

RANCHO BODEGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DID YOU KNOW?

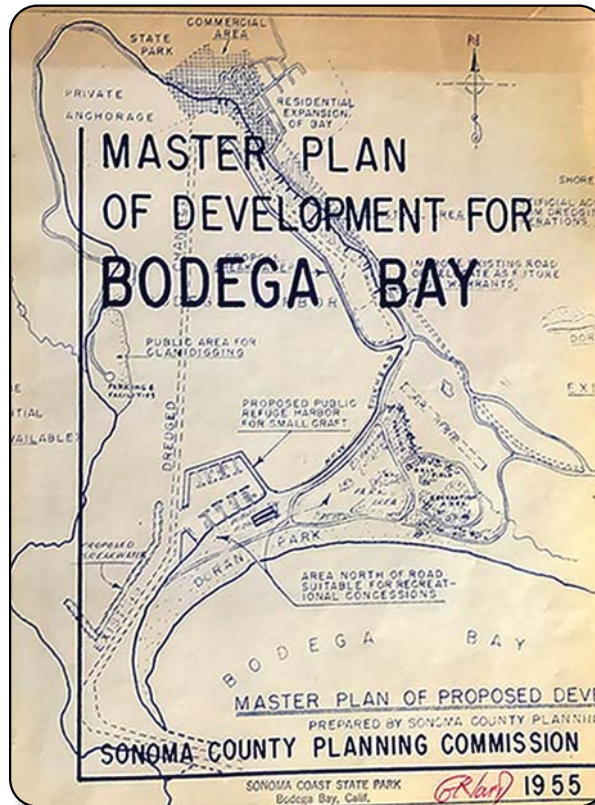
The Bodega Ghost

The Potter School House in Bodega is one the most recognizable and historically significant buildings in the Rancho Estero Americano. The School sat empty and abandoned for years after it was sold at auction. Alfred Hitchcock arrived in Bodega Bay in 1961 in search for a location for his new film, "The Birds", which became a true classic in the film world.

After filming, the building remained empty for five years until it was purchased by Tom and Mary Taylor who moved their family there in 1966 with plans to open it to the public as a bed & breakfast inn.

The Taylor's daughter Leah, who now owns the building and used to open it for public tours, tells of unusual occurrences inside their new home almost immediately after they moved in. Young Leah would hear footsteps in the night. The footsteps seemed to climb the stairs and then abruptly come to a stop. As an adult, Leah would watch the apparition of a little girl with shoulder-length hair appear to her. She described the girl as being surrounded by a "white aura" and speaking to her in a small girl's voice, saying simply, "Hi!" ■

Controversary Swirls Around Bodega Harbor (Part 4) Who Owns the Bodega Harbor's Tidelands?



For at least 10,000 years the Coast Miwok, known as the Olamentko culture, thrived in Bodega Bay along with Southern Pomo to the East in Sebastopol and Kashaya Pomo north of the Russian River (called Shabaikai or "long snake" as early as 5,000 BCE). Inland tribes traveled to the coastal plains in Rancho Bodega for cooler weather, summer games and seasonal gatherings.

Early 1800's - Mexico and Russia rivaled

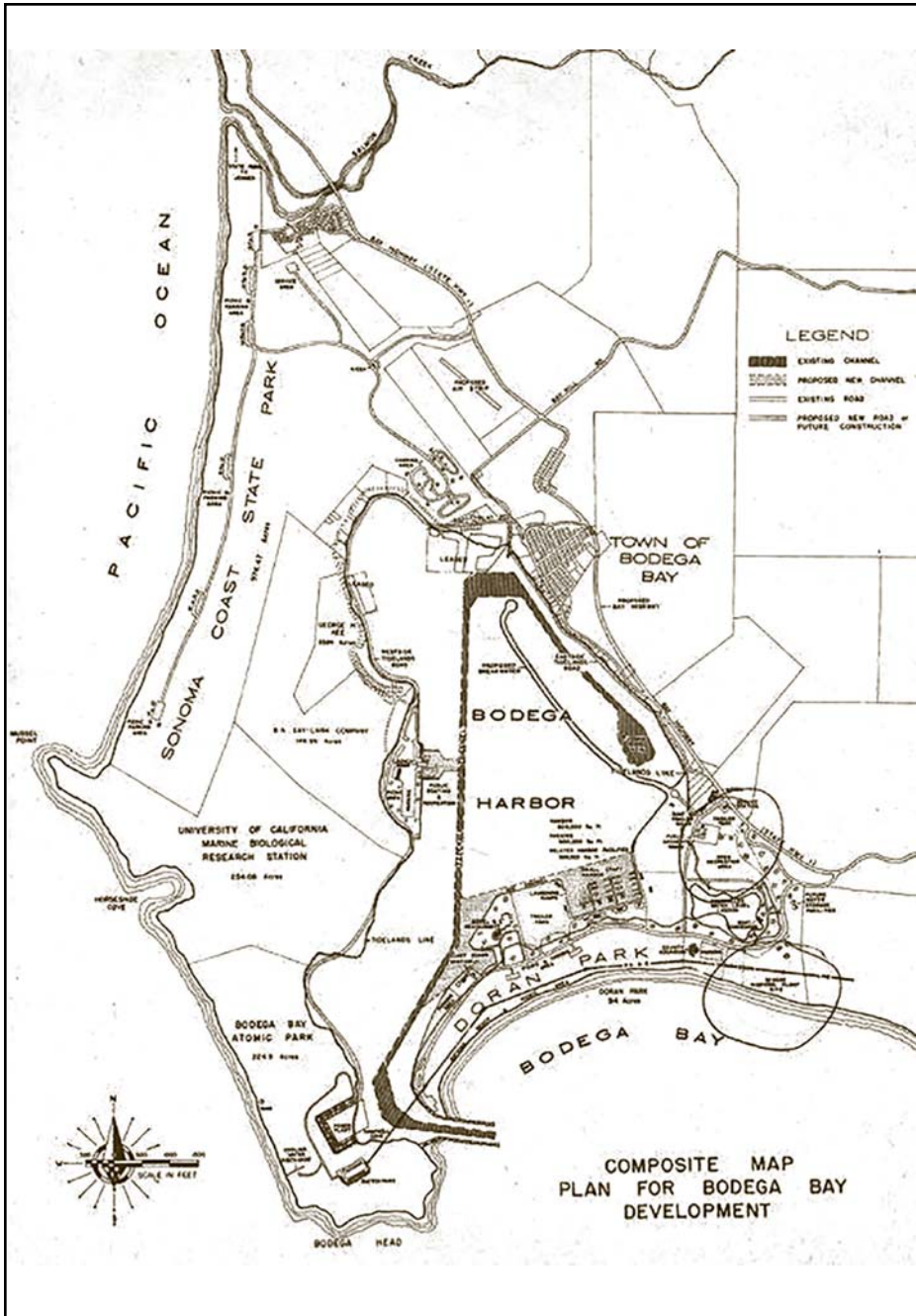
over resource rich Alta California. The Russians landed a settlement where Campbell Cove is today. The northern border was known as the Slavyanka River by the Russians.

1843 – Captain Stephen Smith was awarded Rancho Bodega as a land Grant by Mexico. Indian people were in servitude by Mexican land grant owners, such as Captain Stephen Smith until he died in 1855. Coast Miwok people's human, ancestral and property rights were shamelessly absconded by all levels of Government as well as local residents.

1861 - 1870 – Rancho Bodega, including the area around Bodega Harbor, was carved into ranches. Private landowners vied for property, leaving the earliest settlers and indigenous people without their long-time homes.

continued next page

CONTROVERSY SWIRLS AROUND BODEGA HARBOR (PART 4)



1870 -- Stephen Smith's widow's new husband, Tyler Curtis, sold all the lands in Rancho Bodega. Landowners and ranchers surrounding the bay with familiar names such as Smith, Doran, Campbell, Gaffney, and Kee used the tidelands as their own.

1943 - The Army Core of Engineers opened the channel and built jetties making Bodega Harbor accessible to larger boats. World War II created more demand for food. Wartime measures prohibited international fishing boats. Crab pots were legalized locally. On stormy days, Bodega Bay's fishermen made and repaired their own crab pots making for a more sustainable catch. The old ring nets used before, pulled in, destroyed and killed all kinds of sealife, including female reproductive crabs, juvenile fish too small to sell, and sealife not considered useful. In good fishing weather, the inner bay was almost deserted with most boats out to sea.

In the 1950's, On good fishing days, Bodega Bay's fishermen thrived. Crabbing was "brand new." Where once, only the Smith Brothers operated commercially, five fish plants received and canned or "fast-froze" (also new) and shipped thousands of tons of fish each year.

Meredith Wharf, based in Sacramento and operating from the wharf in Bodega Bay, was the largest, packing 900,000 pounds of crab in 1950. There women filleted about a million pounds of bottom fish – sole, flounder, and around 400,000 pounds of albacore tuna. There was Consolidated Fish Co., A. Paladini Fish Company, and Dusty Rhodes Plant. At Consolidated and Meredith, women workers could be found any weekday, sometimes "around the clock," deftly picking crab meat from the shells in clean, careful process preparation for hotels, restaurants, and lucky households.

A major issue around Bodega Harbor was the **Tidelands ownership**. What about the local people that work and own the adjacent upland property?

CONTROVERSY SWIRLS AROUND BODEGA HARBOR (PART 4)



One of Bodega Bay's prominent residents, Rose Gaffney, owned a ranch on Bodega Head. She disputed both County and State ownership of the Bodega Harbor's tidelands, saying her ownership went back to the original 1843 Mexican Land Grant to Captain Stephen Smith. Gaffney's theory was that her husband's family purchased their land from Smith's estate and thus she owned the tidelands adjoining the Gaffney Ranch. She had a second theory that she owned the riparian rights the same way people own the shore of an inland stream.

Unfortunately for Rose, that border dispute was decided in 1886 by the California Supreme Court. Winfield Wright, who purchased his ranch when Rancho Bodega was sold off

by Tyler Curtis, claimed ownership of Penny Island in the Russian River. Wright lost the case when the Court determined that Rancho Bodega extended to the edge of the Russian River but not into the river. The Court decided "California State is the owner of all land below ordinary high-water mark."

"Before West Shore Road was built, the pavement took you only as far as the Kee Ranch House (above present Spud Point Marina), an area known as Keesport. From there the pilgrim who wanted to find his way to the headlands followed a half-road that snaked through the sand to a gate on the Gaffney Ranch which was usually closed. Or you might find your way blocked by Rose Gaffney, who did not like State officials, politicians, or trespassers. And she owned a shot gun." ¹

1951 - CA State offered a land grant to Sonoma County. CA State's original grant was for the "furtherance of navigation, commerce and fisheries." There was thought given to restore and enlarge an air strip located where today's Bird Walk is on CA Highway One in Doran Regional Park. The landing field was occasionally used, although some pilots preferred safer landing on a nearby pasture.

With these varied and rich sources of income, local property owners expected a formula for tidelands rents to help spread expenses across business owners, rents formulated to ensure a steady stream of profitable commerce among many, many people. Rents kept to a level that would allow businesses to grow and prosper as well as invest in their own properties and the basic infrastructure. Growth was an imperative to the plan.

1955 - Sonoma County's Master Plan for Bodega Bay assured abundant revenue sources in the form of fees for entering and parking at Doran Beach, recreational docks, rents from business owners and taxes on the goods and services purchased by tourists and locals. Rents could be collected from the plethora of fish processors, docks and shops surrounding the Harbor. Rents could be collected not only from the businesses but from slip holders and moorings. The fishing was good then, really good, and commercial boat owners would pay for safe refuge during a storm and when fish were running.

1958 - Eight years had already passed since 1951, when CA State granted "certain tide and submerged lands to the County of Sonoma." That left only two short years for Sonoma County to act and show real improvements to the State. Meanwhile investors large and small were ready, waiting and losing faith in the County's ability to come up with a fair, simple formula to rent the tidelands presumably to the owners holding property adjacent to the tidelands, in time for the State deadline but controversies & conflicts abounded, as we reported in Part III of the Winter 2021 RBHS newsletter available at RanchoBodega.org. ■

¹ GAYE LeBARON's NOTEBOOK, Sunday April 14, 1991

FROM THE ARCHIVES



Thank You and Kudos to Tom and Jeanette Petek

RBHS is enormously grateful for the amazing volunteering of Tom and Jeanette Petek. Tom and Jeanette who took on the upkeep and reorganization of not only our archives, but our entire office in the white building at the Bodega Bay School House.

Tom, a retired engineer and Jeanette, a retired librarian, tidied up and labeled the files. They updated our catalogue of books, files, audio tapes, maps and miscellany. They also rearranged the office, created fresh displays and organized our humble abode.

As the RBHS archivist, I've met so many fascinating folks in the past 15 years and steeped myself in our rich local history. I invite you to join me. Would you like to:

- select a file that interests you from the archives and write an article for the newsletter about the topic of the file,
- suggest and organize a speaker event, who you might like to hear from,
- research books for our library. It's a great opportunity to exercise your curiosity,
- print past or present newspaper articles about Bodega Bay for the archive,
- help us with an upcoming Open House.

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Robin Rudderow, RBHS Archivist RBHS@BodegaMoon.net



FROM THE ARCHIVES

RBHS's building is getting a much needed Tune-Up

In addition to his other activities for Rancho Bodega Historical Society Library and Office, Tom Petek took charge of getting bids for the repair work for our building which is in need of repairs.

Stay tuned for more on our fundraising efforts.



Joan Poulos and David Lewis have generously donated prints of a recent painting by a local artist of the old Marin, the boat that is a favorite landmark and subject of artists in Bodega Bay. Today, the remnants of this old favorite are still visible on West Shore Road.

The prints will be given as a thank you gift for your donations for much needed repairs to the Rancho Bodega Historical Society Library behind the Bodega Bay Elementary School.

RANCHO BODEGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Rancho Bodega Historical Society Web Site (RanchoBodega.org)

On our web site you can find the latest events, our past newsletters, our archives dating back to 2006, including information on Captain Stephen Smith and the original landowners of Rancho Bodega, as well as, the controversies swirling around Bodega Harbor. (page 3)

Also on the website is a link to the 'Faces Project', which is a compilation of portraits of local residents and business owners by John Hershey together with their biographies. It is a terrific project because it offers insight into the characters who inhabit our community. There is also a page of links to museums & other historical societies, along with our story (About Us) and our RBHS Store.

FACES OF BODEGA BAY

Meet Amanda Michele Bryant

Amanda Bryant was born on the Pawnee Indian Reservation in Oklahoma in 1980, yet she is descended from Irish, not Indian, ancestors. Her parents went to the hospital that was closest to their home on the land where Amanda's father was born and raised, land that his family got in one of the Oklahoma Land Runs in the late 1800s.

Amanda's parents divorced when she was 8, and Amanda moved with her mother and siblings to California. Amanda attended Linden Wood University in St. Charles Missouri, graduating in 2000 with a BA in Art History.

Looking for a way to pair her love of art history with a profession that would support her, Amanda became an antiques appraiser. She worked for many years on a traveling panel of appraisers, a precursor to "Antiques Roadshow," has been appointed by Courts to value estate assets, and now has a private consulting business as an antiques appraiser.

Bodega Bay was the go to place for Amanda's grandparents when her mother was growing up, and Amanda and her mother and family often spent the month of October in Dillon Beach. So in 2009, when Amanda was looking for a place to call home and raise her daughter, Elsie (born in 2004), Bodega Bay called out to her as the place to be.



When Amanda was young and growing up in Oklahoma, she used to say that she was going to live by the ocean and have a store. Notwithstanding the eye rolling that followed her pronouncements, Amanda proved herself true. In 2013, Amanda opened her shop "Eclectic Amanda" (eclecticamanda@yahoo.com) in the Blue Whale Building, 1580 Eastshore Road, Bodega Bay (707-812-9710). A steady stream of customers enjoy poking through the antique treasures and cute beachy art objects that are charmingly displayed in the small but cozy shop.

Bodega Bay makes Amanda happy. A secret mermaid at heart, Amanda loves living by the ocean and is inspired by its moodiness. - by Robin Rudderow ■

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If you have artifacts or stories of Bodega Bay History to contribute to RBHS, please reach out to Robin Rudderow, our Archivist at <RBHS@bodegamoon.net

BECOME A MEMBER

Enjoy the history of Rancho Bodega. Please join us. Subscribe for a year and receive the RBHS newsletters, \$15 individual (\$20 family). Support the stories of Bodega Bay. Email Robin Rudderow for details.



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**Rancho Bodega Historical Society, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation
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IN THIS ISSUE

Who Owns the Tidelands?

In the 1950's, the major issue around Bodega Harbor was about the Tidelands ownership. The State of California, was poised to turn over rights in 1961. What about the local people that work and own the adjacent upland property?

Meet Amanda Bryant

In 2013, Amanda opened her shop "Eclectic Amanda" in the Blue Whale Building at 1580 Eastshore Road. Bodega Bay makes Amanda happy.



SPRING/SUMMER 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/>>

FREE VIRTUAL EVENTS AROUND SONOMA COUNTY

The Museum of Sonoma County Looking Back at the Influenza Pandemic of 1918. (Online exhibit) The historic influenza pandemic of 1918 and 1919 has recently received more attention for obvious reasons. The experiences of that trying time echo across the decades, resonating with the events of today and the threat of the coronavirus. <<https://museumsc.org/1918-flu-pandemic/>>

The Press Democrat has a listing of virtual events, such as Peanuts Origami, Poetry Book Club, Spark Your Inspiration, Meet the Artists! or take Creative Writing Classes <www.pressdemocrat.com/Events/>

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