



THE SHEEHY FAMILY

The Sheehy family came from County Cork, Ireland in the 1840's and settled in Watsonville, California. Patrick H. Sheehy was born in Watsonville and married Isabel Adam, daughter of William Laird Adam, the Santa Maria Valley pioneer.

During World War II, Patrick's sons, Ken and Rod, began to talk with Ned Driscoll, founder of Driscoll Strawberry Associates. They felt there would be good demand for fresh berries after the war. So Rod and Ken decided to move to Santa Maria.

The Sheehy's first farm in Santa Maria was called the Gardena Ranch located on Donovan Road. Prior to this, strawberries had not been grown commercially in Santa Maria. Ken's sons, Bob and Terry, who were both serving in the military, received letters telling them to return to Santa Maria instead of Watsonville.

The Sheehy's were instrumental in bringing back Japanese-Americans to grow for them. Many Japanese-American families that worked for the Sheehy's (including the Furakawas, Kagawas and the Matsumotos) went on to form their own berry companies.

Ken died in 1953 followed by Rod in 1956. Bob and Terry eventually formed their own separate companies in 1985. Bob passed away in 1993 and Terry in 2007. Bob's sons, Rob & Patrick and Terry's son Brian are still actively growing berries in Santa Maria.

The Sheehy's have always taken pride in their fair treatment of employees and workers and their many innovations in the Santa Maria area including the following:

- *1st air shipments of berries-1947*
- *1st drip irrigated berries-1968*
- *1st in house pest control department for berries-1972*
- *1st laser leveler- 1976*
- *1st use of predatory mites-1988*
- *1st Bug Vacuum-1989*