

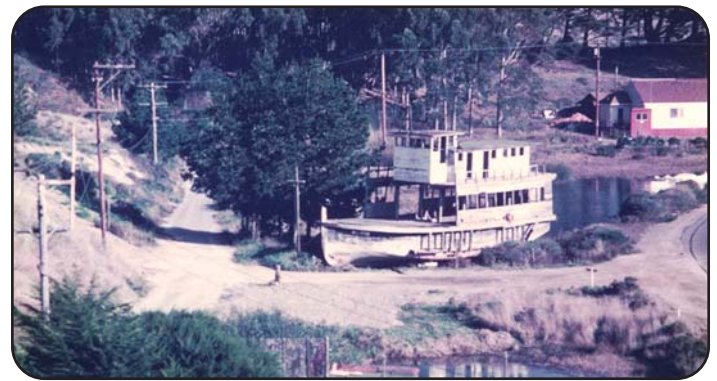
What is the Story of the SS Marin? by Mag Dimond

American towns and villages are rich with stories. These tales can come from old well-preserved houses, from broken down bridges, lakes and indigenous wildlife. And also stories come from boats – vessels used for transporting, fishing, storage and leisure. Bodega Bay is home to a mysterious story-laden boat called the *SS Marin*, who may be close to 100 years old, surviving a sketchy and mysterious past.



Some historic legends we encounter are false and some are true. Described by some as storage for the region's Bodega Red Potatoes, the *SS Marin* was in fact a ferry boat on the Sacramento Delta, reportedly built in Antioch in 1928. In the 40's she was brought to Bodega Bay by the *Meredith Fish Company* to be a delivery boat, serving as a place to store the bounty brought in by the fishing fleets. At that point, she was parked in the bay by Porto Bodega. The fishing business changed and for a limited time she became a floating storeroom housing unused shark nets – that is until the market for shark liver died out...

**“Storm Damage High to Bodega Bay Docks – Forty Boats Sunk or Heavily Damaged”
cried the January 5, 1959 Press Democrat headline**



The storm crashed ashore and shoved the *SS Marin* to her present resting place adjacent to Bay Flat Road.



In time, the *SS Marin* would wither and age as do so many buildings by the sea, ultimately becoming what some people might describe as a pile of wood.



In the early 1960's PG&E built a shoreline road to the proposed site of its nuclear power plant on Bodega Head. Despite ardent resistance when a local longshoreman with a wooden leg turned conservationist, road construction prevailed, until he gave up his fight for both his property and the *SS Marin*. The old ferry boat would then become definitively cut off from the bay waters.

The chapter that followed involved the inevitable conflict between locals, some who wanted to preserve the little piece of marine history, and others who felt it should be incinerated because it was an eyesore. This humble boat has been photographed and painted, and maritime historians from San Francisco have been sketching and studying it. It remains an object of the public's curiosity...

The disintegrated *SS Marin* carries many stories: of the harsh conditions of life working on the water in northern California and those personalities who stayed the course, of the political clout of power companies who often devastate landscapes in favor of "progress," of the local citizens arguing incessantly about maintaining their community, and of those dedicated to honoring history and tradition by preserving such wonders as character-filled boats in various states of decay, reminding us of a time when hard work amidst the elements was truly valued.

Yes, the *SS Marin* has a meaningful and rich legacy. It offers us a whisper of a story about this quirky and beautiful landscape.