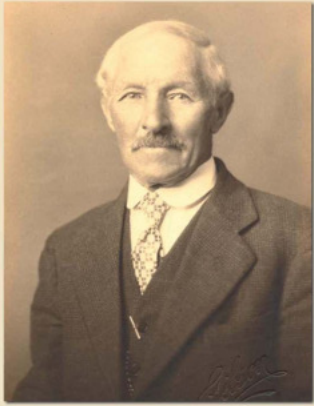


Rogers Farm

George Rogers



George Rogers Senior, Circa 1940

George Rogers Sr. emigrated from England in 1886, and in 1887 bought a dairy business on Toronto Street in James Bay (Victoria). Seven years later, in 1894, George leased land along the Gorge from lawyer James Yates. He called the land Craigie Lea Farm and moved his livestock there. When Yates sold some of the leased land, George purchased property west of Lake Hill (now known as Christmas Hill) from Alexander Howe. He subsequently purchased more land in the Lake District, including some from the Von Allmen family (after whom Vanalman Avenue is named). By 1903, George owned 236 acres for his expanding dairy business. For a time his brother, Joseph Rogers, assisted him. He eventually named his new farm Chester Lea Dairy.

George married Lillie Stevens, who had emigrated from England in 1893, on June 16, 1896. Their first child, Rosa Ethel, was born at Craigie Lea Farm. Son George Wright (June 19, 1904) and daughter Beatrice Mary (June 18, 1908) were both born at the family home on Agnes Street, which had been completed in 1901.



Lillie Rogers, Circa 1917-1918



George Wright Rogers and wife Genevieve's Wedding, April 19th, 1930



George, Lillie and family, Circa 1909

George Rogers Sr. came from a farm-milling family in England. When he started farming, he used draught horses to pull wagons and operate some machinery. As time passed, tractors took over the horses' work. At Chester Lea Dairy, crops included oats, wheat, hay and corn. Grain crops were cut by a binder and bound into sheaves that were stooked by hand. When dry, the stooks were threshed to separate the grain from the stalks. Corn was cut by hand, loaded on wagons, processed in an ensilage cutter and stored in silos. In the low land that flooded in the winter, kale and mangels were grown for cow feed. Cows were milked by hand, and the milk was sold in glass bottles, and later in bulk to a larger dairy. The Rogers family also maintained large gardens for personal use.



Agnes St. House with Lake Hill (Christmas Hill) in background, Circa 1915

When Douglas Street (formerly Lake Road) was extended in 1917, it split Chester Lea Dairy into two pieces. Rogers built new barns on what is now known as Rogers Avenue, plus a new home with access off Quadra Street in 1920. Lillie died in 1920 at age 49, while George Sr. lived twenty-three more years until 1943.

George Wright Rogers took over the farm from his father in the 1920s. He married Genevieve Sangster on April 19, 1930, and they lived in a third house on the farm near the barns off Rogers Avenue. George Wright ran the farm until his death in 1979, gradually selling off parts of the land. Glanford Gardens and Chesterlea subdivisions, Rogers School and Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary are all located on the former Rogers property.

George and Genevieve are survived by their children Phyllis (Fatt), Alec and grandchildren. Members of the Rogers family are buried in the St. Michaels and All Angels cemetery at Royal Oak. They are commemorated by stained glass windows in the church.



Rogers Home off of Quadra St., Circa 1920. This house still survives and is designated a Saanich Heritage House, however the address is now on Woodhall Ave.



Postcard, George Sr. with binder, Circa 1920.



Corn crop on Rogers Ave., Circa 1918.

"For with him, as with all such men, the land was a hunger and a passion in his blood and he could hardly bear to leave it even to eat and sleep. The land, for its part, never failed him.

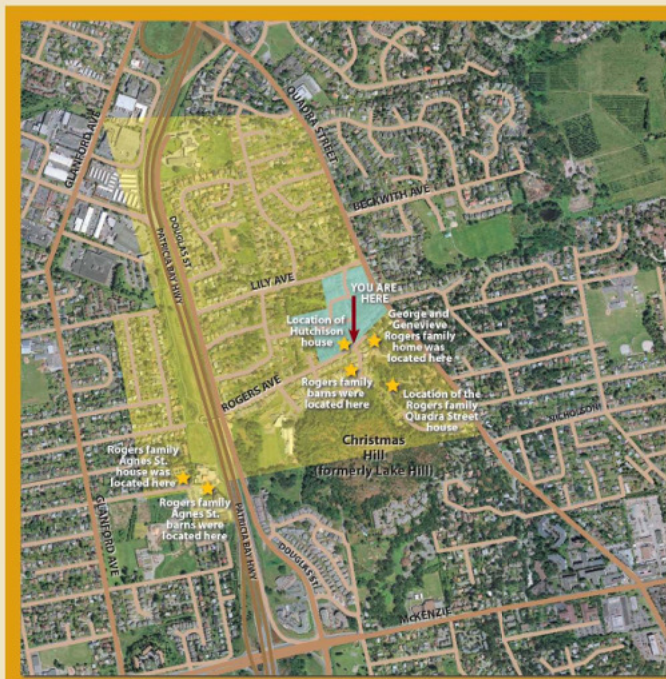
Thus we would see him behind the plow in early spring, when the sun glistened on the sleek new furrow and the white seagulls screamed at his heels for the upturned worms. In the summer we would see him driving his mower or pitching hay up to his big wagon. In the autumn he hauled the tall corn in and in winter he would bend over his saw, cutting next year's firewood."

"... (food production) is something absent from the life of many people altogether—or, if present, scarcely touches the understanding, much less the imagination of the worker, who was separated from the result of his labor by a jungle of machinery and a wilderness of management."

Bruce Hutchison, 1943 (following George Sr.'s death), from the newspaper article *My Old Neighbour*. Hutchison purchased his property from the Rogers family.

Memories of the V & S

The V & S Railway Line was built in 1893-94 near Chester Lea Dairy. According to George Wright Rogers, in the summer, the sparks from the train caused the tinder dry grass next to the tracks to catch fire. Passengers pitched in, grabbed sacks and beat back the flames to put the fires out. In the winter, the train carried passengers out from Victoria to skate on the swamp which was once part of the farm. To keep warm, the skaters built bonfires from fence posts. The V & S train was also the transport of Alice Carr, a massage therapist who treated George's older sister Rosa Ethel for polio. Alice Carr was the sister of Emily Carr.



Rogers and Hutchison Family Historical References

Legend

- ★ Original Rogers Farm (approximate)
- ★ Original Hutchison Property
- ★ Point of Interest

Scale
0 km 2.5 km 5 km



NORTH

Map Credit: Saanich GIS
2005 aerial photograph



Barns at Rogers Ave. looking north to Hutchison property, Circa 1916-1918



Alec Rogers, Circa 1945-1950



Photos and information compliments of Phyllis Fatt, daughter of George Wright Rogers

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