

THE SMITH FAMILY OF BODEGA BAY

10,000 years ago	1579	1775	1809	1810
Coastal Miwoks, Pomo, Kashaya	English	Spanish	Russians	Mexican
<i>The end of the era of Columbian Mammoth that roamed our Coastal Prairie</i>	<i>Explorer Sir Francis Drake lands nearby</i>	<i>Lt. Bodega y Quadra discovers Bodega Bay for New Spain</i>	<i>Port Rumiantzev established in Bodega Bay</i>	<i>Mexico wins independence from Spain, creates Alta California</i>

RBHS Welcomes the Smith Family Back to Bodega Bay

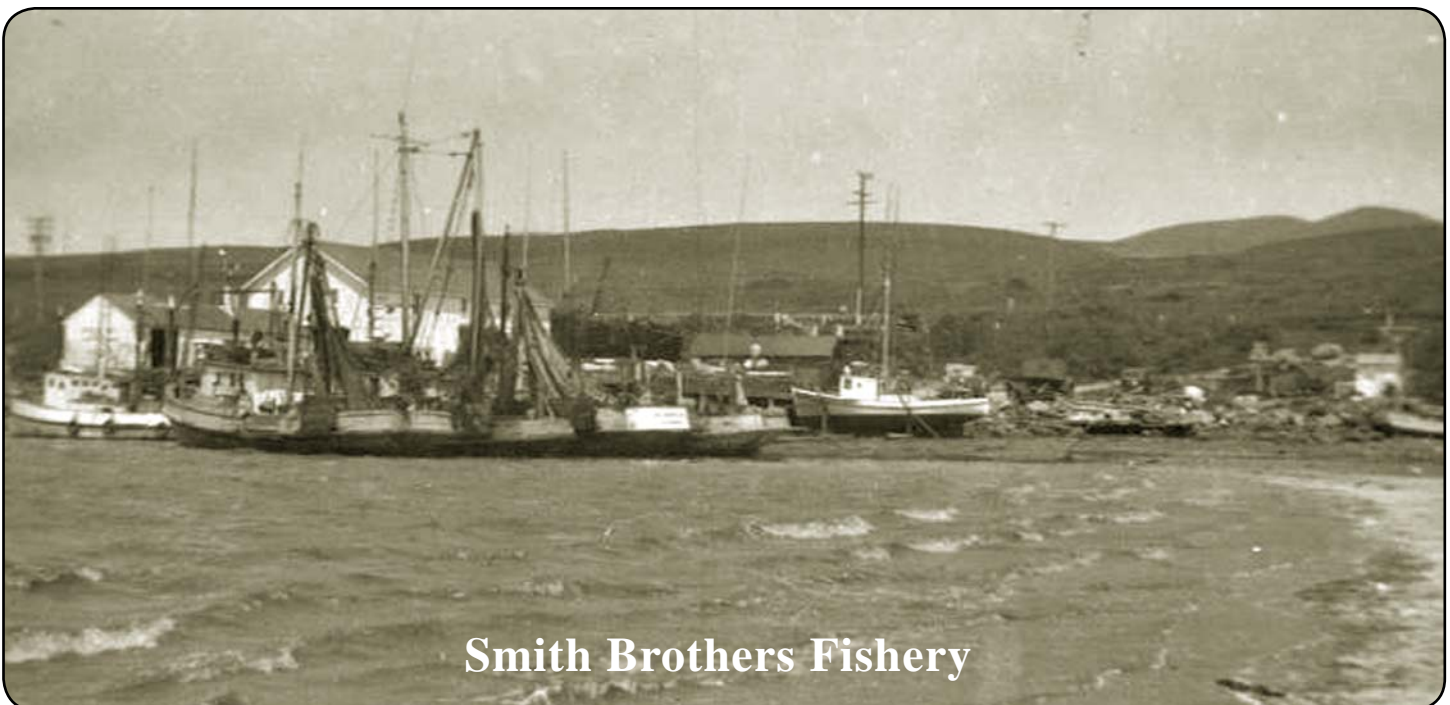
As one of the oldest families in America, the Smith Family legacy begins with the native Coastal Miwoks who inhabited this area some 12,000 years ago. Thought of as friendly, peaceful, well-established hunter-gatherers that left spear heads, acorn grinding holes, beautiful baskets, middens and other artifacts to tell us their story, Coastal Miwoks were first documented by English explorers in 1579 when Sir Francis Drake landed on our shores. Here in Rancho Bodega, it is thought that the Coastal Miwoks inhabited the area south of Salmon Creek. They shared the land north of Salmon Creek and south of the Russian River with the Kashaya Pomo who lived north of the Russian River.

Rancho Bodega Historical Society were privileged to hear from and honor their direct descendants this past June during the Smith Family Reunion.

The First Settlers in Rancho Bodega came by Sea. A well-traveled ship master for 30 years, Captain Stephen Smith was a Quaker and native of Dartmouth, Massachusetts who first visited the Sonoma Coast in 1839 and 1841 as a trader. He recognized the area as a source for lumber, food and leather for the small but growing city. Bodega Bay became Captain Smith's shipping port. His vessels shipped passengers and goods from his Port in Bodega to San Francisco.

The Smith's story continues today and members of the

In this part of Alta California the Mexicans encouraged



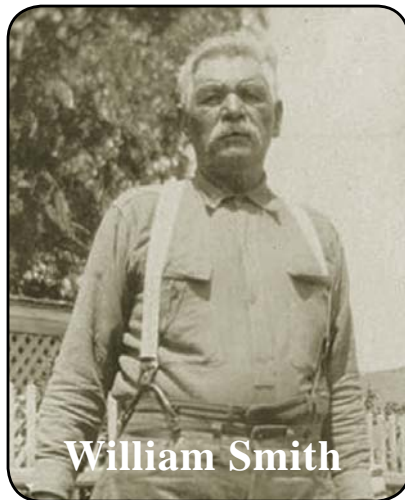
Smith Brothers Fishery

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1839	1842	1844	1848	1849	1850	1876
Captain Stephen Smith	Russians	Captain Stephen Smith	Americans	GOLD !	California	William Smith 1843-1936
<i>Mexican Governor grants Captain Smith permission to bring sawmill to Alta CA</i>	<i>Russian American Company sells Fort Ross to John Sutter</i>	<i>Received Land Grant 'Rancho Bodega' & builds Porto Bodega to ship milled lumber</i>	<i>Mexico cedes Alta CA to United States</i>	<i>Gold discovered at Sutter's Mill in California</i>	<i>California becomes a state of the Union</i>	<i>William Smith marries Rosalie Charles creating line of descendants in Bodega Bay</i>

settlement by awarding land grants called “ranchos.” At age 57, Stephen Smith proposed to the Mexican Governor that he construct a saw mill, become a Catholic and marry into a prominent Spanish Family so that he could qualify and be awarded a land grant. He married 16-year-old Manuela Torres, the educated daughter of wealthy Peruvian aristocrats. In 1844 he was granted “Rancho Bodega” a land grant that stretched 55 square miles along the Pacific Coast from today’s southern border of Sonoma County at the Estero Americano, north to the Russian River.

The Matriarch of this branch of the Smith Family was Tsupu, a Coastal Miwok woman. In 1843 the year before receiving his land grant, Captain Stephen Smith and Tsupu had a son William (Bill) Smith. Bill, a Miwok, first married another Miwok, Walla Walla, who died young. In 1876, he married Rosalie Charles and they had 12 children. In the early 1900’s with the help of his large Bodega Miwok family, Bill Smith founded the commercial fishing industry in Bodega Bay. Bill Smith’s grandchildren came together to share their cousins’ stories.



THE SMITH FAMILY REUNION

The Smith Family Reunion hosted by RBHS on June 23, 2018 was a rousing success! The auspicious location was on Smith Brothers Road (yes, of the same family), where the Smith family lived and started the fishing industry out of Bodega Port, in the exact same building that the Bodega Harbour Yacht Club stands today. Susan Teel, RBHS President, and Robin Rudderow, RBHS Archivist, welcomed the Smith Family to Bodega Bay. The long-awaited event (originally scheduled for October 2017 and postponed due to the wildfires in Napa and Sonoma Counties on October 8, 2017) was enthusiastically received by 40 descendants of the Smith Family and 27 RBHS members. Sincere thanks to Kevin Kingsley, Manager of the Bodega Coast Inn & Suites, for his generosity by providing the meeting room.

A Special Edition of the RBHS Newsletter presented Smith Family stories, memorable photos and traced the genealogy from the 1840’s grantee of Captain Stephen Smith’s and Coast Miwok Tsupu’s son William Smith Sr., his wife Rosalie Charles and their 11 children (five sisters and six brothers) – Mary, Stephen Sr., Angelo, Sarah, Margaret, William Jr., Eli, Rosalie Ann, Edward, Aileen, and Young Eagle Smith. This helped William Sr. and Tsupu’s grandchildren trace their ties to the 11 aunts and uncles as they told stories and shared memories.

A wonderful video of old photos of the Smith Brothers in Bodega Bay, created by Marlene Smith, was shown.

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Matthew Young Smith described the ongoing Smith Family Archival Initiative to preserve and share photos, artifacts, memories from the past and to revive and protect Coastal Miwok culture, traditions, and language. Robin Rudderow presented photos and excerpts about life at the Smith Brothers Wharf down the street on Smith Brother Road, to encourage family members to share stories and memories.

Tooch (Smith) Colombo started an hour-long story telling session that generated lots of participation from Smith descendants. Several of the Smith's personal stories reflected Sonoma County's and our Country's culture.

Language: Members of the Smith family, Sarah, Eileen Rose and Maggie were the last to speak the Miwok language. Russian words had been incorporated into the language, but it was rarely spoken because there was a bounty for catching Native Americans speaking their native language. Kathleen Smith explained that the law in California was that Indians must be on a reservation or in a Catholic Mission. If they were not gainfully employed, they would become property. There were disappearances from public school and an Indian Genocide book.

Today their language and music are being revived. At the Graton Rancheria, a Federated Tribal Office is working with Smith descendants to save the Miwok language and music. Language courses are taught locally at Santa Rosa Junior College.

Discrimination: Stories of prejudice against American Natives are becoming clearer. Tooch remembers his Uncle was fortunate to sit at the Tides Bar, albeit at the end of the bar. Even at Catholic School in Santa Rosa the cousins were outcasts. The white children wouldn't play with the Smith girls. Tooch and Kathleen remembered train travel to San Francisco from the Marconi Station. The family "wore their furs to show the whites!"

Names were changed to protect the innocent Native Americans. Tsupu, the known matriarch was also

known as Maria Checka. Tooch and the others explained that there was bounty on heads of Native Americans, peaceful or not. Being given an English name helped protect the family and allowed them to own land, particularly another half-brother Tom Smith.

They were fisherman and sold fish in Santa Rosa. They started in a small boat and grew the fleet to two larger boats. Uncle Angelo sold crab. Tooch told us they hauled in 75 boxes of salmon a day. Uncle Eli, who died in 1968, was considered to be the smart one. He didn't do the fishing, he sold the fish on West A and Fourth Streets in Santa Rosa. When we asked where the fish went, Tooch shrugged and guessed it was the quarry in Cheney Gulch among so many other things.

The day of the 1906 earthquake the ocean was dead calm, like a lake. Then the water started bubbling and up came the fish. A great catch! But when they went to San Francisco to the port, the family was waiting to escape. They sailed up the Sacramento River to Pittsburg where they still live today. There is a Miwok tale that William's half-brother Tom Smith was mad that day and did a dance – then the earthquake happened!

There were thunderstorms and snow! There is a book written about the thunder to sooth the Miwok children. *Thunderbear* is a book for children available at the Graton Rancheria today.

Sarah Smith was a sweet midwife with a special touch who always found a kind word to say about even the most despicable characters. But the whites often didn't want the only midwife for miles. **Many in the family were talented artists.** Clarence and Angelo painted. Sarah painted several pictures of Bodega Bay. They embroidered too. They were happy – it breaks the cousin's hearts to know what they went through, but it never broke their spirit.

All in all, it was an important and meaningful event for everyone fortunate enough to spend that Saturday in beautiful Bodega Bay! ●