

# RANCHO BODEGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Proposal for a Memorial at the Seaman's Cemetery

The Rancho Bodega Historical Society is working with the Smith Family and Graton Rancheria to recognize and honor Native Americans and early settlers by respectfully marking a historic plot of land (about 1 acre) on

Captain Stephen Smith.

Captain Smith had been granted Rancho Bodega in 1844, the land between the Russian River and the Americano Estero (now the Marin County border). Captain Smith

House is on the site now. Even today, descendants of the Smith family think of Bodega Bay as their ancestral and importantly, their spiritual home. They are our founders.

In one RBHS document, Captain Smith's son William was described as "a very old Indian (sic) who lived near." He told us that the cemetery "was for people washed overboard."

William's half-brother Tom was a full-blooded Native American, who took the Smith Family name to draw attention away from himself, meager protection from the potentially deadly Federal Bounty Law. He was the local tribes' Spiritual Elder. In 1934 at 110 years old, Tom Smith was the final person known to be laid to rest in the cemetery.

RBHS believes this marker holds the power of supporting the true bedrock of our community by solidifying Bodega Bay as a historic coastal village that respects and honors fishermen, unknown sailors who died at sea, today's living descendants of the Coast Miwok and indigenous people at-large, as well as the brave pioneers, such as the Joy Family, who helped establish Rancho Bodega and are also buried in this community burial ground. ■



Heron Drive in Bodega Harbour. Formerly owned by the Smith Family, Graton Rancheria holds the title to the burial ground overlooking the sea and Bodega Bay on one side. The other side overlooks the valley where Highway One winds among the steep hills and canyons of our Coastal Prairie below.

Known earlier as Bodega Bay Cemetery, Smith's Cemetery and the Seaman's Cemetery, the land was donated to the community around 1849 by

and Tsupu, a Miwok woman, had a son called William. His (secret) Miwok name, Yole Tamal, translates to "West Bay." Until we had a Post Office, our town's name was simply "Bay", William's Miwok namesake.

The influence of the Smith family on our community is strong. The Smiths began and grew our prosperous fishing industry. Today's Post Office on Smith Brothers Road, is across the street from the Smith Brothers' fishery and Bodega Harbour's Club