

# Five Generations of the Sagert Family Custom Farming Business

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Until the 1960s Tualatin was an agricultural based community. One of the most prosperous and successful farm families were the Sagerts.



Lou and Mary Sagert's home. Current site of Atfalati Park.

German immigrants Frederick and Caroline (Jurgens) Sagert settled in Tualatin on 80 acres of the William Robbins Donation Land Claim in 1874, paying \$400 for the land.

Although the couple had several children, son Louis, or Lou as he was known, assumed the management of the farm when his father passed away, and it was Lou who started the custom farm business, first using a horse powered threshing machine, then purchasing a steam engine. Most farmers could not afford to buy all the equipment needed for harvesting, so the Sagerts would go from farm to farm, threshing grain and baling hay for a fee. The Sagert men married local women who did their share in helping farm wives prepare the big meals needed to fuel the work crew.

Lou had little education, but lots of "skookum," a term used to describe business acumen. He started a horse and wagon freighting business, hauling goods to and from Portland, and was famous for his fine draft horses. Henry Wienhard

once offered him \$1,000 each for his matched pair of blue roans, an offer Lou declined.

There was an old rumor going around that a man named Lursman hid some gold in his barn on Robbins Road.

Lou Sagert built Lursman's house (which still stands, barely) and some say that Lou found the gold and that's how he was able to purchase his fine machinery. No doubt that was just sour

grapes for folks who were jealous of Lou's prosperity.

In 1945 when Lou retired, his equipment included a modern combine, and the business was passed on to his son Fred, and in turn to Fred's son Earl, and then Earl's son Gerald. The old Sagert farm is now the

site of Atfalati Park, Grace Community Church and a housing development.

Photos courtesy of the Tualatin Historical Society



Threshing grain. Lou Sagert on the right, son Fred on the left. Pile of burlap "gunny" sacks will be filled with grain. Straw is blown into a big pile.



Steam engine which powered the Sagert custom farm business. The team of horses brought bundles of grain to the thresher.



Sagert steam engine, stationary hay baler, horse drawn wagon and "modern" 1920s car.



Workers resting after a hard day's work. Note the filled pile of grain sacks.



Fred Sagert's barn on Sagert Road, as it was being renovated by the Grace Community Church folks.