

RANCHO BODEGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DID YOU KNOW?

The Gardens of Bodega Bay

Summer 2018 begins the seventh year of the BBCA Community Garden. A dusty and unused piece of land at the Bodega Bay Community Center was transformed into an abundant community garden starting in 2012. Now there are a dozen raised beds inside the fully fenced garden, each lined with gopher wire.

Flowers grow around the borders of the garden, and a big swing for two invites you to sit down and enjoy the view of the garden. Many gardeners enjoy growing in the Community Garden because their home gardens are too small, too shaded, or vulnerable to local critters.

The Community Garden beds are all organic. There is an annual fee, depending on the size of the bed. To get on the waiting list for a garden bed contact Robin Rudderow, Community Garden Manager: BBCAGarden@gmail.com.

Contribute Articles for our Newsletter, contact us at:

**Rancho Bodega
Historical Society**

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STURGEON'S SAW MILL RESTORATION PROJECT DEMONSTRATION RUN: Sat/Sun September 15-16th 10 am-3 pm

***2150 Green Hill Road, Sebastopol
www.SturgeonsMill.com***

The technology of Sturgeon's Mill dates to about 1865-70, only about 80 years after the start of the industrial revolution. In the early days, logs were pulled out of the woods with mules, oxen and horses, then hauled to mills. The development of the steam powered donkey engine in 1883 began replacing oxen and increased the production of lumber.

The arrival of the North Coast Railroad in 1877 opened the Russian River basin to a logging boom. Lumber was shipped from dog holes (small safe ports where lumber hauling ships could dock) along the coast via sailing schooners to build and rebuild San Francisco.

Sturgeon's Mill started in Coleman Valley in 1914 by Wade Sturgeon

and his partners, John Donati and J.W. Gonella. It used ox teams, horse teams, and machinery from the old Korbel (of champagne fame) mill in Guerneville. The Korbel mill dated back to the 1870s.

In 1922 the logs ran out in Coleman Valley and the mill was moved to its present location. Steam donkey engines replaced the oxen in the logging operations at that time; but logs continued to arrive at this sawmill's present location via beasts of burden with Teamster Mr. Craig driving a team of four mismatched horses.

The partners eventually acquired a 2000 acre tract of timber in the former Rancho Bodega, west of Occidental. The mill would sell retail in any quantity. There are endless chicken houses, barns, fences, and homes made with the Sturgeon lumber.

FACES OF BODEGA BAY

Ship with Shona

For more than 25 years, Shona Lee Weir's influence has been exerted for good in Bodega Bay. Hard work, affability, devotion to the community, the determination to give 100 cents for every dollar received, with close attention to every business detail has made Shona's Business Services Unlimited an underpinning of the Community's ability to be self-reliant without heading into town for business services.

Proud First Generation American, Shona's parents and eldest brother Maurice (pronounced Morris) immigrated from Scotland in 1952. Her father came to America first and lived Elyria, Ohio for six months before sending for her mom and older brother, then about 1 year old. Her Uncle David "Davey" Renwick, a 1930's immigrant from Scotland, sponsored her parents.

Shona was born to Elizabeth and George Weir in the heart of the Midwest in Marion, Ohio, a town known for its steam shovels and power shovels. The Marion Power Shovel Company was a major supplier of steam shovels for the construction of the Panama Canal (1904-1914). Shona's father, who now lives with her mother in Sebastopol, was an Industrial Engineer at Whirlpool the appliance manufacturer. Later he became an engineering consultant for Science Management Corporation specializing in time management. Shona credits her Dad's influence, encouraging her abilities to be time efficient and a good problem solver.

As a young teen Shona and her family moved to St. Louis, Missouri to be nearer to her older brothers. One brother Graham was attending college, while older brother Maurice had graduated and was working.

After Shona graduated high school in 1978, she never missed a day at work as one of the youngest full-time sales clerks. Soon she became responsible for a large department in the Stix, Baer and Fuller department store, later bought by Dillard's. After that, she worked for a prominent and wealthy family in St. Louis, Mr. & Mrs. E.V. Dickson. Mr. Dickson was a City Councilman as well as a Vice President at Hussman Refrigeration. There she learned bookkeeping skills

and about serving as an elected official. She helped with his campaign by folding and stuffing envelopes. She credits campaigning as the experience that made her the "queen" of folding and stuffing envelopes!

Meanwhile, Shona's father's consulting work caused him to travel. Sometimes he brought the family along for working vacations all over the United States. On one such Spring trip when visiting California, Shona, her mother and father discovered the Sonoma Coast.



Shona remarked that the land and seascape reminded her of Scotland with its gentle green hills and grazing sheep. After discovering the Sonoma Coast and Bodega Bay, Shona's brother Maurice fell in love with the area (and golf course) and began plans to move here and raise his family. Her parents led the way and built their house in Dillon Beach. Not wanting to be left behind, Shona soon started packing. After she arrived in Bodega Bay, she quickly found a job working for a local real estate agent where she used her organizational skills in his office. She spent a lot of time running to Business Services Unlimited in Pelican Plaza to make copies of the real estate flyers and became friends with the original owner.

Shona bought Business Services Unlimited in 1993. She expanded the business beyond copies and shipping. Maurice's family grew and when their three children

FACES OF BODEGA BAY

had graduated from Tomales High School, Maurice and his wife Kerry moved to Phoenix, Arizona. Shona's parents, George and Elizabeth decided to return to St. Louis where her other brother, Graham lived and was raising his two children. But Shona stayed in Bodega Bay because she had a good business and a place in the community. Bodega Bay and the Sonoma Coast were now her home.

Her office in Pelican Plaza at 1400 N Highway 1, Bodega Bay, CA 94923, is our adjunct Post Office, and our local internet and computer services provider. She does everything from gift wrapping to bulk mailing. Yes! Business Services Unlimited is aptly named. If you need stationery, a notebook or file folders she has that too, everything you need from her friendly corner store. And her business has evolved into much more. She does bookkeeping and payroll for over 20 local and area businesses. Shona's store is probably one of the best places in Bodega Bay to get to know people. It's located in the center of things, right next to Bob Miller's Surf Shack, Dr. Michael Trapani's Veterinary Hospital and the other small businesses in Pelican Plaza.

As we all know it's a small world. Locals may remember that after Shona's Dad retired, he helped her out at the store giving Shona time to take an occasional vacation from time to time. One day a client from Serena Del Mar came in to ship a package. When George was writing the name and address, he recognized the same name as Shona's Mom's doctor that delivered Shona as a baby in Marion, Ohio. When George asked, the person responded and said, "Yes, that is my Uncle."

Some people forewarned Shona that she shouldn't expect to meet the man of her dreams in our tiny town, but her husband Eric Crumley walked right into her store and they were married in 2014. True to her devotion to Bodega Bay, Eric and Shona considered getting married at Compass Rose Gardens (now The Secret Garden, 1555 Eastshore Road) and at the Fisherman's Festival itself. (She still wishes to find herself at The Secret Garden for a special day.) But to ensure the accessibility for all family members,

they chose Bodega Harbour's Yacht Club on Smith Brothers Road for their wedding. Four years later she still considers her community well-being when she tells the story that her wedding party cars might have inconvenienced people trying to get their mail, ice cream and hot dogs.

Both Shona and her husband Eric are entrepreneurs serving the community. Eric is "Your Friendly Chimney Sweep" and will happily help keep your dryer vents safe and clean, your fireplace working and help fix your chimney.

Shona's dedication to our community is outstanding. She has been the Secretary, President and now the Treasurer for the Bodega Bay Area Chamber of Commerce. She makes colorful posters that catch our eyes and let us know what is happening in Bodega Bay. You can say she puts a "face" on the Community by creating posters from winning art and distributing the news far and wide.

For example, as of this writing in April 2018, this year Shona has already devoted her time, energy and skills to local fundraising events. In January, it's Chowder Day. In February, the fun and lively Community Center's Cabaret comes alive at the Grange Hall. Then in March, she was Chairperson for the Chamber of Commerce's Hitchcock Film Festival. In April, for Bodega Bay's signature annual event The Fisherman's Festival, she created, printed, laminated and along with her husband hung more than 75 signs and placed another 10 banners around the county. She also designs the valuable Bodega Bay Map & Guide, a tourist essential, just ask the ladies at the Sonoma Coast Visitor Center now run by the Bodega Bay Area Chamber of Commerce.

Shona is the sole proprietor and the only employee. That means she does EVERYTHING! People coming in and out all day with different needs. Picking up, dropping off and on the day I was there, lots of free toner and Styrofoam peanuts recycling. All that big stuff goes through her tiny store front. And she takes care of it. Remember to "Ship with Shona" keeping Bodega Bay a self-reliant community in a small world.

FROM THE ARCHIVES by Robin Rudderow

Little Buckhorn Ranch

Little Buckhorn Ranch, a 446-acre ranch on Coleman Valley Road, was part of the original 35,000 acre Rancho Bodega Land Grant from Mexico. Carved from coastal Buckhorn Ranch, owned by WSM Wright, Little Buckhorn was formed sometime before 1877. The first owner was a land man named Hollis Hitchcock. It is likely the next owner was the North Coast Pacific Railroad, using train tracks to haul logs and goods to coastal boat landings and onto San Francisco. After the Railroad's short tenure, James Coleman became owner in the 1880's.

I was contacted for information by the family of the current owners of Little Buckhorn Ranch and found this a wonderful opportunity to use our great archival resources. Learning about Little Buckhorn Ranch and the surrounding ranches swept me into the early days of Rancho Bodega when Captain Stephen Smith allowed settlers to live on his land and make it productive. He then helped them get their products to market on his ships that plied the seas between Bodega Port and the growing San Francisco.

RANCHO BODEGA ENJOYED HARMONY .. UNTIL THE WAR IN 1847. Captain Smith's 1855 death and the remarriage of his wife Manuela to the scheming Tyler Curtis, brought an end to harmony in Rancho Bodega, when Curtis evicted Captain Smith's "squatters" as Curtis called them. The December 1857 eviction lawsuit by Tyler Curtis named fifty-eight defendants, including Hollis Hitchcock and James Coleman, who had built homes and ranches on Rancho Bodega lands. In March 1859, Curtis received judgment in his favor on the eviction action, but the settlers refused to move. Three months later the "Bodega War" erupted where "nary a shot was fired," when Curtis tried to take the law into his own hands with a band of armed ruffians from San Francisco. Curtis and his militia men were sent packing, but Curtis ultimately prevailed. In short order, land parcels were surveyed and sold; and the patchwork quilt across Rancho Bodega of individual ranches was started.



FROM THE ARCHIVES by Robin Rudderow

RANCHO BODEGA IS CARVED INTO CATTLE RANCHES and LOGGING OPERATIONS. WSM Wright was not named as a defendant in the eviction proceedings because he bought his land from Capt. Smith's Estate. Winfield Scott Mullen Wright ("WSM" 1822-1892) was a '49er from Missouri, married in 1845 to Sarah Boone, granddaughter of frontiersman Daniel Boone. WSM and Sarah had two children, Sampson Boone and Olive Mahala. After a year in California, WSM returned to Missouri and came back to settle in California in 1853 with his young family, his parents and 400 head of cattle. First, he purchased his family homestead further inland, named "Wright Ranch," located at Stony Point and Sebastopol Roads. Then, c1857, WSM bought nearly 4,000 acres of coastal ranch land, stretching from what we now know as Wright's Beach to the Russian River. WSM called his coastal ranch "Buckhorn." A "buckhorn" is the horn of a deer, used typically to make knife handles, small containers, or rifle sights. After his wife Sarah died in 1859, WSM then married a widow, Jarena Brown Clark.



Hollis Hitchcock



Hollis Hitchcock Memorial - Bloomfield Cemetery

A GAMBLING DEBT CREATES A GEM: LITTLE BUCKHORN RANCH. The 1877 Atlas shows Little Buckhorn Ranch was owned by Hollis Hitchcock. The story goes that WSM incurred a gambling debt to Hitchcock, one of Tyler Curtis' evicted settlers. To pay off his debt WSM deeded 446 acres of Buckhorn Ranch to Hollis, creating the "Little Buckhorn Ranch."

Hollis Hitchcock was born in 1822, probably in Vermont, later moved to Quebec, and then to California. Hollis came to Bodega at the age of 34 looking for pasturage for his cattle stock and became a significant land investor. Described in the 1892 Register as a short man at 5' 4 1/2" and farmer from Freestone, Hollis was known to be a tough businessman and stickler for collecting rent from his tenants. Hitchcock married Amelia and divorced in 1875 leaving no children. By the time of Hitchcock's death in 1896, he owned approximately 20 ranches in the Bodega area, plus more in Sonoma, Mendocino, Marin, Solano and Monterey Counties. The beneficiaries of his estate were a brother, two sisters, and numerous nieces and nephews. Perhaps surprisingly, in his Will he showed his appreciation for his community by leaving \$20,000 in trust for construction and improvement of the roads in the Bodega Township. The gravesite of Hollis Hitchcock is an elaborate memorial set in the beautiful Bloomfield cemetery. If you haven't been to the cemetery, it is worth a visit. *(continued next page)*

FROM THE ARCHIVES by Robin Rudderow

Little Buckhorn Ranch

Ports and the Railroad Make Rancho Bodega a Hub

While no transfer of ownership of Little Buckhorn from Hollis Hitchcock to the Railroad has yet been found, Ruth Burke (*An Intimate History of Bodega Country*, p. 461) says the Coleman Family bought Little Buckhorn from the railroad. In the 1880's the North Coast Pacific Railroad built a 5.14 mile spur up Willow Creek from the Russian River (the spur ceased operation sometime before 1907). Little Buckhorn Ranch was just south and over the hill from the Willow Creek spur. One stage coach road ran through Little Buckhorn from Joy Road to the Russian River ferry and another zigzagged over the hill from Little Buckhorn to Willow Creek. In later years Little Buckhorn was a stagecoach stop, perhaps a hotel.

The next good piece of evidence, the 1898 Atlas, shows Little Buckhorn Ranch being owned by Mary Coleman, the widow of James Coleman. Coleman "showed a progressive and practical spirit, his judgment and sound common sense being evident in everything he did. His name was appropriately given to the valley, his prominence and worth being recognized and appreciated by his fellow citizens." (source: Honoria Tuomey, *History of Sonoma County*, p. 948)

James P. Kolmer, later known as Coleman, was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1825. He arrived in Philadelphia at age twenty, then to San Francisco in 1850 via the Isthmus of Panama. James married Mary Knowland, born the same year as her husband in their Irish homeland. The Coleman Family left San Francisco in 1857 and bought a 1000-acre ranch known as the Coleman Hill Ranch, located between Occidental and the coast, near where Fitzgerald Lane meets Joy Road. Their home was a three-story mansion on a knoll with a beautiful view of the ocean, which burned to the ground in November 1905. James ran a large dairy and shipped butter to San Francisco by boat.

A NEW CENTURY, A NEW LIVELIHOOD IN LOGGING: THORPE FAMILY SAW MILL. James Coleman's second ranch was then known as the Sutherland Ranch, now Chanslor Ranch. When Coleman owned it, it was a 437-acre dairy ranch. In 1871 James leased a portion to John Genazzi, when the rest of the ranch was occupied by N. Keefe. Hollis Hitchcock took over Sutherland Ranch in 1877, after he had acquired Little Buckhorn Ranch. James Coleman died in 1890; his wife Mary in February 1905. The second of their nine children, Jenny (1858-1927) married James Thorpe (born in Ireland 1851, died in Occidental in 1935).

After mother Mary died, the Thorpe Family took over Little Buckhorn Ranch and operated a sawmill from 1923 to 1927. Ruth Burke described the operation: "James Thorpe was the sawyer at the mill. Joe Coleman (last child of James and Mary, 1872 - 1926), Bill Thorpe and son, Jimmy, ran the 'donkey' (steam side spool engine) and high lines to move logs to the mill. Charles Thorpe ran the trimmer. Amanda (wife of Bill Thorpe) ran the edger when no one else was available, as well as the carriage at times, plus delivering lumber to customers. Charles did the bookkeeping. They had a Fageol truck (built in Oakland) to haul lumber, logs, etc. Jimmy drove it when he was nine or ten years old. The highline came from Austin Creek woods. It was hauled home in the Fageol truck and dragged behind from Occidental to the mill to get the kinks out of it, also to get it cleaned up and polished. The steam engine and the 'donkey' came from Bob Bittner's mill on Battle Ridge in 1923. The 50-horse power motor came from Meeker's mill and the little 30-horse power motor was from Kenwood."

Gone are the dairy cattle, the whistle of the train, the echoes of the steam donkey and saw mill, the dusty stagecoach. The beautiful Rancho Bodega hills surround Little Buckhorn Ranch as the fog rolls in and whispers stories of bygone days. -- Robin Rudderow 2016

ROBIN RUDDEROW

Attorney at Law

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WILLS AND TRUSTS

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Please join us. To subscribe for a
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just \$15 individual (\$20 family) and
supports the stories of Bodega Bay.
Send an email to Robin Rudderow
for details. RBHS@ bodegamoon.net

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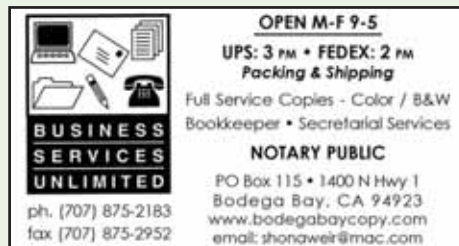
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**Rancho Bodega Historical Society, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation
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Ship with Shona

For 25 years, Shona Lee Weir's Business Services Unlimited in Pelican Plaza in Bodega Bay has been a service for the community.



Sturgeon's Mill

Sturgeon's Mill dates to about 1865-70. There are endless chicken houses, barns, fences, and homes made with the Sturgeon lumber.



SUMMER EVENTS IN RANCHO BODEGA

July 21-22, Saturday & Sunday, 10:00am-4:00pm, Pacific Coast Air Museum, One Air Museum Way, Santa Rosa, "OPEN COCKPIT". Korean War Weekend: look inside four of the aircraft that fought the Korean War. The A-16C Invader was an attack aircraft first used in World War II and then used extensively in the Korean conflict. The RF-86F Sabre Jet was the photo reconnaissance version of this superlative first-generation jet fighter. The F-84F Thunderstreak was a swept-wing fighter bomber and the F-86H Sabre Jet.

September 15th & 16th, Saturday & Sunday, 10:00am-3:00pm, Sturgeon's Mill Restoration Project, 2150 Green Hill Road, Sebastopol, "MILL DEMONSTRATION RUN". Sturgeon's mill is a 105 year old steam powered sawmill. We are a working museum that is open 4 weekends a year to the general public. On these weekends historians, gear heads, steam heads and students of California history come to "Step back into History" at our museum. They serve delicious hot lunches at very reasonable prices at their beautiful picnic grounds with seating for up to 200 people.

October 13, Saturday, 10:00am-3:00pm, SHONE FARM, 7450 Steve Olson Lane, Forestville, 100th Anniversary Fall Festival. Shone Farm invites the public to its free, family friendly Fall Festival as the college celebrates its 100th anniversary and recognizes 45 years of the Farm's history with opportunities to experience authentic farm activities like apple pressing, wood milling demonstrations, harvesting pumpkins and vegetables from the garden, rotten fruit slingshot and compost lessons, farm equipment displays, tastes of our award-winning wine and olive oil, and tours of the 365-acre farm, forest, and garden.

For more local events, visit our website. www.RanchoBodega.org/events.html