

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Bodega Cemetery (Calvary Cemetery)

Catalogue by Tom Chapman - 1994



The correct name for the Bodega Cemetery is Calvary Cemetery, but people frequently call it St. Teresa's Cemetery. The Cemetery came into being in 1869, and there were two burials that year. The first was Thomas Johnson, who was seven years old; the second was Willie Long five years old.

Some may wonder why the cemetery lands were sold to an archbishop in San Francisco. The reason; the Santa Rosa Diocese did not come into existence until 1962; thus we were a part of the very large Archdiocese of San Francisco.

Amongst the hundreds of burials in this cemetery we find Rose and the Gaffney family. The head of the family was Miles Gaffney, born in Ireland. He came to Bodega Bay in 1864 after many years in the gold fields of California. He bought a ranch on Bodega Head and a house in Bodega, so his sons could go to the new Potter School.

Miles, and his wife Catherine, hired a local woman as their housekeeper. Rose (Schmidt) Walsh was the daughter of a German immigrant, who was a Lutheran minister. Rose's first husband left her with a small child Ellen. Rose would later marry one of the Gaffney sons, William, who adopted the Rose's young daughter, Ellen Walsh Gaffney. After working the ranch for most of their lives, Rose and William bought a house in Salmon Creek, where William passed in 1941.

Rose who was born in 1895, continued on, acting as an amateur archaeologist whose collection of Indian artifacts from the area was later to be donated to the Sebastiani collection. Rose became well known for her rejection of PG&E's nuclear power plant to be built on Bodega Head,

Another notable burial in the Cemetery was young Nicholas Green. Nicholas had been a second grader at the Bodega School before his trip to Italy with his parents. His family had been traveling in Southern Italy when their rental car was mistaken for a jeweler's vehicle and was fired on. The bullets injured Nicholas and he was placed on life support in an Italian hospital. While Nicholas lay wounded, his heart remained strong. It was with that realization that the Green family offered to have his organs donated to seven Italian's who needed transplants.

When his remains were brought home to Bodega Bay, the ceremony at St. Teresa's was attended by many who had known the family. At the Bodega Cemetery, his burial was a solemn affair. Bodega Bay children took turns tossing red roses and white carnations next to Nicholas' grave. President Bill Clinton would later send a condolence letter to the Green family; "Hillary and I were so sorry to hear about the death of your son and we extend our deepest sympathy. Your generosity in donating your son's organs is a testament to your love for him and I applaud your extraordinary compassion." ■

FROM THE ARCHIVES



Rose Gaffney 1895–1974



Nicholas Green 1987-1994

