

RANCHO BODEGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DID YOU KNOW?

Sonoma County Cars

With the turn of the 20th century, the Industrial Revolution had matured. The mechanical age was coming on strongly and the most extensive of today's businesses to come from these beginnings was the automobile. By 1905, auto names included Cadillac, Ford, Olds and Packard.



At that time, Sonoma County had 262 vehicles. A majority of the registered autos were found in and around local towns. With rural interests adding to the battle cry of "Get the farmers out of the mud!" Congress passed the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916. Emergency road service for early "automobilists" usually involved a willing farmer, a team of his horses, and the exchange of a few dollars.

Vanishing Landmark (or Watermark?) Brought to Life



In the 1950's Bodega Bay was a popular harbor with anchored boats. The fish were jumping and locals were busy processing fish for the post-war high-protein food demands. An old ferry boat from the Sacramento Delta was a perfect place to store ice and shark nets. But then, a major storm in 1959 washed the old SS Marin onto shore. A few years later, PG & E built Westshore Road & Whaleship Road leaving the big old boat high and dry, where it has stood ever since. The boat is an outstanding, popular subject for artists, revealing the history and character of Bodega Harbor. But now, it's vanishing to the elements. Thanks to long-time Bodega Bay residents Joan Poulos and David Lewis, the SS Marin is being preserved in art once more.

Preserved for RBHS and Our Contributors

Joan Poulos and David Lewis commissioned Salmon Creek artist Patty Pieropan Dong to paint the SS Marin in situ, anchored in Bodega Harbor. A beautiful, colorful scene shows the hills in Springtime and tells the story of our harbor's wildlife and beaches.

David and Joan have generously offered prints of their original painting, as a "thank you" gift to contributors of the Rancho Bodega Historical Society. Your donation of \$100 or more to the RBHS Building Repair Fund secures your 14"x 18" archival print, matted for conservation and ready for framing. This gift brings a fine art piece of Bodega Bay's history into your home.



Preserving Memories

We need your help to fund recent major repairs to the RBHS Building that includes new siding, windows and repainting. Keeping our archives clean, dry and cool is a priority for the Historical Society and we keep careful watch. Please help us maintain our history with your contribution. Thank you!



web site: <http://www.ranchobodega.org/marin.pdf>

GoFundMe link: <https://gofundme.com/f/rancho-bodega-building-repairs>

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Or mail your check to: RBHS, PO Box 1027, Bodega Bay, CA 94923

*be sure to include your name and a mailing address

For more information, contact RBHS@bodegamoon.net

CONTROVERSY SWIRLS AROUND BODEGA HARBOR (PART 5)

Local Journalist* Prevails and “Settles” Bodega Harbor Controversies

By 1957, after eight years of the ten years allotted to complete substantial improvements had passed by Sonoma County’s capacity to acquire Bodega Harbor appeared to be in jeopardy. In the 1950’s, Bodega Harbor was bustling with jobs. Busy fisheries processed robust catches, yet the required improvements for Bodega Harbor appeared distant. The “Bodega Dream” was deemed “arrested in development.”

Waterfront owners had advanced dozens of plans for moorage facilities. The demand for fully utilized moorage was urgent with “a long waiting list of boat owners from points 100 miles away and farther.” People were ready. The State was only two years away from granting ownership to Sonoma County. But by failing to adopt policies for leasing the Harbor’s tidelands, the Board of Supervisors had stood in the way of developing improvements required by California State to turn over the tidelands to the Sonoma County.

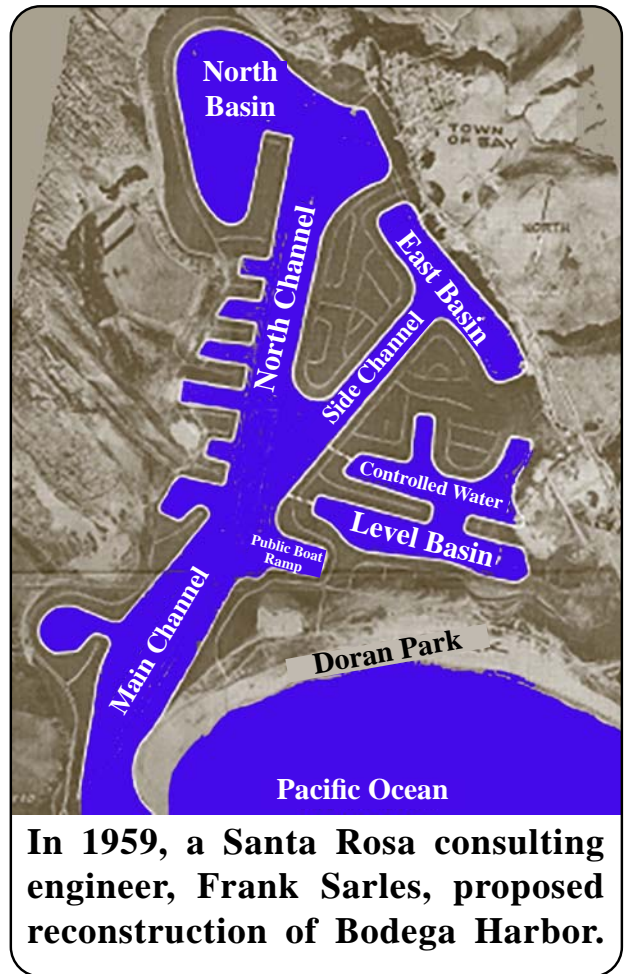
The Army Core of Engineers was authorized to dredge and maintain the harbor, but Federal funding priorities were dependent on the level of commercial activity. Bodega Harbor was bypassed as an anchorage with no permanent moorings in place. Sounding depths were down to only two feet.

In January 1958, Fred Fletcher’s seven-part exposé in the *Press Democrat*, rang the alarm for Sonoma County Supervisors to get moving before time ran out on the transfer of Bodega Harbor’s Tidelands from California State to Sonoma County. “Dust had gathered” on the 1955 Master Plan.

Less than a month later in early February, Sonoma County’s interests began to coalesce.* California State’s Chamber of Commerce North Coast Manager urged Santa Rosa’s Chamber of Commerce to review proposals for four other points around the County. Bodega Harbor Development was deemed an “urgent, county-wide problem.” Bodega Bay’s recreational facilities would be used by people from all parts of the county and the port at Bodega Bay is a major part of the county’s industry.”

In the months following Fred Fletcher’s series in the *Press Democrat*, rather than expecting the embroiled Bodega Harbor landowner and representing Supervisor Nin Guidotti continue holding the reins, the Board of Supervisors acted together to:

- create a County Harbor Commission with a paid Executive Officer.
- appointed seven harbor commissioners



In 1959, a Santa Rosa consulting engineer, Frank Sarles, proposed reconstruction of Bodega Harbor.

CONTROVERSY SWIRLS AROUND BODEGA HARBOR (PART 5)

- adopted a new Master Plan for Sonoma County's Small Boat Harbors. ¹
(Petaluma was fostering harbor plans.) Top priority was a give to Bodega Harbor.
- The newly formed Harbor Commission held their first meeting on May 7, 1958.
- voted funding to improve the airstrip on Doran Park. ²
- adopted a \$30,000 budget for Harbor Commission operations including a \$10,000 loan from the State to pay for consulting engineers.
- hired an engineer from Southern California to be Development Director and Executive Officer to the Harbor Commission.
- hired an aerial survey for mapping Bodega Harbor as a basis for Bodega Harbor's tidelands management.

By September 1958, Fletcher declared "the Bodega Dream is no longer a dream in arrested development." Exactly one year later, in Sept 1959, Fletcher was appointed to and became a Commissioner of the Sonoma County Harbor Commission.

Just nine days later, approved by the new Governor of California, Pat Brown, and filed with the State of California, the County of Sonoma was granted the right, title and interest to all of the tide and submerged lands in Bodega Harbor. ³

Of course, the people of Bodega Bay would not settle its hot controversies with the stoke of a pen creating State Law. Where to put the road and Frank Sarles' plan were under fire. The law itself was amended in 1961 to reflect clarification of drilling rights. ⁴

Enter PG&E and the heat was turned up even more. And today, the fairness of the Tidelands Leases is fair game for revision. "*A Title Wave of Opposition Washed the Bodega Bay Plan 'On the Beach.'*" ⁵ But that is another story....

This is the conclusion of the five part series of Controversies swirling around Bodega Harbor in the 1950's.

Footnotes

*Editor's notes:

a. Support local journalism

b. Sonoma County coming together is relevant today. Bodega Bay is in contest with County Supervisors and other fire district's interests regarding procuring funding for the Bodega Bay Fire Protection District. It is estimated that 80% of the calls to the Fire District are from non-residents. Keeping CA Route 1 & State Parks safe, draining limited local resources in Rancho Bodega. The expenses need to be spread over a larger municipality, most obviously, all on Sonoma County.

1. Petaluma's representing Supervisor Leigh S. Shoemaker fostered plans for a turning basin in Petaluma.

2. The airstrip on Doran was sidetracked a few months later by Supervisors' agreement with Pacific Gas and Electric Co to seek a different airport site. PG&E offered to consider financing the move as part of PG&E's plan to build a steam electric plant on Bodega Head. Bodega Bay's Future No Longer a Dream, Fletcher, Press Democrat 22 Sept 1958

3. Chapter 1064 Approved by Governor June 19, 1959. In effect September 18, 1959.

4. Chapter 799 Approved by Governor June 12, 1961. In effect September 15, 1961.

5. *On the Beach* is a 1959 American film that depicts the aftermath of a nuclear war. The post-apocalyptic science fiction drama film starred Gregory Peck, Ava Gardner, Fred Astaire, and Anthony Perkins, a film is based on Nevil Shute's 1957 novel of the same name. ■

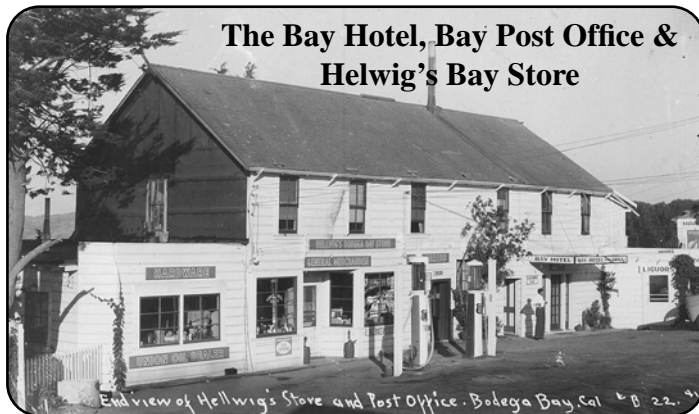
FROM THE ARCHIVES

REMEMBERING GLENICE AMES CARPENTER

By Robin Rudderow, Archivist, Rancho Bodega Historical Society

The passing of Glenice Ames Carpenter on August 4, 2021 at the age of 90 signals the closing of a chapter in Bodega Bay history. Gone, but not forgotten, below are stories she shared about her early days in Bodega Bay; many were told at a talk she gave in 1992.

The tiny coastal town was then called “Bay”. In the 1930's I imagine a child's life of combing the dunes and beaches was without worry.



The Bay Hotel, where Diekmann's Deli is now located (1275 Highway One) was the backdrop for a significant time in Glenice's life. Glenice described the hotel as a large two story building which also housed the Bay Store and the Bay Post Office. Just north of that was a large two story building that was the Town Hall, used for dances and meetings. The ground level was a garage. Across from the Hotel was a butcher shop (where the AT&T building stands today). Where Pelican Plaza is there was a service station and bar & grill that was called Otto's.

The Ames family moved into the Bay Hotel in 1935 when Glenice was about four. Even then the swimming tank, still visible if you look over the edge of the Diekmann's parking lot, was dilapidated. Probably built in the early 1900s, it had bathhouses around it and a boiler that heated saltwater for the baths. There was a large wide stairway going down from the Hotel to the swimming tank.

Glenice and her brother, Harold Jr., lived in the Hotel with their parents, Harold and Frieda Ames, who ran

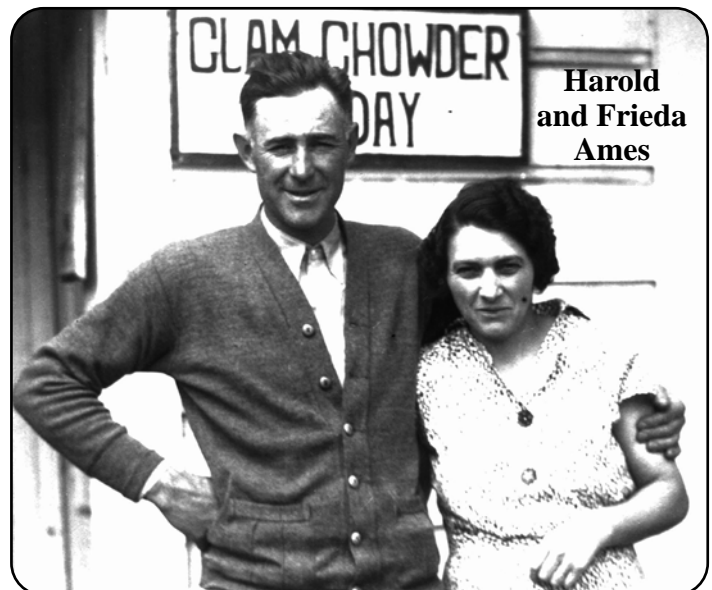
the hotel and operated the bar, called *The Blue Room* because of the blue glass windows.

In the 1930s everybody had outhouses. Without a sewer system the pollution was so bad that locals would not eat clams. Boats would turn black during the summer from sewage. There were multiple epidemics of hepatitis in the town.

In 1936 Glenice began attending Bay School, located at 700 Highway One, where there was one teacher for all 8 grades, with approximately 12 to 20 students attending.

During the years 1939 to 1945 the Ames Family saw big changes in Bodega Bay. The Army Corp of Engineers dredged the bay, opening it up for more commercial fishing boats to come into the bay and deliver their catch. In 1941, Piombo Brothers Construction Company built jetties by making a road down the sand spit, trucking the rock from the quarry in Cheney Gulch to the jetty site. They built a bridge across to the other side to build the jetty on that side, which blocked the harbor and posed a problem for commercial fisherman, including the Smith Brothers.

The Army was dispatched to Bodega Bay in December 1941 immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor. They occupied Rose Gaffney's old ranch house on



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Bodega Head and built a lookout on the highest point of the Head. The soldiers came to the Bay Hotel for meals. The Army was in Bay a few months, when the Coast Guard replaced the Army, and just stayed the duration of the war. At first they occupied the town hall building, then as more troops were needed they took over the Bay Hotel and Glenice's family had to move "now".

With WW2 in full swing, where the Birds Café now stands (1409 Highway One) was a small building used as an aircraft lookout. People from town volunteered their time to watch and report the aircraft that they spotted.

Sand dunes on Bodega Head were bare, not yet having grass planted, so they made a good place for airplane target practice. Planes would fly over hitting targets drawn on the dunes. On the high dune, at what is now the end of Whaleship Road, they constructed a tall tower to observe the planes. When the planes were not practicing, the kids from town ran out onto the area and gather clips and empty cartridges that had fallen to the sand.

At times, planes camouflaged Bodega Bay with smoke, which would last for a few hours before the wind would take it away. During mandatory "blackouts" all windows had to be covered with a heavy black covering at night when the lights were on. Cars had to drive with black out lights. The beaches were covered during the war years with oil, tar, Japanese thong sandals, and a conglomeration of other debris from sunken Pacific ships.

One night everyone in the old hotel left the building and stood in the middle of the road. The rumble from guns offshore shook the building so hard. The flash from the gunfire lit up the whole bay. The Ames Family heard from someone at Mare Island Navy Yard that a Japanese submarine had been sunk.

Riding the schoolbus to Tomales High School with the other Bodega Bay students, a romance with Earl Carpenter, who had moved to Bodega Bay with his family in 1943, ensued. When they were married their wedding reception was at the first restaurant in town, which was at the site of the Tide's Wharf Restaurant,

but up on the road (the Tides Wharf restaurant in the movie The Birds).

By 1952 the commercial fishing business was picking up steam. Needed was a Grange in Bodega Bay to support the fishermen, the "Farmers of the Sea", was proposed and the locals signed on wholeheartedly. Only 21 at the time, Glenice became Treasurer and continued to dedicate her good will and energy to the Grange for all the years that she was able.

Cioppino feeds became an annual fundraiser, and Glenice was right there helping to put on the food. When the Gold Ridge Soil Conservation District stepped up to stop the sand on the dunes of Bodega Head from blowing into the bay, they paid Grange members 85 cents an hour to plant dune grass to hold the sand in place, and the members donated their earning to the Grange. Glenice was there planting dune grass and donated her earnings. With the monies that were raised the Grange building was built and the community had a place to gather.

Raising two children with a hardworking fisherman community-minded husband, as postmaster in Bodega and Bodega Bay post offices, supporting the Bodega Bay Volunteer Fire Department and the Bodega Bay Area Rescue. The memory of Glenice Ames Carpenter reflects a lifetime of community service, bringing so much good to the people in the town she called home. May her memory live on and be an inspiration to all who live in this fair town. ■



FROM THE ARCHIVES

What is the Story of the SS Marin?

By Mag Dimond

American towns and villages are rich with stories, these tales can come from old well-preserved houses, from broken down bridges and lakes and indigenous wildlife. And the stories come also from boats – vessels used for transporting, storing, fishing, and leisure. Bodega Bay is home to a mysterious story-laden boat called the *SS Marin*, who may be close to 100 years old, surviving a sketchy and mysterious past.

Some historical legends that we encounter are false and some are true. Described by some as storing the region's Bodega Red Potatoes, the *SS Marin* was in fact a Delta ferry boat, reportedly built in Antioch in 1928. In the 40's she was brought to Bodega Bay by the *Meredith Fish Company* to be a delivery boat, serving as a place to store the bounty brought in by the fishing fleets. At that point she was parked in the bay by Porto Bodega. The fishing business changed and for a limited time she became a floating storeroom housing unused shark nets – that is until the market for shark liver died out...

“Storm Damage High to Bodega Bay Docks Forty Boats Sunk or Heavily Damaged”

January 5, 1959 Press Democrat headline

In the early 1960's PG&E built a shoreline road to the proposed site of its nuclear power plant on Bodega Head. Despite ardent resistance, a local longshoreman turned conservationist with a wooden leg, road construction prevailed, and he gave up the fight for both his own property and the *Marin*. The *SS Marin* would then become definitively cut off from the bay waters.

In time, the *SS Marin* would wither and age as do so many buildings by the sea, ultimately becoming what some people might describe as a pile of wood.

The storm crashed ashore and shoved the *SS Marin* to her present resting place adjacent to Bay Flat Road.

The chapter that followed involved the inevitable conflict between locals, some who wanted to preserve the little piece of marine history, and others who felt it



should be incinerated because it was an eyesore. This humble boat has been photographed and painted, and maritime historians from San Francisco have been sketching and studying it. It remains an object of the public's curiosity...

The disintegrated *Marin* carries many stories: of the harsh conditions of life working on the water in northern California and those personalities who stayed the course, of the political clout of power companies who often devastate landscapes in favor of “progress,”



of local citizens arguing incessantly about maintaining their community, and of those dedicated to honoring history and tradition by preserving such wonders as character-filled boats in various states of decay that remind us of a time when hard work amidst the elements was truly valued.

Yes, the *Marin* has a meaningful and rich legacy. It offers us a whisper of a story about this quirky and beautiful landscape. ■

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IN THIS ISSUE

The Bodega Dream

In the 1950's, Bodega Harbor was bustling with jobs. Busy fisheries processed robust catches, yet the "Bodega Dream" was deemed "arrested in development." Waterfront owners' dozens of plans for moorage facilities were urgent with a long waiting list of boat owners. People were ready.

A Tribute to Glenice Ames Carpenter



Born in Santa Rosa, Glenice moved with her parents, Harold and Frieda Ames, to Bodega Bay where she would live all of her years. She was fondly referred to as "Tootsie".

FALL EVENTS

Farmers Market Is Open: Memorial Day thru October, 10am - 2pm Formed to provide residents of Bodega Bay and surrounding communities with fresh, locally grown products and to provide farmers with a venue to sell their farm fresh products directly to the consumers.

The open-air market thrives behind the Bodega Bay Community Center at the north end of town. We offer the freshest, locally grown produce specializing in organic, heirloom and gourmet varieties of fruits and vegetables, beef, goat, duck, pork, poultry and fish. Also available are eggs, (duck and chicken), artisan breads, olive oils, premium goat and cow cheeses. <<https://bodegabaycommunitycenter.org/farmers-market/>>

Russian River Rodeo Moscow Road at Highway 116, October 9th & 10th @ 1:00 Bill Parmeter Field 707-865-9854 The small, west Sonoma County town of Duncans Mills presents a top notch professional rodeo each summer, endorsed by the California Cowboys Professional Rodeo Association. Kids of all ages will enjoy the fun! Catch some exciting rodeo and other entertainment. Start each morning with a Cowboy Breakfast! <<http://russianriverrodeo.org/>>

Sebastopol Makers Market Saturday, Nov 6th, 12:00pm Sebastopol Plaza, 6901 McKinley St. Small town affair on the Plaza Square. Local makers and purveyors make a day to savor life the Sebastopol way. At the Sebastopol Plaza every first Saturday. Price: Free <<https://www.sebastopoldowntown.com/>>

For more local events, visit our website. <<http://www.ranchobodega.org/events.html>>