point where - not wanting to deal with it at that time - she left the room.

A visiting couple from Washington state were inside the building when they saw a girl at the top of the second floor stairway. Asking her to move so they could take a picture of the stairway, she moved down the stairs toward them and....simply vanished into thin air.

A woman who was working inside the building by herself one day heard a rapping on the kitchen door. Looking up from her typing, she saw the knob of the door start to turn by itself. In that same vein, a door in the building has been filmed opening and closing by itself. The sounds of children on the now-vacant playground are also heard from time to time.

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Leah Taylor also witnessed the apparition of a young man with a slightly balding scalp, bushy eyebrows and a handlebar moustache staring at her inside the building one day. To her astonishment, this same face appeared on a blackboard on the second floor and despite attempts to erase it - would reappear. Upon looking at a class photo taken in 1874, she saw a male teacher that bore an uncanny resemblance to the man she saw. His name was Clive Keefely, who had a daughter named Clara who died of measles. Might these explain the sightings of both the male and young female on the premises

The CBS SF Bay Area website has stories about the best haunted bars in North Bay, CA. One story is about Jenner Inn, located on Highway 1 in Jenner, CA.

“This old inn dates back to days of sea captain William Jenner, the town’s founder and namesake. When you’re quaffing an adult beverage at the Fireside Lounge and bar, things are pretty safe.



It’s when you leave to go home in the dark that things get interesting. Don’t be surprised if you see a man in a black leather jacket stumbling along the roadside.

However, upon second glance, he will have likely disappeared into the trees. The mystery man walks north on the west side of Highway 1, then disappears”.

A second story is about the Casino Bar & Grill, located on Bodega Highway in Bodega, CA.

“There’s a small dive bar in this quaint roadside village just inland from Bodega Bay off Highway 1.

After perusing the antique store, it’s time for an old-school Sonoma brewpub visit to quench your thirst and down a few barbecued oysters.

The bar dates back to 1939 and was the go-to place during the filming of Alfred Hitchcock’s film, “The Birds”.

Several people who have spent the night at the casino hearing a poker game in the patio behind the bar after the bar is closed. But when you look around, there’s no one there. Is it the spooky sound of something evil or maybe just an old sailor who came back for one more hand?

