

# RANCHO BODEGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## World War II Japanese Submarines in Bodega Bay

During World War II, fears of a Japanese invasion of the West Coast were considered well founded, especially along sparsely populated Marin and Sonoma counties, where enemy forces could conceivably make landfall and prepare for a larger invasion of San Francisco Bay. The military commandeered many cottages and monitored the water from outposts on the surrounding hills supported by ground patrols.

The sand dunes on the Lawsons Landing property were also a site for rifle and grenade practice, and the Lawson family recalls at least one instance of an armored vehicle's .50 caliber machine gun being fired around their cows, resulting in a tense conversation between soldiers and ranchers.

One soldier reportedly sighted a Japanese submarine off the beach, prompting the garrison to scramble to nearby Marshall to requisition its civilian fishing boats for use in a counterattack, several of which were run by their respective owners. It took several hours to coordinate the operation, and once the soldiers finally arrived at the area of the supposed sighting, armed only with small arms, the submarine had departed, if it had been there at all.

### Gaye LeBaron Interviews Glenice Carpenter - 2005

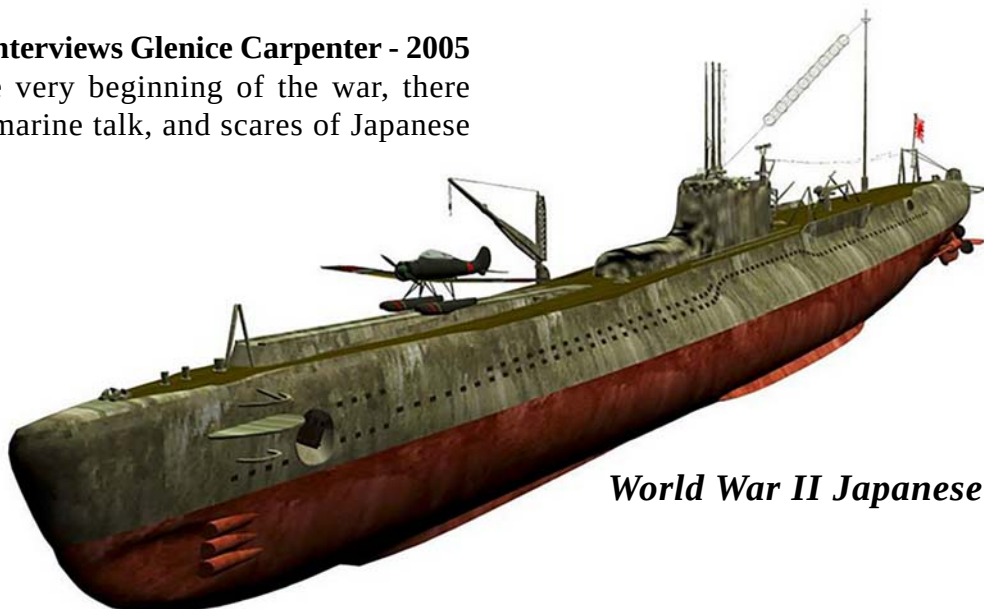
*LeBaron:* At the very beginning of the war, there was a lot of submarine talk, and scares of Japanese

submarines off the coast, do you remember that?  
*Carpenter:* Yes, very vividly – one night, we could hear all the guns starting to shoot and it just literally shook that old hotel and we all went out and stood in the middle of the road and you could see the flashes of the guns reflect over the hill into the bay and it was rather scary.

*LeBaron:* And there was actually a sub spotted off of Dillon Beach.

*Carpenter:* Yes. I didn't know that, at that time we didn't ever hear what happened, but it went on for quite a while. I remember one story about some people from Dillon Beach going out in a rubber raft with their rifles to get the sub. (laughs)

Local accounts from Bodega Bay residents recall finding debris on beaches during WWII, including crude oil, Japanese-style sandals, rice bowls, and wreckage from ships sunk in the Pacific. There are persistent rumors and local legends about a sunken Japanese submarine off Bodega Bay, but no definitive wreck has been discovered or confirmed in this location. ■



*World War II Japanese Submarine*

## JUAN BODEGA

### The Juan Bodega Story, Chapter 1: The Conquest of Peru by Spain, Juan Bodega's Parents, and His Training at the Spanish Naval Academy *by Robin Rudderow, RBHS Archivist*

2025 marks the 250th anniversary of the arrival of the small Spanish sailing ship, the Sonora, captained by Don Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra, with a crew of sick and exhausted sailors, to the bay that came to be named Bodega Bay.

In this and subsequent chapters I'll tell you about Juan Bodega's 1775 voyage from Mexico to Alaska, looking for signs of Russians and exploring the coastline along the way.

Then we'll look at how Juan Bodega's career flourished after the 1775 exploration, including his



crowning achievement of conducting negotiations in 1792 with Captain George Vancouver of the British Royal Navy at Nootka Sound, on the island the two men named "Quadra and Vancouver Island", which was later shortened to "Vancouver Island."

Along the way we'll explore related historical events, explorers, and other things that I find interesting.

Our hero, Juan Bodega, was born in Peru in 1744, so I'll start the Juan Bodega story there. Beginning in the 10th millennium BCE, Peru was home to several cultures. The Caral-Supe civilization of north-central coastal Peru (3500 to 1800 BCE) was the earliest civilization in the Americas and considered one of the cradles of civilization. The Inca Empire, which rose from the Peruvian highlands sometime in the early 13th century, was the largest known state in the Americas before Columbus' arrival (hence the term "pre-Columbian").

Andean societies were based on agriculture, using techniques such as irrigation and terracing; camelid (i.e., llama and alpaca) husbandry and fishing were also important, and they relied on reciprocity and redistribution because they had no notion of market or money.

After the "discovery" of the "New World" in 1492 by Italian explorer Christopher Columbus, who sailed on behalf of the Spanish Crown, Portuguese explorer Aleixo Garcia was the first European to reach the Inca Empire in 1524.

Spanish noblemen, called "conquistadors", came from the west and south of Spain and began building a colonial empire in the Caribbean using colonies such as Santo Domingo, Cuba, and Puerto Rico as their main bases. From 1519 to 1521, Spaniard Hernán Cortés led the Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire, located in the highlands of Mexico.

In December 1532, after crossing the Isthmus of Panama and sailing the Pacific to northern Peru,

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a party of conquistadors led by Francisco Pizarro and supported by indigenous peoples who had been oppressed by the Incas defeated and captured the Inca Emperor Atahualpa in the Battle of Cajamarca. After years of preliminary exploration and military conflicts, it was the first step in a long campaign that took decades of fighting but ended in Spanish colonization of the region known as the Viceroyalty of Peru, with its capital at Lima, which was then known as “La Ciudad de los Reyes” (The City of Kings).

A longstanding conflict with Pizarro and fellow conquistador Diego de Almagro over the control of the former Inca capital of Cuzco erupted into a civil war during which Almagro was killed. Almagro's loyal followers and descendants, who had been stripped of title and belongings after his death, avenged his death in 1541 by killing Pizarro inside his palace in a fight to the death.



*Francisco Pizarro  
Conquistador*

The Indigenous population of Peru collapsed due to epidemic diseases introduced by the Spanish as well as exploitation and socio-economic change. Viceroy Francisco de Toledo reorganized the country in the 1570s with gold and silver mining as its main economic activity and Amerindian forced labor as its primary workforce. With the discovery of great silver and gold lodes, the viceroyalty flourished as an important provider of mineral resources. Peruvian bullion provided revenue for the Spanish Crown and fueled a complex trade network that extended as far as Europe and the Philippines.

All that wealth did not come without consequences, and one such consequence was the Englishman, Sir Francis Drake (1540 – 1596). Drake was an English explorer and privateer, having been given license by Queen Elizabeth to attack Spanish ships and make off with the spoils. On a voyage between 1577 and 1580 to circumnavigate the world, Drake sailed up the South American coast from the Strait of Magellan, unnoticed by the Spaniards who had never known a hostile ship in their waters. He seized a shipment of Chilean wine at Valparaíso, attacked passing Spanish merchantmen, and captured two very rich ships that were carrying bars of gold and silver, minted Spanish coinage, precious stones, and pearls. When Drake returned to England, his expedition became the second to circumnavigate the earth, after the voyage of Ferdinand Magellan of Portugal in 1521, and the first to return with its commander.

Having set the stage in Peru, we now turn to how the Bodega family made its way from Spain to Peru, the culture Juan Bodega grew up in, and the early days of his naval career. Juan Bodega's father, Tomas de la Bodega y de las Llanas, was Basque of the minor, landed nobility, whose family had lived for generations in the valley of Somorrostro near Bilbao, Spain. Tomas left Spain for Peru in 1720 at the age of 19, joining members of the Quadra family, whose family had become joined in marriage

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with the Bodega family decades earlier, and who had immigrated to Peru earlier and succeeded financially.

Eight years after arriving in Peru, Tomas married Francisca de Mollinedo de losada, the daughter of a long-established, aristocratic colonial family in the Chancay region on the northern coast of Peru.

Tomas and Francisca had 12 children between 1731 and 1754, seven sons and five daughters. Sadly, three daughters and a son died before reaching adulthood. Of the surviving children, three of the sons and two of the daughters pursued careers in the Church. One son studied law and became an administrator and politician and another took over the family businesses in agriculture and shipping. Their ninth child, Juan Francisco, born May 22, 1744, chose a life of action and became an officer in the Spanish navy.

At the time of Juan's birth, Spain's American empire consisted of three viceroyalties: Peru (modern-day Peru, Chile, and Bolivia), New Spain (Mexico), and New Granada (Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela). The capital of Peru was Lima, which had a population of 25,000 and was home to several educational institutions, offering courses in such subjects as humanities, law, and theology.

The social classes in Lima consisted of a European elite of administrators, clergy (about one-tenth of the Lima population were priests and nuns), and merchants; mestizo (mixed European and indigenous ancestry) craftsmen, black household slaves, and Indian workers, who did most of the manual labor. The white population was divided into peninsulares, who were born in Spain, and criollos, who were born in the Americas.

King Carlos III, who came onto the Spanish throne in 1759, sought to modernize Spain and its empire with the goal of restoring Spanish prestige to the

levels it had reached in the 16th century when Spain was conquering the New World. Carlos III reorganized and expanded the navy, considering it vital to his foreign policy objectives.

Juan Bodega's time in the Spanish navy, from 1762 to 1794, coincided with the apogee of the Spanish navy. He applied to the Real Colegio de Guardiamarinas, the naval academy in Cadiz, Spain, where each applicant had to prove that he was legitimate and a gentleman of notable nobility, be able to write, and be of clean habits in mind and body. Juan Bodega enrolled in the Real Colegio at the age of 18 and studied there to prepare for a career as an officer in the revitalized Spanish navy.



After graduation in 1765, Juan had a series of minor postings in the Mediterranean, was returned to Peru in 1767 over concern of the British occupation of the Falkland Islands, and was returned to Spain in 1773 where he received two quick promotions. In 1775, he was assigned to the Naval Department of San Blas, a port on the coast of Mexico, south of Baja California. ■



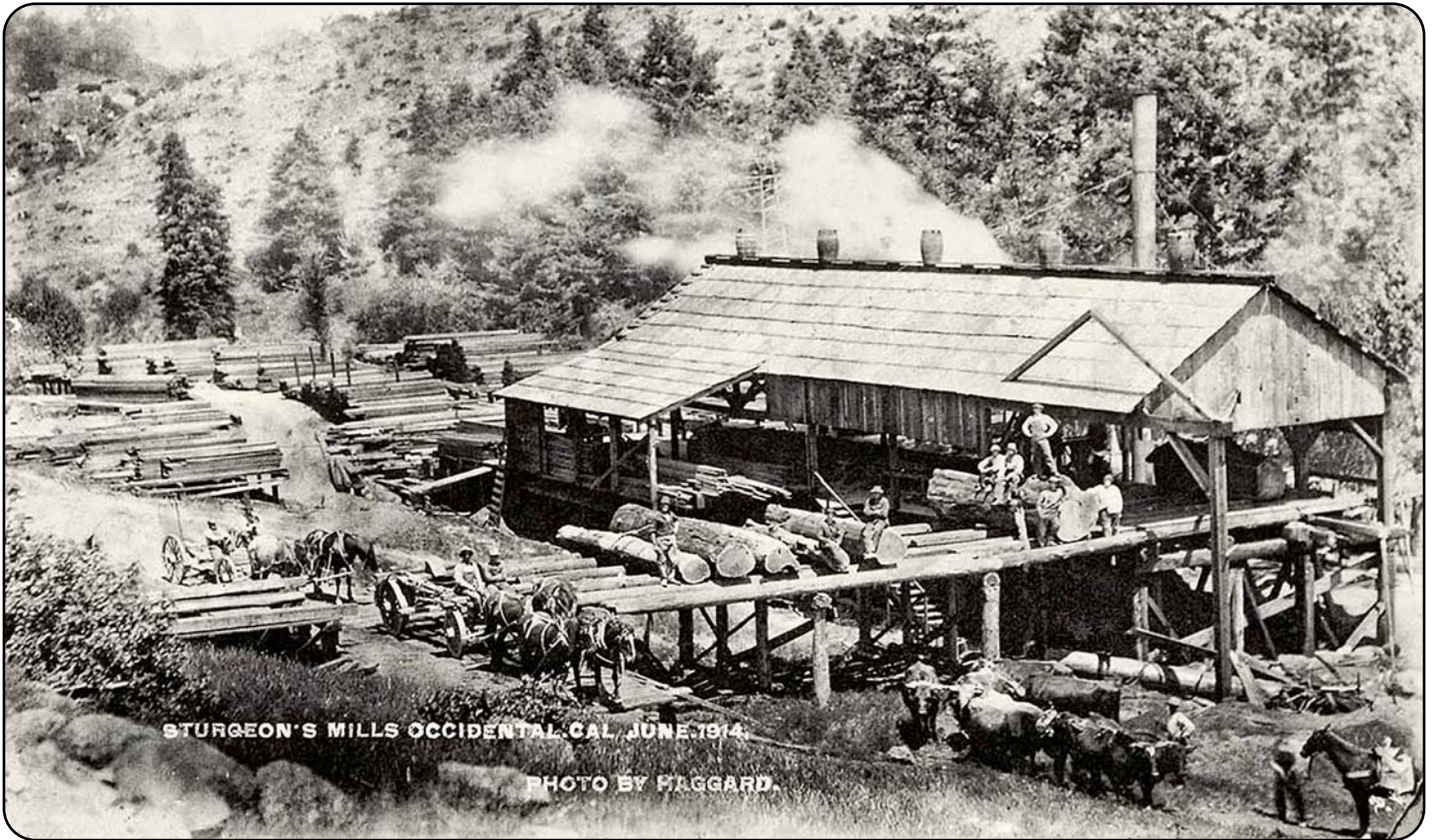
# JUAN BODEGA



## STURGEON'S SAW MILL

### STURGEON'S SAW MILL RESTORATION PROJECT

DEMONSTRATION RUN: Sat/Sun August 23/24 & Sep 13/14, 10 am-3 pm



**2150 Green Hill Road, Sebastopol**  
**[www.SturgeonsMill.com](http://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.



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If you have artifacts or stories of Bodega Bay History to contribute to the Rancho Bodega Historical Society, please contact Robin Rudderow, our Archivist at [RBHS@bodegamoons.net](mailto:RBHS@bodegamoons.net)

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### IN THIS ISSUE

#### **Bodega Bay's Early Explorer**



2025 is the 250th anniversary of the arrival in Bodega Bay of a Spanish sailing ship captained by Don Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra.

#### **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**

**BODEGA BAY FARMERS MARKET** Bodega Bay Community Center, 2255 CA-1, Until the end of October, Sunday 10 AM–2 PM. Offering the freshest, locally grown produce specializing in organic, heirloom and gourmet varieties of fruits and vegetables, beef, goat, duck, pork, poultry and fish.

**BARLOW SUMMER CONCERT SERIES** Join us every Wednesday from June 4 to August 6 for The Barlow Summer Concert Series, featuring live music, local wine, craft beer, food, and a curated street market. Music starts at 5 PM, with vendors and drinks flowing from 4 to 8 PM. It's the perfect way to spend a summer evening in Sebastopol — good vibes, great tunes, and community all around. Free to attend and family-friendly! <https://thebarlow.net/pages/calendar>

**GRAVENSTEIN APPLE FAIR** Ragle Ranch Regional Park, Sebastopol, Sat/Sun Aug 9/10 10-6. Good food, good music, and good vibes await you at the 52nd Anniversary Gravenstein Apple Fair! Celebrate all things apple, connecting you to your neighborhood farmers and artisans, VIP Lounge, and much more! Buy your tickets online today to save up to 30%. Kids 5 and under are FREE. Ticket prices start at \$10. The Fair is the major annual fundraiser for the nonprofit Sonoma County Farm Trails; your support helps us keep farms forever in Sonoma County! <https://gravensteinapplefair.com/>

**HAPPY HOUR Russian River Vineyards, 5700 Highway 116, Forestville** Join us until October 30th! Thursday nights from 5pm - 7:30pm for Happy Hour in true Russian River Vineyards style. We'll have special prices on wines by the glass, beer from local craft breweries, and a selection of delicious small bites & appetizers prepared to order in our kitchen. And of course, we'll be featuring live music from top local artists. Don't miss the fun! <https://russianrivervalley.org/>

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