

The Erickson Farm



ERICKSON FARM/ROCKMEADOW EQUESTRIAN CENTER

Originally part of 100-acre plot homesteaded in 1864 by Peter Prilliman. Prilliman his wife Maria-Jane and family cleared enough land for a garden, a cow or two and a small cabin.





Floyd Erickson (top row, second from right) on the 1927 Issaquah High School Football Team

On May 14, 1907 Peter Prilliman sold 80 acres to Edward Erickson. Edward and his wife Hilma were Finnish emigrants. Edward and Hilma had five children. The family cleared the land by hand with their horse team. The Ericksons raised dairy and beef cattle, however were primarily chicken farmers. They raised fryers and at one point were producing 325,000 fryers a year. They were famed for having one of the richest chicken farms in the State of Washington. In 1930 the Erickson built a large family home on the property. The smaller home was built around 1939.



In 1965 the Good News Bay Mining Company purchased the ranch and the Erickson youngest son Tauno, continued to lease the pastureland for cattle from 1965 to 1972.

In 1970 Bill and Suzanne Cumming leased the house and in 1972 they leased the rest of the pastureland to start a horse ranch.

In 1975 William Henry, who loved horses, purchased the property. He kept the horse trade alive at the farm and left the Cummings to manage the place. It was known as Shiloh Horse Farm, Inc. The larger barn that once housed 40,000 chickens was turned to stalls and indoor arena. By this time the farm had grown to 175 acres.

Although once considered Prilliman's "hopeless acreage" the property has been developed into an area of expensive homes surrounding the equestrian center. The property has retained many of its historical features. Deborah and Ed Ritchie have been the custodians of the center since 1982 and in 1986 purchased the center. They continue to develop and expand the gardens.

Resources:

Paper written by Michelle Brennan as school project in 1978

Interview with Camille and Thano Erickson in 1999

Interview with Ed Ritchie in 2003