

The Wanser Farm



The Wanser residence before a 1960s remodel.



Margaret Wanser at the Evergreen State Fair in 1950s.



Bill and Kathleen Wanser and friends in their 4-H Club.

William Henry and Fannie Lora Wanser came to Snohomish County from Peoria, Illinois in 1905 with their three sons, purchasing 80 acres near Flowing Lake in April, 1906. Today, Anna Rose Wanser, wife of third generation William David Wanser, still maintains a small orchard, raises sheep and keeps a few chickens. Married over 50 years, the Wansers and their five children were active in 4-H, with many a summer spent at the Evergreen State Fair.

The orchard at the Wanser Farm produced a variety of apples, cherries, plums, and pears. A smaller orchard has replaced the original, although a few of the trees remain. Until the 1950s when the farm made the transition to beef cattle, dairy cows produced milk, butter and cream which were sold at the market in nearby Three Lakes, or to processors who would pick up cans of milk. Sheep for wool and meat, against the advice of County agents who told them this was cow country, were also added in the 1950s, with 80 Cheviots sheared during one productive year.

The original farm house, built from hand-hewn logs, was probably built before 1889, and was converted to a barn in 1908 when a new house, the current Wanser residence, was built. The barn was converted back to a house when a snow-storm collapsed the roof in 1968 and is now home to a new generation of Wansers.

Anna Rose and William David lived in West Seattle during the early years of their marriage, but moved to the farm in 1951. William David resided there until he passed away in April of 1999 at age 81, as did his grandfather who lived in the house until he was 89. Now, son Bill (William MacRae) lives with his wife Pam in Phoenix but returns to the farm every summer for two months. Daughters Bethia and Kathleen live in Texas, and son Don was killed in a car accident in 1977. Only the youngest, daughter Margaret, remains in Snohomish County.

“Of all the crops we’ve raised,” said Anna Rose, “the children are the most important,” with many weddings, births, deaths, and family parties taking place on the farm.