

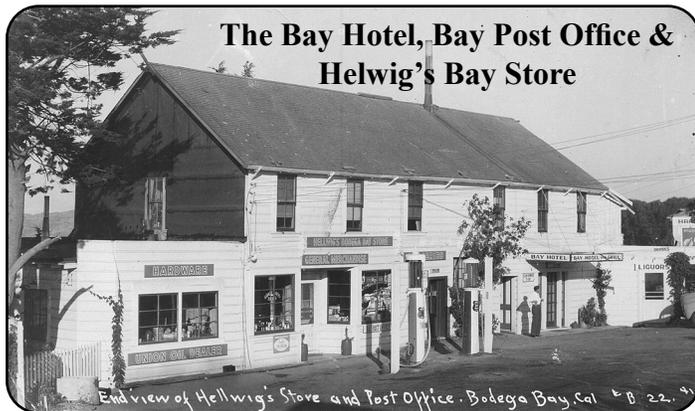
FROM THE ARCHIVES

REMEMBERING GLENICE AMES CARPENTER

By Robin Rudderow, Archivist, Rancho Bodega Historical Society

The passing of Glenice Ames Carpenter on August 4, 2021 at the age of 90 signals the closing of a chapter in Bodega Bay history. Gone, but not forgotten, below are stories she shared about her early days in Bodega Bay; many were told at a talk she gave in 1992.

The tiny coastal town was then called “Bay”. In the 1930's I imagine a child's life of combing the dunes and beaches was without worry.



The Bay Hotel, where Diekmann's Deli is now located (1275 Highway One) was the backdrop for a significant time in Glenice's life. Glenice described the hotel as a large two story building which also housed the Bay Store and the Bay Post Office. Just north of that was a large two story building that was the Town Hall, used for dances and meetings. The ground level was a garage. Across from the Hotel was a butcher shop (where the AT&T building stands today). Where Pelican Plaza is there was a service station and bar & grill that was called Otto's.

The Ames family moved into the Bay Hotel in 1935 when Glenice was about four. Even then the swimming tank, still visible if you look over the edge of the Diekmann's parking lot, was dilapidated. Probably built in the early 1900s, it had bathhouses around it and a boiler that heated saltwater for the baths. There was a large wide stairway going down from the Hotel to the swimming tank.

Glenice and her brother, Harold Jr., lived in the Hotel with their parents, Harold and Frieda Ames, who ran

the hotel and operated the bar, called *The Blue Room* because of the blue glass windows.

In the 1930s everybody had outhouses. Without a sewer system the pollution was so bad that locals would not eat clams. Boats would turn black during the summer from sewage. There were multiple epidemics of hepatitis in the town.

In 1936 Glenice began attending Bay School, located at 700 Highway One, where there was one teacher for all 8 grades, with approximately 12 to 20 students attending.

During the years 1939 to 1945 the Ames Family saw big changes in Bodega Bay. The Army Corp of Engineers dredged the bay, opening it up for more commercial fishing boats to come into the bay and deliver their catch. In 1941, Piombo Brothers Construction Company built jetties by making a road down the sand spit, trucking the rock from the quarry in Cheney Gulch to the jetty site. They built a bridge across to the other side to build the jetty on that side, which blocked the harbor and posed a problem for commercial fisherman, including the Smith Brothers.

The Army was dispatched to Bodega Bay in December 1941 immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor. They occupied Rose Gaffney's old ranch house on



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Bodega Head and built a lookout on the highest point of the Head. The soldiers came to the Bay Hotel for meals. The Army was in Bay a few months, when the Coast Guard replaced the Army, and just stayed the duration of the war. At first they occupied the town hall building, then as more troops were needed they took over the Bay Hotel and Glenice's family had to move "now".

With WW2 in full swing, where the Birds Café now stands (1409 Highway One) was a small building used as an aircraft lookout. People from town volunteered their time to watch and report the aircraft that they spotted.

Sand dunes on Bodega Head were bare, not yet having grass planted, so they made a good place for airplane target practice. Planes would fly over hitting targets drawn on the dunes. On the high dune, at what is now the end of Whaleship Road, they constructed a tall tower to observe the planes. When the planes were not practicing, the kids from town ran out onto the area and gather clips and empty cartridges that had fallen to the sand.

At times, planes camouflaged Bodega Bay with smoke, which would last for a few hours before the wind would take it away. During mandatory "blackouts" all windows had to be covered with a heavy black covering at night when the lights were on. Cars had to drive with black out lights. The beaches were covered during the war years with oil, tar, Japanese thong sandals, and a conglomeration of other debris from sunken Pacific ships.

One night everyone in the old hotel left the building and stood in the middle of the road. The rumble from guns offshore shook the building so hard. The flash from the gunfire lit up the whole bay. The Ames Family heard from someone at Mare Island Navy Yard that a Japanese submarine had been sunk.

Riding the schoolbus to Tomales High School with the other Bodega Bay students, a romance with Earl Carpenter, who had moved to Bodega Bay with his family in 1943, ensued. When they were married their wedding reception was at the first restaurant in town, which was at the site of the Tide's Wharf Restaurant,

but up on the road (the Tides Wharf restaurant in the movie *The Birds*).

By 1952 the commercial fishing business was picking up steam. Needed was a Grange in Bodega Bay to support the fishermen, the "Farmers of the Sea", was proposed and the locals signed on wholeheartedly. Only 21 at the time, Glenice became Treasurer and continued to dedicate her good will and energy to the Grange for all the years that she was able.

Cioppino feeds became an annual fundraiser, and Glenice was right there helping to put on the food. When the Gold Ridge Soil Conservation District stepped up to stop the sand on the dunes of Bodega Head from blowing into the bay, they paid Grange members 85 cents an hour to plant dune grass to hold the sand in place, and the members donated their earning to the Grange. Glenice was there planting dune grass and donated her earnings. With the monies that were raised the Grange building was built and the community had a place to gather.

Raising two children with a hardworking fisherman community-minded husband, as postmaster in Bodega and Bodega Bay post offices, supporting the Bodega Bay Volunteer Fire Department and the Bodega Bay Area Rescue. The memory of Glenice Ames Carpenter reflects a lifetime of community service, bringing so much good to the people in the town she called home. May her memory live on and be an inspiration to all who live in this fair town. ■

