

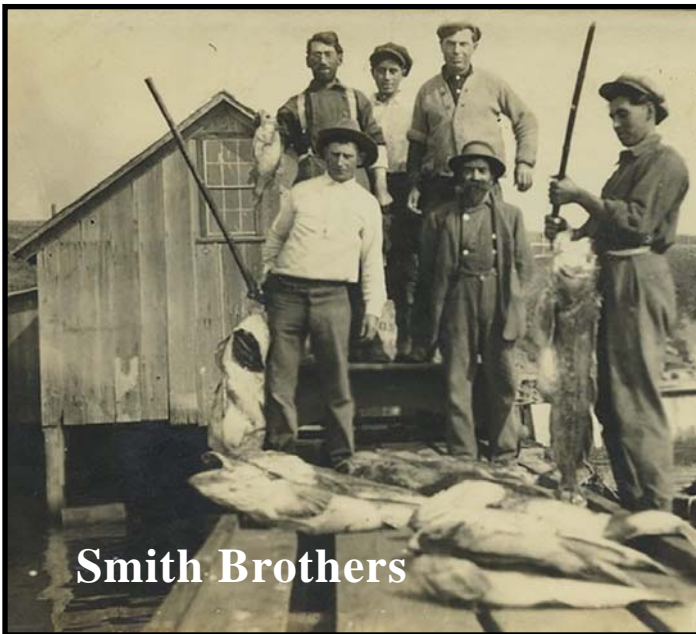
# RANCHO BODEGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Touring Bay Highway Then & Now

In Bodega Bay much of the landscape and structures from more than a century ago are still here. Horses and wagons are gone. Luckily, we don't carry our own water any longer. Fishing and Ranching are still valued as a way of life. Then and now the community strongly supported each other and were quick to say, "we take care of our own."

Illustrated in this newsletter issue, the area's culture and historic character persist today. Even Google Maps shares the evidence. The village then known simply as "Bay" is found by traveling on "Bay Highway" otherwise known today as Highway One.

**Smith Brothers Road** At the turn of the 20th century,



Smith Brothers

when heading north, the first landmark on your left was the home of the Smith family, where today Smith Brothers Road turns from the highway toward the water's edge. Not surprisingly, it was home to a fishermen's family with strong Coast Miwok heritage. The matriarch of the Smith family was Tsupu, a Coast Miwok. Her son, William (Bill) Smith, born in 1843, was fathered by Capt. Stephen Smith, Bodega Rancho's first recorded landowner.

Bill Smith and his sons fished from small boats off the sand spit known as Doran Beach. In 1911, five Smith brothers fished in Alaska earning enough to buy two 50-foot trawlers from the Boat Works in Sausalito. Their catch from the twin boats, named Smith Brothers 1 & 2, was sold from the fish market operated by the sixth brother in Santa Rosa. By 1919 the Smith Brothers were selling their catch at Paladini's fish market in San Francisco, establishing themselves as the first true commercial fishers in Bodega Bay.

The Smith's purchased property easily accessible to the water from the Doran's. Their home resided on the highway. On the water, they built a two-story structure with a boom and wharfage facilities to handle three boats at a time. **Tooch Columbo**, who passed recently, remembered playing there as a boy. (see page 6)

The old warehouse still stands today, in 2024 it's Bodega Bay Yacht Club, owned and operated by Sonoma County.

Up the road was Bay School. In 1926 when the



Bay School

fishing village was simply known as "Bay," Louie Asman came from his mother's home in Eureka to build Bay's schoolhouse. Harold Ames' Grandmother was a teacher at Bay School. Today the Carpenter family proudly displays a picture showing her class in 1932.

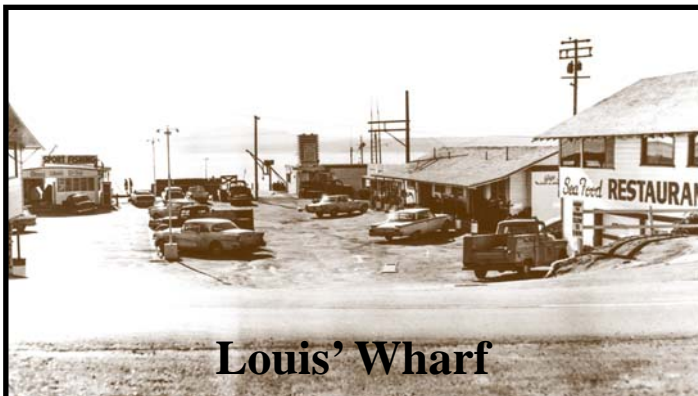
## THEN AND NOW

Mid-century school trustees included Paul Wedel, Shirley Ames from Bay and Pauline Columbo from Bodega. Recently, one of Bodega Bay's native sons who still lives in the village, remembers attending 5-6th grades at Bay School. He went on to 7 & 8th grade in the new school built on top of the hill. For high school classes, just as students today, he rode the school bus to high school in Tomales. The men in these families fished for their living and served the community as volunteer firefighters, while their wives served as postal workers and post mistresses in both Bodega and Bay.

Bay School eventually closed in favor of the modern school at the top of the hill, today's Bodega Bay Elementary School. When the property sold Great Grandma Ames didn't move far; her family replaced her school with two new homes for the Ames and Carpenter families. Their families figure large in our local history. Sister-in-laws Shirley Ames and Glenice Ames Carpenter, both born in 1931, outlived their husbands and were the closest of sisters living next door. Glenice Ames Carpenter died in 2021. Shirley Ames died one year later.

Now in 2024, the two homes are owned and cherished by Carpenter families. Now painted blue, the younger generations of Carpenters lovingly updated and remodeled the twin homes, preserving their family's ownership and history. Across the street on the water is the original Ames family home.

**The Fishing business was growing fast!** At the waters



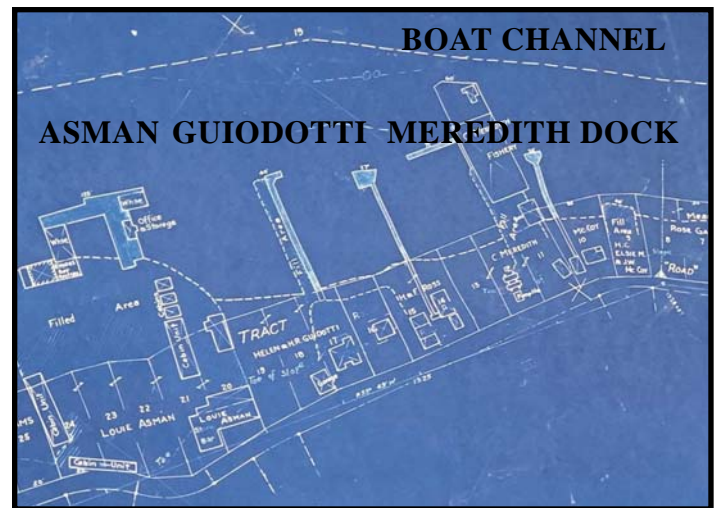
**Louis' Wharf**

edge, the next stop on Bay Highway was Luis Asman's refreshment stand selling bait, fresh fish, soft drinks

and cigarettes. He went on to build **Louie's "Coast Camp"** adding his Wharf and starting a wholesale fish business with Paladini. Louie eventually built a bar and restaurant (more bar than restaurant). In 1940 a family reunion was served a hearty breakfast, enjoyed a day of swimming, boating, fishing, softball, and dancing. For dinner they enjoyed a fish dinner with crab, rock cod, oysters, salmon and clam chowder.

In the 1940's, Bay village thrived. After the channel was dredged in 1943, (except for the sand spit on Doran Beach) docks spouted on Bay's shore. World War II created demand for protein-rich food. An airstrip formed where today we wander the Bird Walk following unnaturally square paths. When the boys came home, the Baby Boom began, the fish were abundant and the docks spilled over with rafted fishing boats and fish canneries.

**The Tides was Bay's meeting place.** On the wharf,



the "Low Tides" with board floors, curved counter and tables with benches, was the commercial fishermen's refuge offering the constant chatter of a marine radio, strong coffee, enormous breakfasts, beer and chowder.

The restaurant known as "The High Tides" was the fancier dinner house with big windows with a good view of the bay. The Grange even held it's meetings there.

Gaye LeBaron, Bodega Bay's respected historian, colorful columnist and former resident tells the story that one day near the end of World War II a tired Louie

## THEN AND NOW

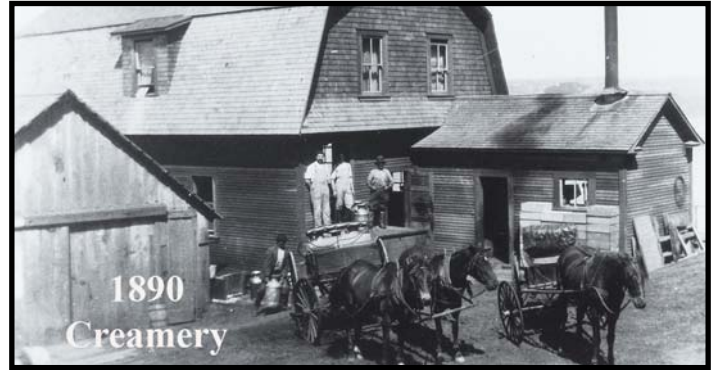
sold his business to a Yugoslavian immigrant who gave him a \$50 deposit.

In the 1950's the Zankich family took over the entire business including boat ways (rails for the boats to go into dry dock), the party boat business, both restaurants and 21 cabins. On the water, The Tides and its Dock remained the community hub of activity hosting the Fish Fest boat parade, the Blessing of the Fleet, the boarding place for party boats and more. In 1963, Mitch Zankich had his 15 minutes of fame when Alfred Hitchcock filmed "The Birds" on the property.



In 1980, after nearly 30 years, the Zankich's sold to Bob Bugatto from San Francisco, owner of Pt. St. George Fisheries, a fish wholesaler with plants up and down the West Coast. The stalwart family-owned business remains a popular roadside stop with generations of tourists and a place where locals gather family and friends. On the water, fishermen still parade to the docks especially when Salmon and Crab seasons are open. Bugatto's family continues the wholesale fish business today, a diverse successful enterprise operating the Tides Wharf, The Inn at the Tides, The Tides 76 Gas Station, a Fresh Fish Market, Gift Shop & Snack Bar.

**Continuing north on Bay Highway**, an original landmark is the Creamery. The distinctive building still stands on the water below Highway One. As early as the 1800's ranchers brought fresh, rich milk to the Creamery, in turn brought by boat to the growing population in San Francisco. Cattle still roam our hills and ranch owners are actively recognized in our Sonoma County's Local Coastal Plan approved last year, in 2023.



**The Heart of Bay Village** served fishermen and families. Proposed in 1922, "Taylor Tract" was the first residential development for fishermen and their families. The new school was at the top of the hill. Plenty of beautiful redwood was available. Skilled shipwrights used expert carpentry and woodworking skills to construct small, practical, and beautiful residences that mirrored wooden wheel houses and boat cabins.



Dubbed "old town" by newcomers, the heart of Bay was and remains today as the center serving Salmon Creek, Porto Bodega, the fishermen on the docks, still reflecting the cool character and culture of Bodega's **Bay Village, a fishing village.**

\* It's important to recognize and give credit to the original writer of most of the above article. Gaye LeBaron is our esteemed historian. She and her husband once lived and worked in Bodega Bay.

# BODEGA BAY COMMUNITY

## Bodega Bay's Area

## Community Org

### Bodega Bay Area Chamber of Commerce

60 local small and family-owned businesses # of employees?  
Fishermen, Deck Hands, Ranchers  
Sonoma Coast Visitors Center (Sonoma County Tourism)  
Chowder Day  
Hitchcock Festival

### Non-Profits, Foundations, Community & Land Trusts, Emergency Prep & Response

BB Community Center  
Bodega, First & Emergency Responders  
Bay Fire Foundation  
Bodega Land Trust  
Bodega Volunteer Fire Dept  
Coastwalk/CCTA Coastwalk.org  
CA Native Plant Society  
CERT Community Emergency Response Team  
COAD Community Organizations Active in Disaster  
Fisherman's Marketing Association  
Stewards of the Coast & Redwoods  
Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District  
Jenner Community Center  
RBHS Rancho Bodega Historical Society  
Waves of Compassion - Food Pantry for everyone  
Surfrider Foundation  
Bodega Bay Grange



### Neighborhoods, Clubs & HOA

Bodega  
Bodega Bay  
Bodega Harbour HOA  
Carmet  
Jenner  
Salmon Creek  
SeaGals  
Serena Del Mar

### Bodega Marine Lab

Abalone Breeding Program  
Kelp Restoration  
Healthy Oceans  
Science Uncorked  
Volunteers

### State &

Doran B  
Sonoma  
Chanslo

## Organizations

### Churches

Bodega Bay Union Church  
St Teresa of Avila Church  
Fishermen's Chapel



### County Parks

each  
Coast State Park  
r Ranch

## Support Each Other

### Local Color

Bodega Head Fisherman's Memorial  
Peter Connors' pressed seaweed  
Farmers Market  
Whale Watching  
Galleries  
Porto Bodega wood carvings  
Salmon Creek Art Walk  
Sport Fishing Porto Bodega  
Artists, Lots of them! Art Trails  
Spud Point Fisherman  
Bodega Marine Lab Coast in Color 7/2/23



### Social Media

Bodega Bay Area Local FB  
Next Door  
BB List Serve for Email Group Nick Makris

### Schools & their PTA's

Bodega Bay Elementary School PTA  
Tomales High School  
Shoreline School District

### Government Agencies

NOAA  
Marine Protective Areas (MPAs)  
Unincorporated Sonoma County / CMAC Committee  
CA State and Sonoma County Regional Parks  
US Coast Guard Flotilla  
Bodega Bay Post Office (Historical & Community Displays)  
Creative Sonoma

## THEN AND NOW



Bay's Post Office, it's general store, salt water baths, and a dance hall called "The Blue Room" served the growing community. A boarding house (Bay Hotel) operated during the war served as temporary quarters for troops protecting the coast. Today, Diekmann's Bay Store can be found there. Second homes cropped up for land lubbers escaping inland heat.

By the 1960's, wrapping around the highway curve, the Firehouse stood on the left side of the road followed by the hangout called the Dry Dock, preferred by deckhands. It's the same place where Sophie and Rick Powers' Boat House serves Fish & Chips today.

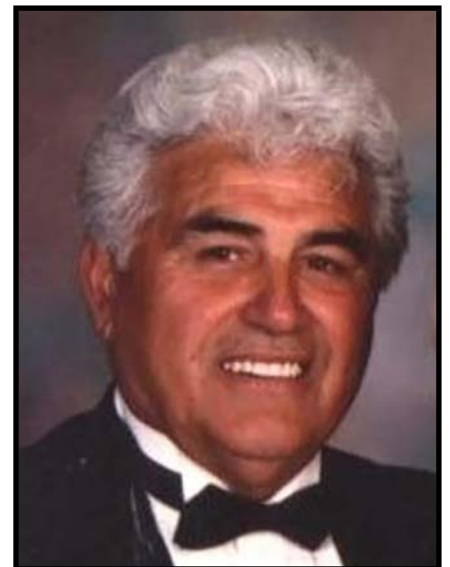
Across from the Dry Dock, the new Grange Hall representing Fishermen as farmers of the sea served the Fishermen's Marketing Association. Across from the Grange, Pelican Plaza once a gas station, came later. ■




## Arthur Charles Colombo "Tooch" Oct. 20, 1935 - Feb. 23, 2024

Arthur Charles Colombo "Tooch" peacefully passed away in his home on February 23, 2024. Born on October 20, 1935 in Santa Rosa, Tooch spent his formative years on the family ranch in Bodega. Dedicating over 50 years to a successful career as a butcher, and later as an elder of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria.

In remembering Tooch and his heritage in the Coastal Miwok Native American tribe, his contributions to the communities he served will be greatly missed. Growing up in Bodega Bay and fishing the northern California rivers, Tooch's love for the outdoors including being featured in the movie "Rivers of the Lost Coast," where he shared the screen with the nation's top fly fishermen. Beyond his passion for fishing, Tooch was an avid hunter, exploring the wilderness not only in California but also in Montana. His adventurous spirit and connection to the natural world added a rich layer to the tapestry of his life. ■



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**THANK YOU TO THOSE SUPPORTING OUR BUILDING REPAIR FUND**

Angela Aloise; Suzanne Martin  
Annie Springer Estate

***STORIES & ARTIFACTS***

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@bodegamoon.net

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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.  
[http://www.ranchobodega.org/membership\\_form.pdf](http://www.ranchobodega.org/membership_form.pdf)

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**IN THIS ISSUE**

**Then and Now**

In Bodega Bay much of the landscape and structures from more than a century ago are still here. Fishing and Ranching are still valued as a way of life.



**Tooch Colombo  
 1935-2024**

Born in Santa Rosa with a heritage in the Coastal Miwok tribe. Tooch was an avid hunter, exploring both California & Montana.

**SPRING EVENTS**

**RBHS MEMBERSHIP MEETING** Thursday April 11th Tides Wharf Restaurant - South Room, 1:30 pm Tour of Tides Wharf Wholesale Fish Processing Operation, 2-4 pm Brief Officers Meeting and NOAA Talk on the Greater Farallones and Cordell Bank Sanctuaries. These waters are bountiful with biodiversity where a robust food web supports life for thousands of species, including humans. Free Parking

**SCIENCE UNCORKED.** Gourmet au Bay, 1412 Bay Flat Rd. Every other Wednesday in April & May. Happy Hour @ 4 pm, Food until 6 pm. Presentations begin at 6 pm. April 17th: Bodega Marine Reserve: Outdoor Classroom and living laboratory. May 1st: Gonad or go home: tales from abalone reproduction research, May 15th: Using super glue and GoPros to understand seasonality in local seagrass beds. (www.facebook.com/ScienceUncorked/) ScienceUncorked@gmail.com

**BODEGA BAY FISHERMEN'S FESTIVAL** Saturday & Sunday, May 4/5, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm Westside Regional Park, 2400 Westshore Road, Bodega Bay, Featuring Live Music, Entertainment, Wine Tasting, Beer Booth, Local Cuisine Food Booths, Art Show, Crafts Fair Exhibits & Children's Events. Tickets at (www.bbfishfest.org)

**SNOOPY'S ICE SKATING LESSONS** Each eight-week Lesson Set, skaters progress through one Level within a Skating Track. At the end of a Lesson Set, skaters are evaluated to determine whether they pass their current Level or will need improvement and will need to repeat their current Level. The Tracks follow the curriculum set forth by Learn to Skate USA, endorsed by United States Figure Skating. For detailed curriculum, please contact: Snoopy's Home Ice: 1667 West Steele Lane, Santa Rosa, California 95403 or 707-546-7147.

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