

The Ranches of Bodega Bay

Hollis Hitchcock - Little Buckhorn Ranch

Hollis Hitchcock born: 24 Oct 1822 Vermont, died: 3 Jan 1896 San Francisco California, buried: Bloomfield Cemetery, Bloomfield, Sonoma County California, married: Amelia Farnsworth 1869 Quebec Canada (she was born: 1847 Quebec Canada, died: 21 Jan 1899 Compton, Quebec Canada, divorced: 1875) no children

Little Buckhorn Ranch, a 446-acre ranch on Coleman Valley Road, was part of the original 35,000 acre Rancho Bodega Land Grant from Mexico. Carved from coastal Buckhorn Ranch, owned by WSM Wright, **Little Buckhorn was formed sometime before 1877**. The first owner was a land man named Hollis Hitchcock. It is likely the next owner was the North Coast Pacific Railroad, using train tracks to haul

logs and goods to coastal boat landings and onto San Francisco. After the Railroad's short tenure, James Coleman became owner in the 1880's. When Captain Stephen Smith allowed settlers to live on his land and make it productive. He then helped them get their products to market on his ships that plied the seas between Bodega Port and the growing San Francisco.

RANCHO BODEGA ENJOYED HARMONY .. UNTIL THE WAR IN 1847. Captain Smith's 1855 death and the remarriage of his wife Manuela to the scheming Tyler Curtis, brought an end to harmony in Rancho Bodega, when Curtis evicted Captain Smith's "squatters" as Curtis called them. The December 1857 eviction lawsuit by Tyler Curtis named fifty-eight defendants, including Hollis Hitchcock and James Coleman, who had built homes and ranches on Rancho Bodega lands. In March 1859, Curtis received judgment in his favor on the eviction action, but the settlers refused to move. Three months later the "Bodega War" erupted where "nary a shot was fired," when Curtis tried



to take the law into his own hands with a band of armed ruffians from San Francisco. Curtis and his militia men were sent packing, but Curtis ultimately prevailed. In short order, land parcels were surveyed and sold; and the patchwork quilt across Rancho Bodega of individual ranches was started.



Hollis Hitchcock Memorial
Bloomfield Cemetery

RANCHO BODEGA IS CARVED INTO CATTLE RANCHES and LOGGING OPERATIONS.

Wright was not named as a defendant in the eviction proceedings because he bought his land from Capt. Smith's Estate. Winfield Scott Mullen Wright ("WSM" 1822-1892) was a '49er from Missouri, married in 1845 to Sarah Boone, granddaughter of frontiersman Daniel Boone. WSM and Sarah had two children, Sampson Boone and Olive Mahala. After a year in California, WSM returned to Missouri and came back to settle in California in 1853 with his young family, his parents and 400 head of cattle. First, he purchased his family homestead further inland, named "Wright Ranch," located at Stony Point and Sebastopol Roads.

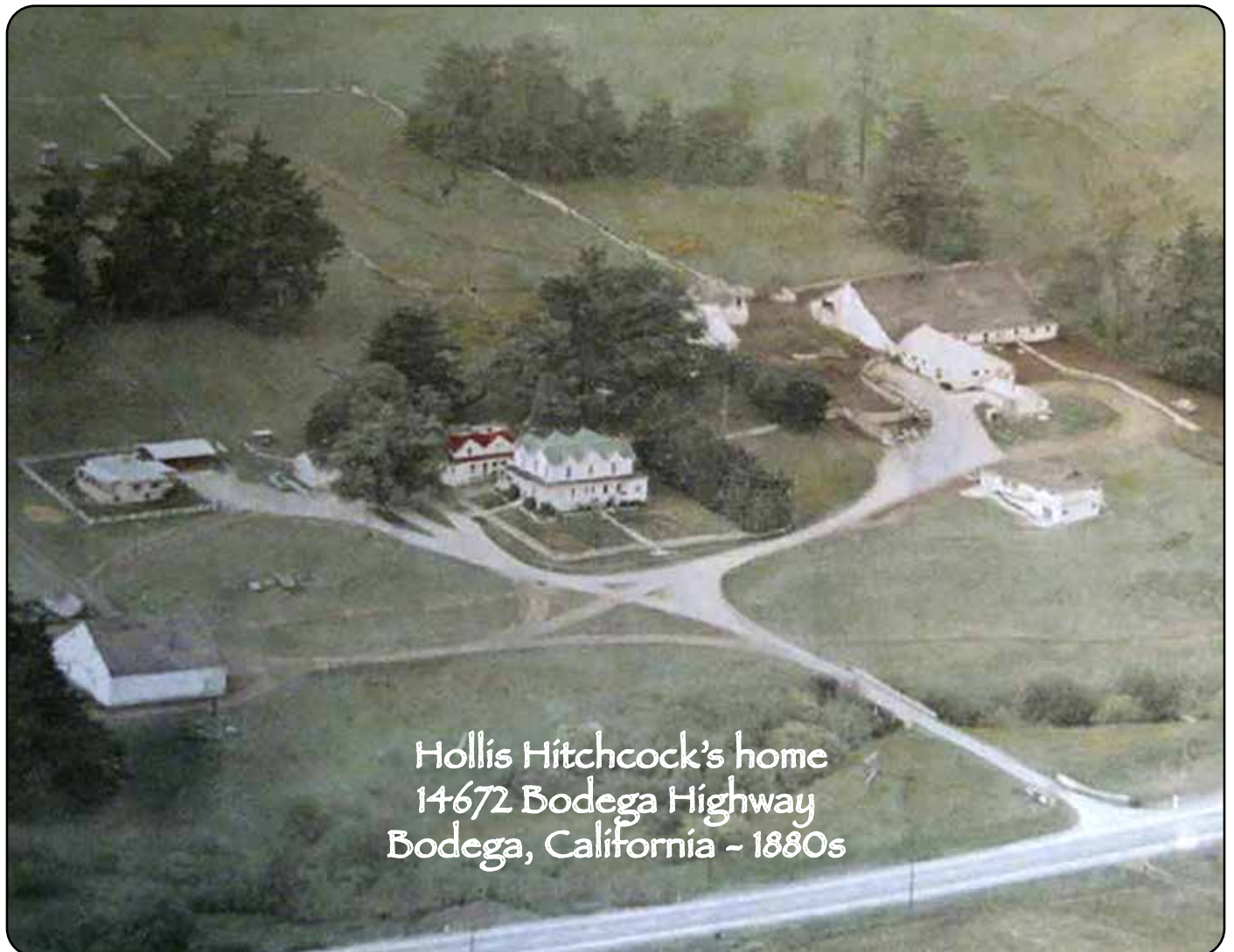
Then, c. 1857, WSM bought nearly 4,000 acres of coastal ranch land, stretching from what we now know as Wright's Beach to the Russian River. WSM called his coastal ranch "Buckhorn." A "buckhorn" is the horn of a deer, used typically to make knife handles, small containers, or rifle sights. After his wife Sarah died. In 1859, WSM then married a widow, Jarena Brown Clark.

A GAMBLING DEBT CREATES A GEM: LITTLE BUCKHORN RANCH. The 1877 Atlas shows Little Buckhorn Ranch was owned by Hollis Hitchcock. The story goes that WSM incurred a gambling debt to Hitchcock, one of Tyler Curtis' evicted settlers.

To pay off his debt WSM deeded 446 acres of Buckhorn Ranch to Hollis, creating the "Little Buckhorn Ranch."

Hollis Hitchcock was born in 1822, probably in Vermont, later moved to Quebec, and then to California. Hollis came to Bodega at the age of 34 looking for pasturage for his cattle stock and became a significant land investor.

Described in the 1892 Register as a short man at 5' 4 1/2" and farmer from Freestone, Hollis was known to be a tough businessman and stickler for collecting rent from his tenants. Hitchcock married Amelia and divorced in 1875 leaving no children. By the time of Hitchcock's death in 1896, he owned approximately 20 ranches in the Bodega area, plus more in Sonoma, Mendocino, Marin, Solano and Monterey Counties. The beneficiaries of his estate were a brother, two sisters, and numerous nieces and nephews. Perhaps surprisingly, in his Will he showed his appreciation for his community by leaving \$20,000 in trust for construction and improvement of the roads in the Bodega Township. The gravesite of Hollis Hitchcock is an elaborate memorial set in the beautiful Bloomfield Cemetery. -- Robin Rudderow 2016



Hollis Hitchcock's home
14672 Bodega Highway
Bodega, California - 1880s

Hollis Hitchcock

in the 1870 United States Federal Census

Name: Hollis Hitchcock

Birth Year: abt 1828

Birthplace: Vermont

Home in 1870: Bodega, Sonoma, California

Occupation: Live Stock Dealer & Farmer

Personal Estate Value: 18000

Real Estate Value: 57400

Household Members:	Name	Age
	Hollis Hitchcock	42
	Amelia Hitchcock	23
	Henry Farnsworth	27

Hollis Hitchcock

in the 1880 United States Federal Census

Name: Hollis Hitchcock

Birth Date: Abt 1823

Birthplace: Vermont

Home in 1880: Bodega, Sonoma, California,

Marital status: Divorced 1875

Father's Birthplace: Vermont

Mother's Birthplace: Massachusetts

Occupation: Stock Raiser

Household Members:	Name	Age
	Hollis Hitchcock	57
	Fedora Pool	43
	Mary Pool	10

Hollis Hitchcock

Quebec, Canada Church Records

Name: Hollis Hitchcock

Event Type: Mariage (Marriage)

Marriage Date: 1869

Marriage Place: Compton, Québec

Place of Worship or Institution: Methodist Church

Religion: Methodist

Spouse: [Amelia Farnsworth](#)

Hollis Hitchcock

San Francisco Funeral Home Records

Name: Hollis Hitchcock

Age at Death: 75

Birth Date: 1821

Birth Place: Canada

Death Date: 3 Jan 1896

Death Place: San Francisco, California

Funeral Home: Kremple & Halsted Funeral Records

Funeral Place: San Francisco, California

Hollis B. Hitchcock

BIRTH 24 OCT 1822 • Vermont

DEATH 03 JAN 1896 • San Francisco, California

Amelia Farnsworth

BIRTH 1847 • Quebec, Canada

DEATH 21 JANUARY 1899 • Compton Québec



Hollis Hitchcock's home
14100 Bodega Highway, Bodega, California - 2020

SAN FRANCISCO CALL, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1895.

THE KING OF BODEGA

Millionaire Hitchcock Has Made His Will and Is Sinking Fast.

DIAGNOSIS OF DOCTOR LANE.

Eccentricities of a Man Whose Vast Fortune Will Be Divided Among Many Relatives.

The exclusive story in THE CALL yesterday that Hollis Hitchcock, the eccentric millionaire of California, was sick unto death at Dr. Lane's hospital caused a great deal of talk among the tens of thousands who know him.

Throughout the Sonoma Valley the name of Hitchcock is good for loads of gold. He owns thousands upon thousands of rich land there, and the seat of his residence is at Bodega, where as the king of Bodega he was master of the finances.

But his domain extends to a vastly richer region, and his lands and possessions otherwise appear on the taxlists of many counties. In Sonoma he owns in many banks—the one in Tomales, all of those in Petaluma, and in one in Santa Rosa; how many others nobody knows.

When it comes to talking of Monterey, Fresno and other counties, the old gentleman owns rolling acres in them, reaching over many miles. It is hard to tell just what he has got. Even his most intimate friends scarcely know, and his real wealth, therefore, can only be guessed at. It is big, however.

As a Czar of Grizzly Island, in the Sacramento River, where the landed financier a few years ago secured 3000 acres, he is well known in that part of the country.

The \$1,000,000 which he was at first quoted to be worth is said to be much too low a figure. If property was worth as much now as it was four or five years ago in California he would be worth probably \$5,000,000 or \$6,000,000. As it is his estate should approach \$2,000,000 or \$3,000,000, so those who know him well aver.

"His land is worth more than \$1,000,000, to say nothing about his other property," said one of his neighbors yesterday. "Besides the land he has \$75,000 or \$100,000 in the Donabue Railroad and interests in the Tomales, Petaluma and Santa Rosa banks. No doubt he has large areas of land and other property also that I know nothing of."

The old gentleman, who is now 75 years old, has neither wife nor children. After he came here from Eastern Canada in 1852, and had made some money, he returned home and brought out a wife. There was a disagreement after a few years, however, and the wife went back and has since died. He never had any children by this marriage.

Though he has no immediate heirs, however, he has a host of nephews, nieces and other relatives in California and Canada. It is said the number will reach thirty or forty anyway, and these, or at least some of them, it is presumed, will fall heir to his great patrimony.

The old man has become convinced that he cannot in all probability survive the Bright's disease of the kidneys with which he is afflicted. Accordingly his nephew, L. V. Hitchcock, ex-District Attorney of Tehama County, came down at his request in reference to his will. The will has since been made and the designation of his millions indicated.

Dr. L. C. Lane, at whose hospital on Clay and Webster streets the old money king now is, said yesterday that the afflicted man could not possibly get well.

"He may live a day or two," he said, "and it is possible he may live longer, but this kidney disease is fatal."

It is said that seven or eight relatives of Hitchcock will, according to the will, get the fortune. Those who know him, however, anticipate the not unusual dissatisfaction among other relatives at such a time, with the possibility of struggles for a portion of the property.

Hitchcock, who laid the foundation of his fortune by driving beef-cattle to the gold mines, has lived an eccentric life for many years. He would not spend a dollar unless there was an absolute need of it.

He acquired in the course of his land accumulations a large house near Bodega, designated as a castle by his neighbors, and here for a long time he lived alone.

When he grew sick finally he was taken to the family of his nephew at Valley Ford, not far away, and they cared for him till he was finally brought to the City for treatment.

Then he went to Dr. Lane's hospital. Though having an income of from \$35,000 to \$40,000 a year, he bewailed the expense, and said the cost was liable to ruin him. Two small rooms there, with the auxiliaries, cost \$3 a day each. The money king said it was too much, that he couldn't stand it.

As there was no fire in the room, and as one was necessary, the relatives moved him to two larger and better rooms, where he could have sufficient warmth and other comforts. The relatives had to assure him, however, that his new rooms did not cost as much as the others, in order to pacify him and make him satisfied.

In later years the money-getter has added materially to his wealth by interest on loans. In this way it is said many very valuable ranches have come into his possession.

The farmers who gave the mortgages could not stem the tide of big interest and succumbed. In this way thousands on thousands of acres were added to the nucleus of acres.

Both ex-District Attorney Hitchcock and Ben Hitchcock, nephews, who have been visiting the old man, left for their homes in Red Bluff and Salinas, respectively, yesterday.

An Ungrateful Rascal

AN UNGRATEFUL RASCAL.—A few days since a young man came to the residence of **Hollis Hitchcock**, near Freestone, and asked permission to stay over night, which was granted. During the evening he told a very pitiful story of misfortune and inability to secure work, which tale excited Mr. Hitchcock's compassion so much that he invited the stranger to remain at his house until the mills should open up,

when he would assist him to secure employment. The stranger gratefully accepted the offer and everything went along smoothly for several days. Thursday evening Mr. Hitchcock, before retiring, placed the sum of \$200 upon a table in the sitting room, and when he arose in the morning it was missing, together with the stranger. Mr. Hitchcock is naturally considerably exasperated at such a return for his kindness, and has, we understand, offered a reward of fifty dollars for the arrest of the guilty party.—*Santa Rosa Democrat.*

San Francisco Call, Volume 79, Number 38, 7 January 1896

SONOMA COUNTY HEIRS,

Twenty Relatives of the Late Hollis Hitchcock Enriched

by His Death.

Others Against Whom He Had a Grievance Cut Off With Small Sums Each.

SANTA ROSA, CAL., Jan. 6.—Hollis Hitchcock, the late deceased millionaire, has acted generously toward most of his relatives. His will has not been filed yet, but is expected here by to-morrow. From one of the witnesses to the will it has been ascertained that he directed that his estate, outside of a few specially named bequests, be equally divided among twenty of his relatives, share and share alike.

To H. M. Le Baron, his nephew and business agent, he left, in addition to the regular pro rata, a sum of \$20,000. He seemed to have had a grievance against a few of his relatives, as he left them but \$100 each. To the Bodega Road District he bequeathed \$20,000. This latter gift is to be placed in the hands of three men, who will superintend the expending of it; \$2000 with the accumulated interest will be spent each year until the whole sum is used up.

Just what the estate will be worth is not known. At one time it was worth a full million of dollars. Land, which forms the major portion of the dead man's wealth, has depreciated of late years, and probably \$800,000 would come nearer the mark. This would give each of the twenty heirs about \$40,000.

The executors are George McNear of Petaluma, H. M. Le Baron of Valley Ford and H. E. Lawrence of Petaluma.

San Francisco Call, Volume 79, Number 40, 9 January 1896

THE WILL OF HOLLIS HITCHCOCK.

*He Was Worth Half a Million and Was
Liberal in His Bequests.*

SANTA ROSA, CAL., Jan. 8.—The will of Hollis Hitchcock, dated December 13, 1895, was filed here to-day.

No appraisement has yet been made, but the petition for the probate of the will estimates the value of the property at about \$500,000.

The property of the estate is situated in Sonoma, Solano, Monterey, Marin and Mendocino counties. It is subdivided as follows: Real estate, Sonoma \$200,000, Monterey \$60,000, Solano \$20,000, Marin \$15,000 and Mendocino \$5000. The personal property is as follows: Railroad stock \$75,000, bank stock \$100,000 and personal effects \$16,000.

The executors of the will are H. E. Lawrence, George McNear and H. M. LeBaron.

Twenty thousand dollars is left to Bodega township and Tomales township, in Marin County, for road improvement. This sum is to be expended at the rate of \$2000 a year till the legacy is used up.

All of the tenants of the deceased in Sonoma and Marin counties are to be given six months rent free.

H. M. LeBaron of Valley Ford is left \$20,000 and a \$30,000 bequeathment is to be held in trust by the executors for the benefit of two sisters and one brother now living. They are to receive a yearly stipend of \$500 each. At their death the residue goes to the children of deceased's sisters and brother and to the child of a sister now living.

Five hundred dollars is left to each of his numerous nephews and nieces, save the children of his brother Benjamin, who are cut off with \$100 each.

The dead man declares he was never married, but in case proof be shown that he had a lawful wife or child, he directs that they be given \$25.

The executors are empowered to sell or convey any or all of the estate, if so desired, without order of the court, and are to act without bonds.

3 Dec 1895: Will of Hollis Hitchcock

← Will of Hollis Hitchcock. →

In the name of God, Amen, I, Hollis Hitchcock, of Sonoma County, State of California, being of sound mind and memory do make publish and declare this my last Will and Testament, in manner following, to wit:

First.

I direct that all my just debts be paid, and that my body be buried at Bloomfield, Sonoma County, California, and that a suitable tomb or monument be erected over my grave.

Second.

I give and bequeath to each of my tenants in Bodega Township, Sonoma County, and in Tomales Township, Marin County, in the State of California, six months rent of the property that he may be occupying as my tenant at my demise that is, the first six months rent that falls due from him after my death.

Third.

I give and bequeath to H. M. LeBaron, J. St. Williams and J. J. Ward, the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars in trust to be used and expended by them in macadamizing the public roads in the Township of Bodega, County of Sonoma, State of California and I direct that they shall loan out said money at interest and shall expend therefrom yearly the sum of Two Thousand Dollars on said roads in macadamizing such parts and portions thereof as they may deem best until said money or fund shall become exhausted. Such fund shall be called the Hollis Hitchcock Bodega Township Permanent Road Fund.

Fourth.

I give and bequeath to my nephew H. M. Le Baron, the sum of Twenty Thousand dollars in consideration for the faithful services that he has rendered me.

Fifth.

I give and bequeath to each one of the children of my deceased brother Benjamin, the sum of One Hundred dollars.

Sixth.

I give and bequeath to each one of the children of my deceased nieces and nephews the sum of Five Hundred dollars.

Seventh.

I give and bequeath to Henry E. Lawrence, Geo. J. McNear and H. M. Le Baron, my nephew, the sum of Thirty Thousand dollars in trust and I direct that they shall loan out said money at interest and shall pay from said money or fund the sum of Five Hundred dollars yearly to my sister Lucy during her lifetime and the same amount yearly to my sister Eliza Ann during her lifetime, and a similar amount yearly to my brother Samuel during his lifetime, and upon the death of the last survivor of them, I direct that the money or fund remaining shall be paid to the children of my deceased brother Hiram and the children of my deceased sister Cordelia and the children of my deceased sister Pamela and the only child of my sister Eliza Ann, share and share alike, that is each child shall receive the same amount.

Eighth.

I hereby declare that I am a single man and that I never was the father of a child but should it be established by testimony or otherwise that I have a lawful wife or a legal child or children then I

give and bequeath to each one of them the sum of Twenty five dollars.

Ninth.

The residue of my property I give, devise and bequeath to the children of my deceased brother Hirau, to the children of my deceased sisters Cordelia and Pamela, and to the only child of my living sister Caliza Ann, share and share alike, that is, each one of said children shall receive the same amount.

Tenth.

I hereby appoint the above named Henry G. Lawrence, Geo. B. McNear, and H. M. LeBaron the Executors of this my last Will and Testament, and having full confidence in their prudence and honesty I do not wish any bond or other security to be required of them for the faithful carrying out the provisions of this will as executors or trustees, and I do not wish any bond or other security to be required of the parties named in the 3^d paragraph of this will in carrying out the trust therein set forth.

Eleventh.

I hereby authorize my aforesaid executors to sell and convey any or all of my property without the order, authority, or interposition of any Court or Judge thereof, either at public or private sale.

Twelfth.

I hereby declare that the parties named in the Third and Seventh paragraphs of this will are all residents of Sarasota County, aforesaid.

Thirteenth.

I hereby revoke all former wills made by me.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this Thirteenth day of December in the year of our Lord One thousand Eight hundred

and ninety five.

Hollis Hitchcock

Seal

The foregoing instrument consisting of four pages besides this was at the date hereof, by the said Hollis Hitchcock signed and sealed and published as, and declared to be his last Will and Testament in presence of us who at his request, and in his presence, and in the presence of each other have subscribed our names as witnesses thereto.

L. C. Lane

Resides N.C. Clay and Buchanan Sts. San Francisco

M. D. Merritt

1037 Linden St. Oakland, Cal.

Geo. R. Williams

Residence No. 1466. 10th Ave. Oakland, Cal.

<Endorsed >

Filed in the office of the County Clerk of Sonoma County, Cal. Jan. 8 - 1896.

Somers B. Fulton, Clerk

By M. G. Hall, Dep. Clerk.

In the Superior Court of the County of Sonoma
State of California.

Probate.

In the matter of the Estate of } Certificate of Proof of Will.
Hollis Hitchcock, Deceased.

J. S. K. Daugherty, Judge of the Superior Court of the County of Sonoma, do hereby certify:

That on the 20th day of January A.D. 1896, the annexed instrument was admitted to probate as the last Will and Testament of Hollis Hitchcock deceased, that the testimony taken on the probate of said Will