

RANCHO BODEGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DID YOU KNOW?

The Casino in Bodega



Frequent the Casino Bar and Grill in Bodega and you'll gain a sense of the place that goes far beyond its wildly popular and affordable gourmet meals scratched up on a hamburger grill. There's even more to it than the tasty well drinks, the at-your-service-but-don't-cross-me bartenders, the strange little stage that hangs over the bar and the ancient 7-Up sign out front.

A play on the surname "Casini," the Casino has operated at least since 1939. Evelyn and her late husband Art Casini (who passed in 1983), who was informally known as the Mayor of Bodega, bought it from his brother in July 1949. Evelyn has continued on, unable to retire from her "living room."

The Casino Bar and Grill is at 17000 Bodega Highway, Bodega. They're open seven days a week for dinner. They're also open Saturdays and Sundays for breakfast.

Bodega Bay Grange Crab Cioppino "Seafood Receptions" (then 1969 & now 2022)



A telephoto lens caught this crab connoisseur in a moment of hearty enjoyment at the Bodega Bay Grange annual crab cioppino Sunday.

3,000 for dinner at Bodega Bay

An unbelievable 13,400 pounds of crab were served to more than 3,000 paying customers from all over the state at Sunday's crab cioppino at Bodega Bay.

Considering that the average crab weighs about two and one-half pounds, the average person ate more than two crabs.

The hearty eaters, some armed with fobs of paper towels, nutcrackers, pliers and bibs supplied by the Bodega Bay Grange, sponsors of the annual feed, paid \$3.75 each for the privilege of taking in all they could eat of what is undoubtedly both the messiest and the most enjoyable dinner to be found anywhere for the price.

In addition to both crab cioppino and seasoned cold crab, the Grange served 600 loaves of garlic bread and an undetermined amount of salad.

Some of the \$5,000 worth of crab came from Bodega and some was shipped from Crescent City and Eureka especially for the event. According to Mrs. Ray Ruchel, publicity chairman, no one harbor could ever fill an order for 13,400 pounds of fresh crab.

Over 100 local residents, many of whom are not members of the Grange, volunteered their assistance in preparing and serving the food.

The annual cioppino pays operating expenses for the Bodega Bay Grange, makes possible a welfare fund in the community, and finances an annual scholarship for a student at Tomales high school, which serves the coastal area.

Since 1954, for 67 years, Bodega Bay Grange members and community have served up the best-tasting and arguably the most fun Crab Cioppino event. In 2021 we canceled our event due to COVID. Sadly, for 2022, we must postpone again to comply with local regulations and safety concerns related to COVID.

We are optimistic that 2023 will be one heck of a Grange Crab Cioppino reunion. After all, we miss you! And we have the traditions of our forefathers to carry forward.

In 1969, some 3000 folks came to our humble, member-built Grange Hall to feast on Crab Cioppino! 13,400 pounds of crab was purchased at 37 cents a pound, and guests paid \$3.75 each.

Some things never change: we still use the same recipes and still use the proceeds from our event to fund scholarships to local students and for maintenance of the hall, which is used for town hall meetings, church services, Red Cross shelter and a food pantry. If you would like to support our existence and programs, please send a check to: Bodega Bay Grange, PO Box 152, Bodega Bay CA 94923 or use Paypal, bbgrange777@att.net. Thanks very much and we look forward to seeing you in January 2023!

STEWARDS OF THE SEA IN BODEGA BAY

Honoring The Fishermen of Bodega Bay

by Andrea Granahan - 2021

The fishing industry has gone through many changes through the years since World War II. One of the most dramatic was its changing role from “**farmers of the sea**” who harvested their catch, to the “**stewards of the sea**”. Fishermen in general and especially our local fisherman play an important role in conserving and protecting the fishery and the waters off Bodega Bay and the California Coast. It was not an easy or peaceful transition, but some key players turned it into success.

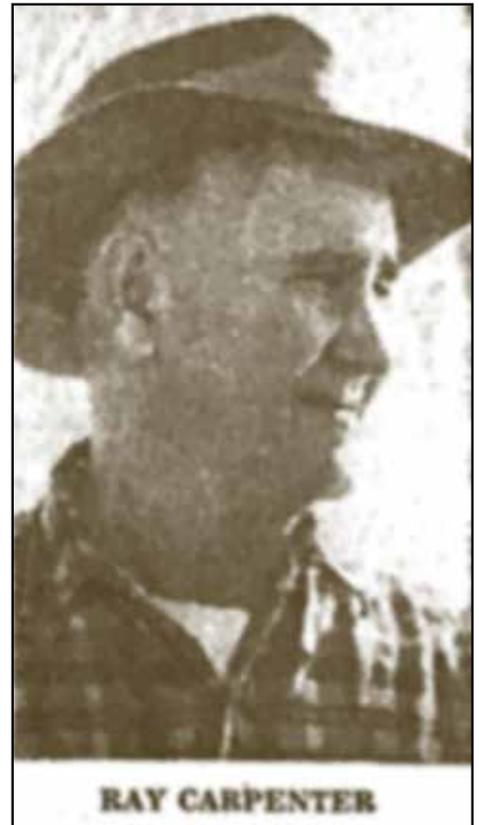
Farmers of the Sea

During the war only esoteric scientists even used the word “environment”. Bill and Steve Smith, two brothers, ran the only fish receiving business in Bodega Bay, until war was declared. “Food” was the operative word in play, because the troops needed valuable protein. Then, two important things happened: California banned ring nets for catching crab and more fish receiving stations moved into Bodega Bay, including one that would prove to be an important protein resource, *Meredith Fisheries*.

Phasing out ring-nets led to the Carpenter family moving to town from the Oregon Coast. Ring-nets were time consuming, demanding constant care by fishermen. Ring-nets were inefficient, catching just one or two crabs at a time while scooping up and killing loads of other sea life

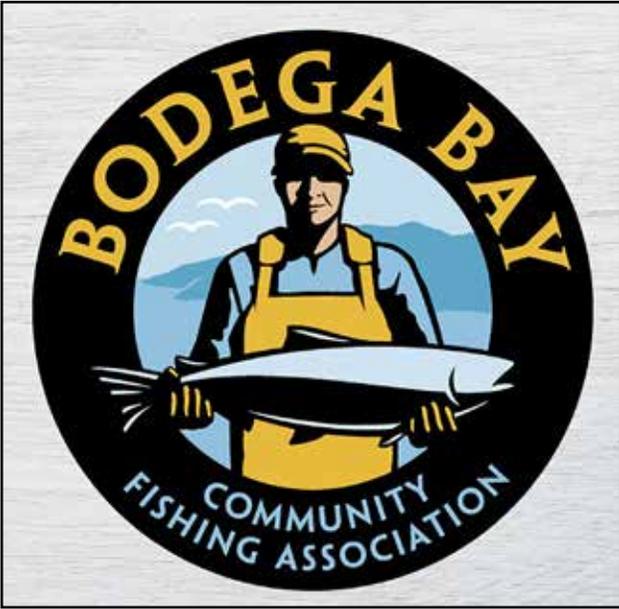
In Oregon, fishermen made and used round, durable crab pots that made a real catch possible with each trip. One of the most successful fishermen, **Ray Carpenter**, made the move and taught locals his skills. His son Earl Carpenter, married Glenice Ames and became one of the most respected fishermen in Bodega Bay, earning the nickname “The Captain” by his colleagues for his work and influence in the industry, as well as his successful catches.

Until the war ended, all anyone could think of was feeding the troops. By that time, the general public had discovered the joys of fresh crab, not canned, and frozen fresh fish so it could be enjoyed far from the coast. Business thrived in Bodega Bay. Food was still the driving force in the fishing fleet.



But something ugly was rearing its head.

STEWARDS OF THE SEA IN BODEGA BAY



Fishermen were forced to wrangle with greedy fish buyers, wholesalers wanting more and more profit. Buyers squeezed out fishermen who actually went about the dangerous business of catching fish, paying as little as possible for the sometimes tragic work. Each fisher was in business for himself, making it easy for the buyers to pick off the fishers one-by-one with low-prices. So the fishers banded together to form the **Bodega Bay Fishermen's Association** to effectively bargain with buyers as a group. Back in Washington DC, when McCarthy-era politicians learned of unions, they determined collective bargaining leaned towards socialism. Collective bargaining was outlawed in 1952.

Fishermen were back at the mercy of the buyers. The former members of the outlawed association tried to figure a way to continue collective bargaining. They came up with a clever idea and formed a local chapter of the Grange. **The National Grange** was originally formed after the Civil War in rural areas so widowed and orphaned children of rural farmers killed during the war could collectively bargain and purchase supplies, aid and educate each other. Bodega Bay's fishermen successfully made the case they were "Farmers of the Sea" and formed Chapter #777. Politicians could eat their hats and the fishermen united were a powerful force. Together with 150 members, local volunteer labor built our Grange Hall, a key public gathering place in Bodega Bay. It is still one of the few "fishing Grange."



A decade later in the 1960s, the rural co-op movement became popular. Consumer cooperatives, owned by members, used the co-op to purchase the goods or services that they needed, eliminating the wholesaler. The fishermen, using the laws that allowed co-ops, re-formed their association, but by that time the Bodega Bay Grange had become a major institution which thrives and which supplies their community to this day. For years teens got their first cars with loans from the Grange Credit Union, and Grange Chapter #777 handed out generous scholarships to them when they graduated.

(To be continued in the RBHS Spring 2022 issue)

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Casini Ranch

by Susan Teel - 2015

From as early as 4000 BCE, Western Sonoma County was the home of the Pomo. The Pomo were hunter gatherers that lived in small groups of bands. Some of the Pomo people remain in the area today, including the Kashia Band at Stewarts Point Ranch and the Dry Creek Rancheria. Just to the South of Casini Ranch is Pomo Canyon Campground, named after the native people who once populated the area. Taking the 12 mile hike from Casini Ranch to Shell Beach will take you right through Pomo Canyon. Fort Ross was a former Russian establishment along the Sonoma County coast from 1812 to 1842. The land around Casini Ranch was used to harvest lumber and grow food for the Fort until the Russians departed the Fort in 1841. Not much of this period remains in the area around Casini Ranch; however, the Fort itself is only 30 minutes away.

Duncans Mills Ranchero was part of the Rancho Muniz Mexican Land Grant given in 1845 by Governor Pio Pico to Manuel Torres. Manuel Torres was the brother of Manuela Torres Smith, the wife of Captain Stephen Smith. Casini Ranch, however being on the south side of the Russian River, was part of the Rancho Bodega Mexican Land Grant since the River was the dividing line between the grants. The Bodega Ranchero was granted to Captain Stephen Smith in April of 1846. While the Mexican culture did have influence in Sonoma County, it was held in check to some degree along the coast due to the presence of the Russian Fort.

Casini Ranch was once the Moscow Mill owned by the Russian River Land and Lumber Company. In 1889 the Russian River Land and Lumber Company was the largest owner of timber land in the area with



FROM THE ARCHIVES



10,000 acres. Moscow Mill was located south of the mill relocated by the Duncan Brothers from the Russian River mouth to the location of the North Pacific Coast Narrow Gauge Railroad Bridge in 1877. Two rail lines once ran through Duncans Mills. The first was the North Coast Narrow Gauge rail which came from the south starting at Sausalito then ran through the towns of Point Reyes Station, along Tomales Bay, Tomales, Valley Ford, Freestone, Occidental and Monte Rio. The Narrow Gauge rail actually went beyond Duncans Mills and terminated in Cazadero from 1886 to 1933. Evidence of these rail lines can still be found today, from sections of track that can be seen along Austin Creek (or even on the west beach at Casini Ranch) to the four narrow gauge cars on display in Duncans Mills. In 1911, The Northwest Pacific Standard Gauge rail line reached Duncans Mills from the East running down the Russian River from Fulton and through Guerneville. Most of the narrow gauge tracks were converted at that time to standard gauge. The standard gauge track was last used in 1935.

The Casini Family has lived on what is now Casini Ranch for four generations and has owned the land for three generations. In 1881 Bartolomeo and Anastasia Casini settled in the area around Duncans Mills, first living in the

Freezeout Creek* area and then later living at the European Hotel in Duncans Mills after the bridge was washed out. Their son Paul Anthony Casini worked as the dairy manager on the land that is now Casini Ranch for the La Franchi Family who at the time owned the dairy ranch. Over the period of 1928 to 1932 Paul Anthony Casini would buy out the La Franchi shares in the dairy and become the sole owner of what is now Casini ranch. Over the next 33 years people visiting the area would express an interest in going to the river to fish. During this time, Paul Anthony or his son George would grant people access and allow them to go down to the river. In 1965 George Casini began the process of turning the 110 acre parcel bounded by the Russian River and Moscow Road into what is the Casini Ranch Family Campground (22855 Moscow Road, Duncans Mills, CA (800) 451-8400).

The Campground is still owned by the Casini Family. George's son Paul Casini is the chairman of the organization that oversees the day to day operations of the park.

* The spectacular 3,373 acre community-powered Willow Creek Park is located near Duncans Mills and covers much of the Willow Creek and Freezeout Creek watersheds. Its rolling grasslands, forested ravines, and fish-bearing streams are home to an abundance of plants and wildlife. Hikers, bikers and equestrians enjoy the 15 mile network of old logging and ranch roads, accessible through a free permit-for-use program. For more information, go to the Landpaths-Willow Creek website. An orientation is required. Enjoy beautiful Sonoma County! ■

RBHS BUILDING REPAIR FUND

BUILDING REPAIR FUNDRAISER A SUCCESS!!



When RBHS announced in Spring 2021 that we needed repairs to our building, the community stepped up and we received over \$5,000 in donations. Last Fall we launched our fundraiser offering a matted print of David Lewis and Joan Poulos's SS Marin, painted by Patty Pieropan Dong, and we received more than \$6,000, including a \$1,000 matching donation! These donations in 2021 covered the cost of our construction project! RBHS is grateful to these generous donors to the Building Repair Fund:

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Randy Breaux
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RBHS also gratefully acknowledges:

David Lewis and Joan Poulos, who granted permission to copy and print their painting of the SS Marin and covered the cost of the prints

Ren Brown Gallery, which provided its expert abilities matting the prints of the SS Marin painting and packaging and mailing prints to out-of-town donors

Robin Rudderow, RBHS Archivist, who conceived of, organized, and oversaw the fundraiser and delivered prints to local donors

John Maestri, RBHS Webmaster, who created the flyer announcing the fundraiser

John Hershey, who took the portrait of David Lewis and Joan Poulos holding the original painting of the SS Marin

Linda Mark, RBHS Treasurer, who ably kept track of the donations

Mag Dimond, who wrote "What Is the Story of the SS Marin?" <<http://ranchobodega.org/marin.pdf>>

Our sincere thanks to our Advertisers, Supporters, Donors & New Members



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<http://www.ranchobodega.org/membership_form.pdf>

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

The Fishermen of Bodega Bay

The fishing industry has gone through changes over the years. One of the most dramatic was its changing role from “farmers of the sea” who harvested a catch to “stewards of the sea” who played an important role in conserving and protecting the fishery and waters off Bodega Bay.

Casini Ranch



Casini Ranch was on the south side of the Russian River and was part of the Rancho Bodega Mexican Land Grant. The River was the dividing line between Rancho Muniz Mexican Land Grant and the Rancho Bodega Land Grant.

WINTER EVENTS

Researching Your Home’s History: webinar presented by the Sonoma County History and Genealogy Library for the Historical Society of Santa Rosa. Topics include Historical Maps/Atlases, Aerial Photographs, City & Telephone Directories, California Digital Newspaper Collection, David Rumsey’s Map Collection, Fire Insurance Maps, Newspapers.com, Ancestry Heritage Hub and Sonoma County Historic Photos <<https://youtu.be/JsqG6EuJYuo>>

Mapping Our Community: Gaye LeBaron and the Stories of Sonoma County, virtual exhibit presenting stories of individuals and communities that have shaped Sonoma County as viewed through the lens of Gaye's columns, such as Bracero Program in Sonoma County, Japanese Americans and the Alien Land Law, Utopian Communities in Sonoma County and Black Americans in Santa Rosa. <<https://library.sonoma.edu/about/gallery/digital-exhibits>>

Homeschool Day: Snoopy in Space: Wednesday, February 23, 2022, 10:00 am–Noon, Charles M. Schulz Museum, 2301 Hardies Lane, Santa Rosa (W. Steele Lane & Hardies Lane), Snoopy has ventured into space in the Peanuts comic strip and as an official NASA mascot. Learn about the phases of the moon, stars and nebulae, and space exploration all through hands-on activities. Design a space lander, make light-up constellations, launch bottle rockets. \$10.00 per child. Chaperones free. <<https://schulzmuseum.org/homeschool-girl-scout-days/>>

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/>>

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