

Whatcom County

## **Winton & Norman Wefer**

### **Diedrich and Margarthe**

Winton and Norman's grandparent's, Diedrich and Margarthe Wefer, emigrated from Germany around 1880. Their great grandparents originally homesteaded 160 acres in Clark County, Washington.



### **Fred and Alta**

Diedrich's son Frederich Wefer was born in 1888. He became an engineer in the Merchant Marines and in 1917 met Alta Daniel on a passenger ship to Alaska. At the time, Alta was teaching in a one-room schoolhouse in Bellingham, Washington. Fred and Alta married and moved to San Francisco, where Fred was stationed.

Their intention was to settle down in the Northwest and began their search in the Bellingham area. When Alta's sister Gladys found an estate sale that had property overlooking Lake Samish, the couple telegraphed Alta's father to bid on the property. They got it and moved back to Washington in 1919. Fred began work as a donkey engine operator for logging companies. Winton remembers, "During the depression, the family survived by cutting wood on the property. We had a horse and I remember going up on the hill. I was barely big enough to hold on to the end of the crosscut saw. My father and a couple of the neighbors cut wood and sold it for 'five bucks' a cord."

### **Winton Wefer**

Frederich Winton Wefer was born January 30, 1927, two years ahead of his brother Norman. While 16 years old and still in school, Winton started working with the State Division of Forestry on the fire crew. In nine seasons he worked his way to the position of fire warden. Before graduating, Winton quit school to enlist in the Navy and served nearly two years during WWII.

Upon discharge from the Navy, he returned to graduate from Bellingham High School in 1946. He then enrolled at Washington State College, graduating in 1953 with a bachelor's degree in agriculture and a major in forestry. After graduation, Winton returned to the Division of Forestry. In 1954 he went to work for Puget Sound Pulp and Timber (PSPT). Georgia Pacific Corporation purchased PSPT in 1962. Winton worked for Georgia Pacific until 1990 when they sold their timberland in the area. At that time he retired.

## **Norman Wefer**

Norman Wefer graduated from high school in 1947 then attended Western Washington College. He started his career with Pacific Coast Paper Mills in 1954. Georgia Pacific Corporation purchased Pacific Coast Paper Mill and Norm continued to work at the mill until his retirement in 1991.

By 1951, four adjoining properties were purchased, bringing the total tree farm acreage to approximately 170 acres. In 1956 the acreage was certified as the Wefer Tree Farm by the West Coast Tree Farms, an affiliate of American Tree Farms.

Coinciding with their recent certification, a farm forestry chapter was formed in Whatcom County and Fred and Winton joined. At that time, a program on forest genetics was seeking trees that showed good form and good growth characteristics. The Wefer's devised a straightforward system to collect their samples, which involved shooting the branches off the tops of the trees with a rifle. Later in the 1970s, Georgia Pacific Corporation and Scott Paper Company began a joint program that involved creating two identical seed orchards. Branches from the select trees in Whatcom, Skagit and Snohomish Counties were collected, this time by climbers cutting the samples. Once again, Wefer Tree Farm branches made the cut. Norman, "Seed collectors took samples off our trees to contribute to the seed orchard. It was selected as one of the best in three counties."

The size of the Wefer Tree Farm was reduced over a period of years due to the appropriation of land for the I-5 corridor. Easement for a pipeline and power line right-of-ways also reduced the acreage to a total of 120 acres.

In 1990 Winton, Norman and their sister Harriett formed "Wefer Forest Limited Partnership" as a way to include the direct descendants of Fred and Alta. A seven-acre reserve has been set-aside for the grandchildren and great grandchildren to enjoy for recreation. A third generation of the Wefer family are actively involved and members of the partnership.

## **WEFER TREE FARMS: GENERATIONAL**

Diedrich Wefer, 1849 - 1938

Margarthe Wefer, 1832 - 1930

Frederich Wefer, 1888 - 1975

Alta Daniel, 1886 - 1984

Harriett Wefer Barker, 1924 - 1991

Winton Wefer, born January 30, 1927

Norman Wefer, born January 13, 1929

President Whatcom County Farm Forestry, 2002 - 2003

Winton Wefer awarded Whatcom County Tree Farmer of the Year, 2000