

## FORMATION OF THE BODEGA BAY GRANGE

From an undated edition of a publication called 'Howdy Neighbor':

Bodega Bay Grange, the 19<sup>th</sup> County chapter, which boasts 115 charter members (probably the largest in the State) had its beginning February 7, 1952. Only a handful of people attended this first meeting at Louie's hall, and listened to George E. Turkington, District Deputy, explain the Grange and how this community would benefit in belonging to this great organization. Mr. Turkington said that because the Grange is usually associated with agriculture, local fishermen were skeptical of the advantages of throwing in their lot with the farmers.

The next meeting was also poorly attended. That was February 14. Mr. Turkington and Mrs. Lena Zankich, proprietess of Louie's Café, decided to make a third attempt at organization the following Thursday, February 21. Mrs. Zankich enlisted the aid of several women to bring refreshments, and George R. Hagens, State Park Ranger, volunteered to post a sign in the Bay store and to send personal invitations to everyone that held a post office box. Mr. Turkington was busy in the meantime also. He lined up Masters and past Masters and members active in other Granges to come to Bodega Bay to convince the predominantly fishermen population that they would be passing up a good thing by not joining the County family of Granges. At this meeting, February 21, the Bodega Bay Grange, chapter 777, was born. Forty-two charter members signed. Mrs. Vivian Turkington, County Home Economics Chairman, explained the Home Economics Club to the assembly, and told of the active part women play in the Grange. Also present were Charles Knight, past Master of Ojai, Rolly Jones, past Pomona Master, Lou Hepworth, Sebastopol Master, and Tom Moyle, Cotati Master.

The following Thursday, February 28, there was another organizational meeting, but it was at the next meeting, March 6, that it was clear to everyone that Bodega Bay had decided to welcome the Grange wholeheartedly. A record crowd of local people and visitors filled the hall and a total of 71 members were signed. Eight of the 16 officers were elected at this meeting. They are: Roy Fraught, Master; Dusty Roades, Overseer, Mrs. Clarence Steen, Lecturer, Paul Wedel, Steward, Emil Valena, Assistant Steward, Mrs. Vernon Ginrich, Chaplain, Glenice Carpenter, Treasurer, Shirley Ames, Secretary.

The other eight officers were elected the following Thursday, March 13. They are: Ronald Hunter, Gatekeeper, Mrs. Paul Wedel, Pomona, Mrs. Leonard Carpenter, Ceres, Mrs. Emil Valena, Flora, Mrs. Clara Owens, Lady Assistant Steward. The following men were elected to the Executive Board: Normal Paulsen, for three years; Robert Manni, for two years; Bert Merwin, for one year. Mrs. George Hellwig, postmistress, was elected musician. Since the Charter had not yet been received, more people were allowed to sign on as Charter Members. This brought the total to 91.

Thursday March 20 the new members were obligated and the officers were installed in an impressive ceremony by L. A. Johnson, County Installing Officer, and his drill team. Most of the Sonoma County Granges were represented at this meeting, as well as members from Napa and Ojai Granges. The Charter Members added up to 115, and George Turkington conceded that it "was the largest Charter membership in the County and probably the largest in the State".

Since the installation, the Bodega Bay Grange has been meeting on the first and third Thursdays. The officers are a little uncertain and bewildered with the Grange ritual, but as one member pointed out, "we are all in this together, and if we laugh, we are laughing with you, not at you".