

## Our Roots Are Here

### The Guichon Ranchers

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Some families feel powerful ties to a place. The Guichon family arrived in the Nicola Valley 130 years ago, during the Cariboo Gold Rush, and they're still ranching there today.

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The Guichon family, with Lawrence Guichon on the left. Container 000343-0155, Folder 10, MS-3173.

In 1859, four brothers travelled from France to join the gold rush and staked their claims along the banks of the Fraser River. One returned to France, but the other three stayed on, trying their hands at different trades. Laurent and Joseph Guichon worked in one of the largest pack-train operations in the area, delivering provisions to miners in Barkerville and all across the Cariboo.

The youngest brother, Joseph, was the first to recognize that the Nicola Valley's rich and abundant grazing would make excellent ranchland. Over the years, his ranch grew, eventually including a general store, a post office and a hotel, which opened in 1908.

In addition to growing his ranching business, Joseph operated the Quilchena Hotel from 1908 to 1919. The eldest of Joseph's seven children, Lawrence Peter Guichon, formally ran the Guichon Ranch from 1918 to 1957. By 1933, he had expanded the ranch to include more than thirty thousand acres, four thousand head of cattle and five hundred horses. He played an instrumental role in shaping the ranching industry in BC.

After Lawrence's retirement, his son Gerard and his nephew Guy Rose (the son of Joseph's daughter Virginia, nicknamed Babe) took over Guichon Ranch, now divided into the Gerard Guichon Ranch and the Quilchena Cattle Company. Guy and his wife Hilde Rose reopened the Quilchena Hotel in 1958.

You can still visit the historic Quilchena Hotel, although it's no longer operated by the family. Today the Gerard Guichon Ranch is one of BC's largest working cattle ranches. It continues to thrive today under the management of fifth-generation Guichons.

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