

Chapter 7

George and George Jr.

George Rogers would be the second Rogers Brother to pass away. His story is one of the greatest stories in the history of Newport Beach.

A couple of blocks from my present Balboa house, at the very end of the Balboa Peninsula, at the base of the West Jetty, near the beach called "The Wedge," there is a modest monument, a rock with a bronze plaque on it reading:

HARBOR IMPROVEMENT
1934 - 1936
THIS MONUMENT ERECTED IN
APPRECIATION OF THE SERVICE
RENDERED BY
GEORGE A. ROGERS
ON BEHALF OF NEWPORT BAY
ORANGE COUNTY HARBOR
MAY 23RD, 1936



BREAKING WAVES roll through the Balboa Harbor entrance circa 1925. Bob Rogers holds binoculars. Lucy Rogers is one of the ladies seated in the beached rowboat. This is where George Rogers Jr. drowned and where a monument would later be erected to George Rogers Sr. Taken from a loose photo album page. Original size 2-3/8" x 3-15/16". (Rogers #1220)

“ROGERS’ ROCK” – The monument thanking George Rogers at the end of the Balboa Peninsula is within sight of the spot where George Jr. died in 1926 and George Sr. died in 1936. (Rogers #3751)





ENTRANCE to Newport Bay in 1914, before the jetties were built, showing the east end of the peninsula and a portion of Rocky Point. Used without permission. Scanned from [Newport Bay, A Pioneer History](#) by Ellen K. Lee, published 1973 by the Newport Beach Historical Society. (Rogers #3410)

The entrance to Newport Harbor was once the greatest surfing spot on the West Coast of North America. Surfers came from Hawaii to surf the Newport Harbor entrance. The mouth of the harbor was full of sand bars, providing a perfect “point break.” Large ocean waves rolled into the entrance and rose as they crossed the sand bars. On a good day, surfers could ride almost a quarter mile, past China Cove before being gently let down as the waves entered deep water. From here, surfers could paddle back out along the west side of the channel which was somewhat protected by the slowly sinking West Jetty at the end of the Balboa Peninsula. That jetty was too short, and it was sinking. There were serious gaps where the waves could come through. Even so, the combination of long ride, gentle release and easy return made the Newport Harbor entrance a surfing paradise, especially when a nearby storm stirred up big waves.

Those same conditions made it a treacherous nightmare for navigation. The jetties were failing. When dredging was occasionally done, it did not last. The constantly shifting sand bars returned, never exactly in the same places. From 1900 through the 1920s, there were tragic losses of boats and lives.

H.B. Webster, one of Newport’s prominent yachtsmen said, “We are inclined too much to play down its dangers ...there’s not a mother’s son of us who has not repeatedly confessed a wholesome dread of the bar and admitted that it might some time get him.”⁵

In the early 1920s, the Army Corps of Engineers called the entrance a “grave menace...the breakwater slowly pounding to pieces and in dire need of repairing...The jetty rocks have either sunk or been washed aside... Waves pound through the breakwater and deposit sand



in the channel. This has resulted in gradually filling in the entrance, thereby proving a serious menace to craft coming in and out. Erosion has been going on many months. There are now several huge gaps. The bar is getting larger. All kinds of boats are having difficulty.”⁶

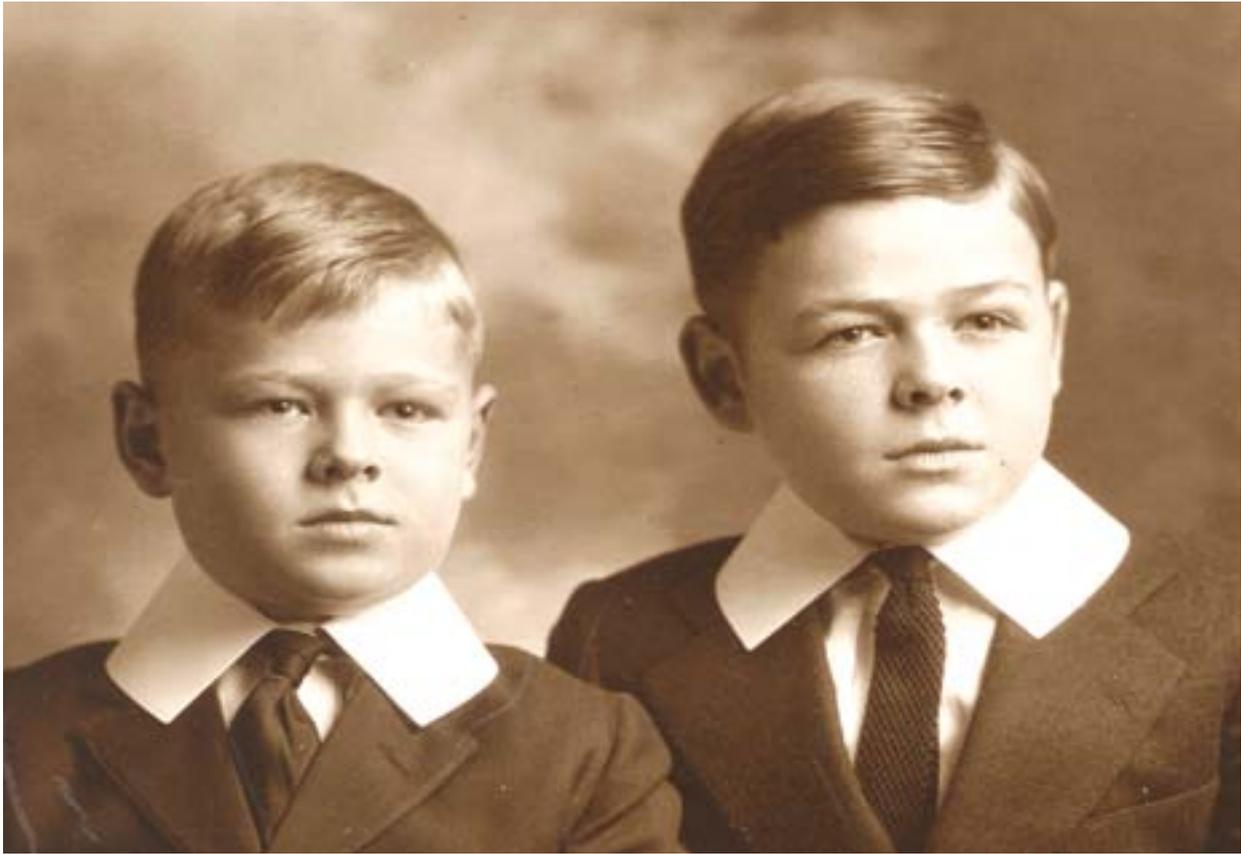
It took three years work by Harry Welch and others, but finally on June 10, 1926, Orange County voters considered a \$1,200,000 bond issue for harbor improvement. Supporters claimed it would give Orange County a thriving commercial port by which to ship the county’s agricultural products. The farmers and ranchers claimed this was nonsense, that the new harbor entrance would mainly benefit rich yachtsmen and vacationers. It was close, but the next day the headlines read, “Farmers Kill Harbor.”⁷ The jetties continued to sink and the sand-filled entrance continued to kill.

In June of 1926, the same month that the bond issue was defeated, five boys boarded a Dodge Water Car (speed boat) and headed for the harbor entrance planning to go to Catalina. At the helm was the boat’s owner, 16-year-old George Rogers, Jr.

As they approached the harbor entrance, they could see the surf was running dangerously high. Atop the cliffs of Corona Del Mar, Antar Deraga, the Russian-born meteorologist who operated harbor entrance safety signals was signaling for the boys to turn back into the harbor.

George Junior’s surviving relatives tell what happened next.

5. Ellen K. Lee, *Newport Bay, A Pioneer History*, Newport Beach Historical Society, 1973.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*



JIM ROGERS (left) and George Rogers, Jr. Taken from a loose photo 6" x 3-15/16". Original size 6" x 3-15/16". (Rogers #784)



THE NARROW, dangerous entrance to Newport Bay photographed on May 27, 1923 showing the first west jetty and a large sandbar. Newport Beach Historical Society. (Rogers #3406)



“THE WEDGE” in 1925. The first 1900-foot west jetty, built jointly by Newport Beach and Orange County, looked like this by July 15, 1925. The jetty is shorter than today and has gaps in it. In addition, this old jetty curves around, covering the beach (in foreground) where today there is sand. Beyond the jetty, in the distance, notice the breakers on a sand bar. Army engineers had found it “a grave menace...the breakwaters slowly pounding to pieces and in dire need of repairing.” Used without permission. Scanned from Newport Bay, A Pioneer History by Ellen K. Lee, published 1973 by the Newport Beach Historical Society. (Rogers #3407)



BEFORE the mid-1930s body surfers came to ride the waves near Coronado Mar. The 800-foot cement jetty created huge waves that were a body surfer's dream. A new jetty changed the wave pattern. (SL/NBHS.) (Rogers #4116)



Clockwise from top left:

“UNCLE GEORGE’S first fish.” George Rogers at left. Taken from Howard Rogers’ Green Indian Scrap Book. Original size 4-1/2" x 6-5/8". (Rogers #2259)

JACK ROGERS thinks this could be George Rogers Jr. and George’s sister Helen Rogers. Taken from a loose photo album page 5-15/16" x 8-15/16". Original size 4-7/16" x 2-7/16". (Rogers #993)

GEORGE ROGERS, JR. Taken from a loose photo 9-3/8" x 7". Original size 9-3/8" x 7". (Rogers #787)



Carlton Rogers (cousin of George Rogers, Jr.)⁸

“George Jr. had been crippled from the waist down by infantile paralysis – polio. He had to walk with crutches and wore heavy braces on both legs. But from the waist up, he was robust and full of energy. He used to like to grab Jack and me, hold tight and make us say Uncle. He had a fun sense of humor and was very bright and alert. His father was counting on him to replace him as the leader of the family and the business.

The speed boat had been given to George Jr. by his father, as a summer fun boat. The boat had a very high front end so George had to sit up on the side rail when under way in order to see over the bow. Because he was crippled, he couldn't merely stand at the wheel. Sitting “side saddle” on the rail was especially precarious because of those heavy iron braces.

On the day of the accident, George Jr., Jim Rogers and Stan Williams (the son of George Rogers Sr.'s attorney, who lived across from him) ignored all advice and attempted to go out the jetty in rough sea. Apparently, George got frightened and tried to turn the boat around. A wave hit the speedboat sideways.”

Helen Rogers Binney (sister of George, Jr.)⁹

“Of my two brothers, Jim was very reserved. George Jr. was the fun-loving one.

I remember George Jr. was about five years old when they ‘put his legs in wire baskets.’ That was when he got polio.

On the day of the accident, I had come home (to Los Angeles) from Newport and was getting ready to go shopping for George Jr.'s birthday present when the first call came, saying that something had happened to my brother, but they wouldn't say what. My father was at the office so I referred the call there. After a while, he called us back and told us the news. After that, he came home and we all rode down in the car to Newport.

There had been four other boys in the boat with him. The only one not thrown into the water was Barkley Brown, the brother of my friend, Virginia Brown. There was a neighbor boy from the McMahon family. I don't remember the name of the boy from the Standard Oil Station in the bay.”

8. From a personal interview conducted in 1992.

9. Ibid.





HOWARD ROGERS, Jack Rogers and George Rogers Jr., aboard George's Dodge Water Car. A few months after this picture was taken, George would attempt to pilot this boat out of the harbor during a storm! The boat sank and George's polio braces took him to the bottom. The body was never recovered. His death caused his father George Rogers Sr. to dedicate the rest of his life to harbor improvement. Taken in front of Robert and Lucy Rogers' beach house at 309 E Edgewater. In the distance you see Bay Island, the mud flats and the cliffs behind Bay Shores. From the green 11"x7" photo album with no front cover. Original scan size 2-1/2" x 4-1/4. (Rogers #621)

Jack Rogers (cousin)¹⁰

"The boys had waited until after 5pm when the Standard Oil dock (which was then moored in the middle of the bay near the Pavilion) would close so one of the boys who worked there could join them for the trip to Catalina.

The West Jetty at that time was in poor condition. It was much shorter than today and there were dips in it which allowed large waves to break over and through the jetty, into the channel. The waves were unusually large that day. Two or three people had gathered at the end of the Peninsula to watch the waves breaking through the jetty. They all motioned to the boys to turn back. I think the boys must have thought the people were just waving to them, so they continued out the jetty.

Their boat was a Dodge Water Car. The Dodge Water Car was high in the bow. At 5 knots you could see where you were going, but at faster speeds the stern goes down and the bow comes up, blocking the pilot's view. In trying to push out through the waves in the entrance, they would have to speed up. Perhaps they never saw the wave that got them.

A large wave hit the boat which turned over or swamped. Jim Rogers managed to swim ashore and ran all the way to the Pavilion to get help.

The Standard Oil boy had George Jr. by the hair with one hand while he clung to the boat with his other arm. The boy was losing his grip on George but dared not release his grip or George would go down. He wanted to shift his grip to get his arm around George's chin, which was "life guard style" according to Boy Scout manuals at the time. He was trying to shift his grip on George when a wave hit the boat, his grip slipped and George Jr. was gone.

In addition to several local boats, George Sr. chartered the Catalina glass bottom boat and had it brought over to search the channel for his boy.

George and his wife Ethel set up chairs on the end of the Peninsula in almost the exact spot where the rock monument to George would later stand. There they kept a vigil, hoping to see the recovery of their son. The body was never found."

George Rogers, Sr. was devastated. Some say he lost his enthusiasm and never fully recovered. It was about this same time he and his brothers began preparing their company, Union Rock, for sale. George named his 120 foot yacht *The Memory* in honor of his lost son.

Because of his road building and rock and gravel businesses, George and his brothers had many friends



HOWARD ROGERS, Jack Rogers and George Rogers Jr., aboard George's Dodge Water Car. A few months after this picture was taken, George would attempt to pilot this boat out of the harbor during a storm! The boat sank and George's polio braces took him to the bottom. The body was never recovered. His death caused his father George Sr. to dedicate the rest of his life to harbor improvement. From green 11" x 7" photo album with no front cover. Original scan size 2-1/2" x 4-1/4". (Rogers #623)

¹⁰. From a personal interview conducted in 1992.



“GOD’S COUNTRY” (Howard Rogers’ handwriting) Newport Beach, possibly about 1930s. Note mud flats in mid-bay. Taken from Howard Rogers’ Green Indian Scrap Book. Original size 6-3/4" x 8-7/8". (Rogers #2258)

in all levels of government. He looked for ways to fix the harbor entrance as a fitting remembrance of his son. But the bond had been defeated. And shortly after the accident, the stock market crashed. The dream appeared dead.

In 1933, Franklin Roosevelt became President and George carefully studied The National Recovery Act which was to create jobs. He saw a window of hope.

At his own expense, George began traveling back and forth between California and Washington, DC to lobby for funding for harbor improvement.

Reluctantly, the Newport Beach City Council agreed to pay to send city engineer Richard L. Patterson along with him. Later, they were joined by harbor booster A.B. Rousselle.

Patterson estimated the cost of a proper harbor entrance improvement at \$1,830,000. Together Rogers and Patterson convinced the Army Corps of Engineers to endorse the plan and to recommend the government contribute \$915,000 – half the cost!

Next Stop: California’s U.S. Senators Hiram Johnson and William G. McAdoo, who helped them talk Secretary of the Interior, Harold L. Ickes out of another \$230,000.¹¹

11. Ellen K. Lee, *Newport Bay, A Pioneer History*, Newport Beach historical Society, 1973.



IT WAS THE GREATEST surfing spot on the west coast of North America. The combination of waves and tides filled the harbor entrance with sandbars. At the right tide the waves started breaking in the lower left hand corner of this picture and you could ride them a quarter mile or more until they gently dissipated in deeper water just past China Cove. Then, by hugging the right side of the channel next to the west jetty you could paddle back out through relatively protected and calm water rather than having to fight through incoming waves. Unfortunately the shifting sandbars of the harbor entrance were a deadly hazard to boats. This photograph of the rebuilt west jetty (lower left) and the new short east jetty (lower center of picture), taken April 12, 1928, shows the entrance full of sand. You can also see something that is no longer there today—a jumble of rocks along the beach front (where the “wedge” is today), dumped along the peninsula ocean front to prevent further erosion. Used without permission. Scanned from Newport Bay, A Pioneer History by Ellen K. Lee, published 1973 by the Newport Beach Historical Society. (Rogers #3408)

THE MEMORY -
George Rogers' yacht.
(Rogers #3818)





NEWPORT HARBOR ENTRANCE, following federal reclamation projects of 1934-36. Work (begun in January, 1935) included the removal of approximately 8,500,000 tons of sand and 50,000 tons of rock. The 750-acre water area of the lower bay was dredged to a depth of 10 feet, anchorage area to 15 feet, main channel to 20 feet, and entrance channel to 25 feet. Approximately 210,000 tons of rock were used to extend the west jetty to 2830 feet and the east jetty to 1673 feet. Newport Harbor was dedicated on May 23, 1936. Used without permission. Scanned from *Newport Bay, A Pioneer History* by Ellen K. Lee, published 1973 by the Newport Beach Historical Society. (Rogers #3409)



THE MEMORY circa 1935-6. From a loose photo. Original size 6-1/4" x 6-1/4." (Rogers #4198)



GEORGE A. ROGERS' last formal portrait. This photo would later go out with his obituaries. (Rogers #3750)

According to Jack Rogers:¹²

“While lobbying for federal funds for the harbor improvements, George traveled to and from Washington a lot. In those days, lobbying included gifts of liquor and social drinking in open defiance of Prohibition. Although George himself never drank anything stronger than ginger ale, he knew what needed to be done. Harry Klein was a pharmacist in Monrovia and a friend of George’s brother, Tom Rogers. Harry supplied the Rogers’ lobbying expeditions with cases of pint bottles of Brook Hill 100 proof bourbon. Not rot-gut, this was distilled and bottled legally by Early Times in 1917 before Prohibition. This kind of liquor was normally distributed during Prohibition only by pharmacists and only by doctor’s prescription for medical purposes. When the Rogers took cases of this to Washington, the bourbon was already over 15 years old. Good stuff! My father, Lawrence Rogers kept one of the unopened bottles as a souvenir. Later it was handed down to me (Jack Rogers). It remained unopened until late one night in the 1980s when a guest staying alone at my house opened it and helped himself to about a third of it, never realizing that it was a prized historical artifact. In the 1990s, I donated the bottle and the remaining bourbon to the Newport Beach Historical Society.”

With \$915,000 from The National Recovery Act and another \$230,000 from the Secretary of the Interior, they were still \$640,000 short.

Back to the voters of Orange County and another attempt to pass a bond issue. But whereas the earlier attempt had failed at the height of the Roaring Twenties, this time the county was in the darkest months of the Great Depression.

But the bond issue passed. Even the farmers had voted for it.

Then came big trouble. With so many grants being processed in Washington, some of the money was accidentally sent elsewhere. The voters were furious! It appeared they had been tricked into voting for the bonds under the false assumption that Washington would pay the other \$1,190,000. Worn out, George Rogers got back on the train. Some years later, Harry Welch wrote, “George Rogers, well along in years, worn from the stress and difficulties of the

bond campaign, was now a sick man. But with that determination that had built his fortune, he turned down all appeals, and headed back into the chill February of Washington. Despite the doctor’s orders to return to sunny California, Rogers made the weary rounds of political officials. Days extended into many weeks, weeks into grim months.”¹³

George got the funds restored. He returned to a hero’s welcome. The dredging began in 1935.

Decades later, Newport Beach historian James P. Felton wrote, “Of course, the irony of all this is that if someone tried to do this today, they would be stopped cold in their tracks by the environmentalists and the ecologists. After all, this dredging wiped out our sand flats and destroyed untold millions of clams, cockles, and other types of sea life, wiped out the breeding grounds for countless shore birds, destroyed the beautiful ocean beaches and put a couple of hundred yards of muck made up of mud from the bottom of the bay and broken shells in front of the ocean front houses. But, of course, it did happen and now some of the people who are complaining the most about any effort to do anything about anything are living on filled land and enjoying the harbor which resulted from this dredging operation. In some ways, George’s nephew, Howard Rogers, during his ten years¹⁴ on the Newport Beach City Council, helped balance the Rogers family’s environmental record in Newport by his role in the Freeway Fighters and his policy of slow growth. In a small way, he helped preserve what the previous generation did not destroy.”¹⁵

In May of 1936, President Roosevelt pressed a telegraph key in Washington and in response the Coast Guard Cutter *Hermes* fired its main gun signaling that the harbor was officially open. At the head of the yacht parade was *The Memory* with Honorary Captain of the Port, George Rogers at the helm.

The city erected the monument near the Wedge to thank George. According to Ellen K. Lee: “When the monument was first proposed, Rogers had suggested that perhaps a plaque might list the names of all those who had lost their lives in the Newport Bay entrance. As soon as he saw that the only name on it was his own, he turned to Richard Patterson and said, ‘I wish the name on it had been my son’s.’”¹⁶

12. From a personal interview conducted in 1992.

13. Ellen K. Lee, *Newport Bay, A Pioneer History*, Newport Beach historical Society, 1973.

14. 1966 to 1976 – See *Rogers Volume II*

15. James P. Felton, *Newport Beach 75, 1906-1981, A Diamond Jubilee History*, Newport Beach Historical Society, 1981.

16. Ellen K. Lee, *Newport Bay, A Pioneer History*, Newport Beach historical Society, 1973. Independently confirmed by personal interviews conducted in 1992 with Carlton Rogers, Jack Rogers and Helen Rogers Binney.

PARADE OF BOATS MARKS NEWPORT HARBOR OPENING

Colorful Fiesta Attracts Throng at Initial Two-Day Ceremony; Gov. Merriam Attends

BY E. M. AINSWORTH
"Times" Staff Correspondent

NEWPORT-BALBOA, May 23.—President Roosevelt pushed a button in Washington.

Instantaneously, a cannon boomed on the long gray United States Coast Guard cutter Hermes outside the harbor here.

The sleek twin-stack cruiser Memory, bearing the Governor of California, wheeled in the open sea and headed between the long arms of the stone breakwater for the harbor inside.

Behind her a literal swarm of boats of every description strung out in a tossing, glistening parade.

Nine yellow United States Army airplanes swooped low across the starting line with a mighty roar of motors and thus did the twin cities of Newport and Balboa today at 1 p.m. herald the happy climax of a long-time dream.

BOATS ENTER HARBOR

The parade of boats swinging into the harbor from the open sea was the initial ceremony in a two-day program officially marking the opening of the new \$2,000,000 pleasure harbor here, which belongs to all Southern California.

It was a boat parade that has never been exceeded on the Pacific Coast.

Behind the Memory, skippered by the honorary captain of the port, George A. Rogers, the man who really put over the Federal harbor-dredging project, came hundreds of every craft. They ranged from the great white sailing yacht Ramona

of Commodore W. H. Rohl to a tiny white kayak pitching in the swells from the parading boats. On the Memory were Commodore Albert Solland, A. B. Rousselle and many other leaders.

Overhead the Goodyear blimp Volunteer cruised in lazy circles. A lone gull drifted low to peer at each boat.

When the starting signal finally sounded there was a rush for position and finally the whole great armada entered the harbor three or four abreast in a column three miles long.

On the breakwater sat spectators by the hundreds.

The towering canvas of each sailing boat was flanked by a triangle of red, green, blue, yellow and purple pennants on ropes running from the bow up to the top of the mast and then down to the stern. Nearly all the boats were white but there were exceptions. Every so often in the line was a jaunty blue-grey Navy or Coast Guard craft like a sailor rolling along convoying the amateur fleet. American flags fluttered from hundreds of halyards.

ARMY PLANES ZOOM

Army planes from March Field kept dipping and diving as the parade swept through the new breakwater channel and rounded the turn into the smooth waters of the bay itself.

Ahead was the venerable old sailing ship San Salvador, a bit dingy but populated by as brightly clad a crew as ever sailed the main. On board were dignitaries no less than Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, discoverer of California; Vasco Nunez De Balboa, discoverer of the Pacific; Father Neptune, a voluptuous silver mermaid, Vikings, pirates and bathing girls from many cities of the Southland.

On past this historic craft at the Balboa pavilion went the celebrating armada. As the head of the parade reached the turning point far up by

(Continued on Page 5, Column 2)

Both pages: HARBOR OPENING, 1936. Taken from the Los Angeles Times, Sunday May 24, 1936. Taken from a loose newspaper clipping. This page: Original size 10-1/2" x 4". (Rogers #2211). Opposite page, top: Original size 6" x 5-7/8"; (Rogers#2208); Opposite page, bottom: Original size 5-1/8" x 7-3/4". (Rogers #2209)



See it on video
16mm Family films of
The Memory, the George
Rogers monument and
the harbor opening
ceremony are available
on DVD.

PARADE OF BOATS FEATURES OPENING OF NEWPORT BEACH YACHT HARBOR

(Continued from First Page)

The Newport Harbor Yacht Club near Lido Isle, the rear was still coming by the crowds clustered on the rocky cliffs of Corona Del Mar.

THUMB FOR RIDE

At the Balboa Island Yacht Club the funsters stood and tried to thumb a ride from every passing craft.

An old lady with white hair sat by nonchalantly in a small boat with a green sail, dodging the cruisers, star boats, sloops and launches came on and on in a procession of poetical names—Nalika, Yavepal, El Mirador, Amaya, Onard.

Five bands played, Spanish dancers whirled to a rumba on the Warrior IV. A bass horn tooter in a green coat looked rather white around the gills as he sailed past.

Zooming down on the press boat, a forty-five-foot Fish and Game Commission patrol, came a great white vessel with a frantic tooting. The press boat skinned out of the way by a hair.

Everywhere was the sound of automobile horns on the boats as they dodged one another.

SALUTE FIRED

Along the shore, amid the crowds of visitors, ran a black and white band wanting to join the fun. A

tiny girl in a pair of white shorts chased him on wobbly feet.

So the procession went, in almost endless profusion. The Samosa II of W. J. Hoie was there. So was Lewis's First Stranger, Capt. Fred

submarine chaser from war days. As the leading craft circled the course and anchored, a frenzied fellow at the yacht club began firing a twenty-one gun salute while

Gov. Merriam landed. The tiny cannon leaped and roared, leaped and roared and women held their hands over their ears to keep out the deafening noise.

HARBOR INSPECTED

The Governor later went on an official tour of the newly dredged harbor. He saw a great deal.

The harbor bottom since January 10, 1935, when the work was launched in a driving rainstorm,

has been dredged of millions of yards of sand. This has created a deep harbor all the way up to the county landing at the arches where there is a huge turning basin.

The dredged-out sand has been used to build up denuded beaches and create new water-front lots. All during the afternoon while crowds were dining in the tent set up at the Yacht Club and the last of the boats were coming in to anchor,

there were pageants and fireworks and other events. Tonight again, fireworks blazed and there was a civic dance at the ballroom.

LEADERS OF FETE

Leaders in preparations for the celebration were Commodore Soland, general chairman; Capt. Rogers, Mr. Roussele and Harry Welch, general secretary. Joe A. Beck was in charge of the

parade committee. Other committee members included Shirley E. Meserve, William A. Bartholomae, Jr., Douglas McKinnon, J. M. Webster, Hermann H. Hilmer, Lew H. Wallace, Irving George Gordon, Harry H. Williamson, Mark J. Johnson, Donald B. Kirby, W. C. Jerome, Walter Spicer, S. A. Meyer, N. E. West, Paul A. Palmer, Capt. William J. Brown, Lloyd Clair, Theodore Robbins, Dr. Howard Seager, Capt. J. B. McNally, J. P. Greeley, R. L. Patterson, Thomas E. Bouchey, Nat H. Neff and S. Robinson.

The dredging job and breakwater extension were accomplished with funds derived from a county-wide bond issue supplemented by Federal funds and carried out under direction of Federal engineers and City Engineer R. L. Patterson.

FETE CONTINUES

The main contract for dredging was let to the Standard Dredging Company, which sublet the work to the San Francisco Bridge Company. The celebration program will continue tomorrow with events scheduled as follows:

- 1 p.m., parade of sailboats on Newport Bay.
- 2 p.m., start of yacht races for snowbirds, start, six-meters, dinghies and other classes on bay and ocean.
- 3 p.m., kayak carnival and races on bay at foot of Corona Del Mar.
- 4 p.m., music and bands at various points.
- 5 p.m., farewell salutes.

BUSINESS AIDE TO TALK

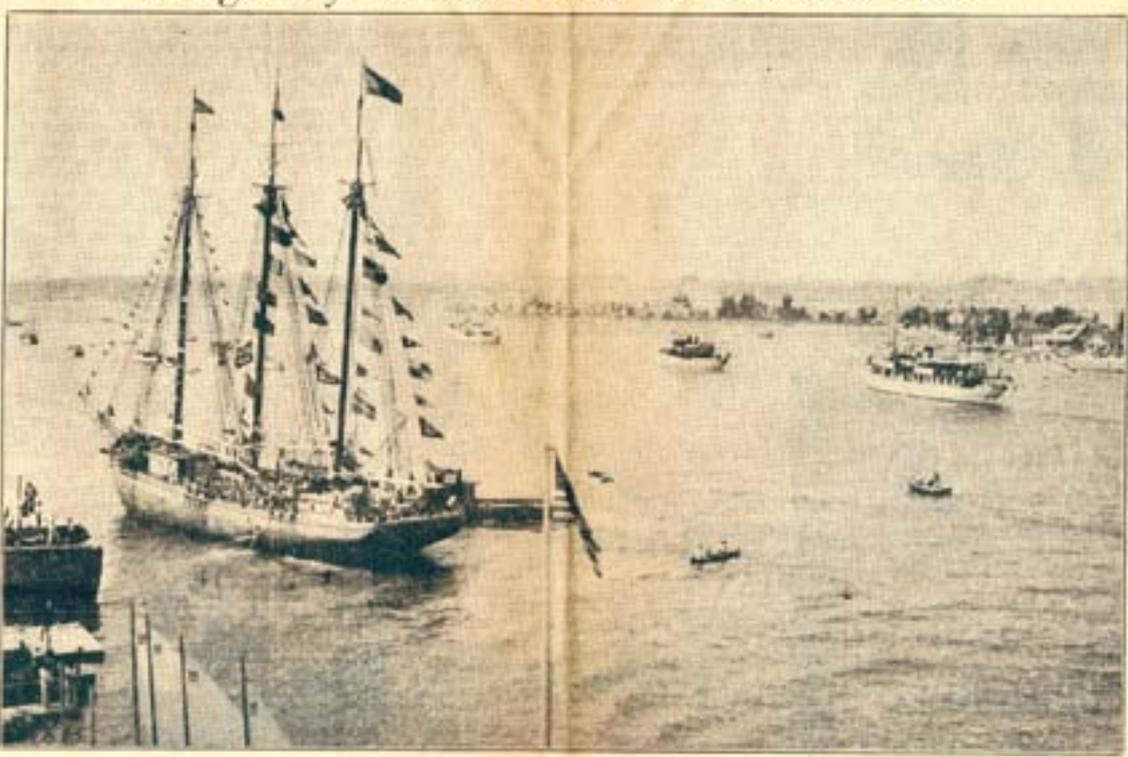
Cornelius H. Buford of Chicago, business counsellor, will give his second lecture at the Los Angeles Public Library Tuesday 7:30 p.m. He has chosen for subject "Kindling the Fire"

Career Ends



THE MAY COMPAN

Flags Fly at Dedication of Pleasure Port



With a sea parade the new \$2,000,000 yacht harbor for Newport and Balboa was dedicated yesterday. Flags flying and decks thronged with a pirate crew of sea-lanned beauties, the old sailing ship San Salvador is shown in the foreground in this view of the harbor. Beyond are some of the pleasure yachts that moved through the sea gates to open water.

Governor Greets Queen of Mermaids



Dedication of the new \$2,000,000 yacht harbor at Balboa and Newport, yesterday, presented a colorful spectacle aboard the old San Salvador, equipped like a pirate ship. Here Gov. Merriam meets Phyllis Bettino, mermaid queen. Father Neptune and others look on. (R) photo

HARBOR OPENING, 1936. Taken from the
Los Angeles Times. Taken from a loose newspaper clipping.
Original size 6-1/2" x 5-3/4". (Rogers #2207)

Helen Rogers Binney (Daughter of George Rogers, Sr.):

*"About one month after the harbor opening, mother and father and I had taken The Memory out for a cruise with Marie Collison and her husband and, of course, The Memory also had a professional crew. Father had a heart attack. He had been ill for some time. He died in the dining room aboard The Memory as it came through the harbor entrance, in almost the exact spot where we had lost George Jr. 10 years earlier almost to the day."*¹⁷

GEORGE A. ROGERS DIES OF HEART ATTACK

Stricken suddenly with a heart attack while aboard his yacht Memory in Newport Harbor, George A. Rogers, prominent yachtsman, civic leader and retired Los Angeles industrialist, died shortly after noon yesterday.

The 61-year-old former executive, who until 1929, when it was sold to the Consolidated Rock Products Company, headed the Union Rock Company, had not been in the best of health recently, according to friends. However, he left early yesterday morning with members of his family, expecting to make a short cruise outside Newport Harbor.

The yacht traveled only a short distance when Mr. Rogers complained that he was not feeling well. Before shore could be reached and a doctor summoned, he succumbed.

Born in Plattsburg, N. Y., Mr. Rogers attended Cornell University, and later was admitted to the bar in his home state. He did little actual practicing, but instead became affiliated with a contracting organization, in which his father and brothers were interested.



GEORGE A. ROGERS
Succumbs on Yacht

and organized a road machinery manufacturing company. Three years later, the firm became interested in road building, and from then until 1922, under the name of the Rogers Brothers Company, it constructed hundreds of miles of highways throughout the state.

Mr. Rogers also was first pres-

pany, and held directorships in a number of other Los Angeles financial concerns. Throughout his active business career he was prominent in the development program of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to his widow, Ethel B. Rogers, Mr. Rogers is survived by a son, James B. Rogers, and a daughter, Mrs. Albert Binney, and two brothers, L. L. and T. C. Rogers.

Mr. Rogers was a member of the California Club, Los Angeles Country Club, University Club and the California and Newport Yacht clubs. He was a Mason and a member of the Al Malakah Shrine.

GEORGE ROGERS' DEATH.
Taken from a Los Angeles newspaper clipping. Original size 4-5/8" x 6". (Rogers #2220)

17. From a personal interview conducted in 1992.

G. A. ROGERS SUCCUMBS

Dies Aboard His Yacht

Father of Newport Harbor
Passes at Spot Where
Son Drowned

At the entrance to the yacht harbor he was instrumental in improving after his son had drowned in its waters, George A. Rogers, wealthy retired Los Angeles business man, died yesterday aboard his yacht Memory, in Newport Bay.

Death struck suddenly. Rogers, 61-year-old veteran yachtsman, went with his daughter, Mrs. Albert Binney, for a sail on his 110-foot boat yesterday morning.

HEART ATTACK

As the craft was about to pass through the entrance of Newport Harbor Rogers suffered a heart attack. He had been ailing for several months.

Immediately the ship swung around and headed shoreward. A physician was called by radio to meet it at the dock and make preparations for Rogers's removal from the boat.

But Rogers never left the ship alive. He died aboard as it docked in front of his home. His daughter only was at his side.

VIGOROUS FIGHT

Known as the father of Newport Harbor, Rogers fought vigorously for the \$2,000,000 bay improvement after his son, George, Jr., was drowned there when a small boat was capsized by the swells at the harbor entrance.

He was given credit for winning the improvement and was highly

honored by Newport residents. The title of honorary port captain was bestowed on him, a huge rock monument was erected to his honor at the mouth of the bay.

It was a queer quirk of fate which occasioned his death at almost identical spot where, a few years ago, his son sank.

ARDENT YACHTSMAN

Since his son's drowning, Rogers has spent a large part of his time in Newport and Balboa. An ardent yachtsman, he purchased the Norconian in 1935, but changed the name to Memory in honor of his son.

ADMITTED TO BAR

Born in Plattsburg, N. Y., Rogers studied law at Cornell University, was graduated and admitted to the New York bar in 1897. He never practiced.

Leaving a contracting business on the east coast, Rogers came to Cali-

fornia in 1905, where he formed the George A. Rogers, Inc., highway machinery dealer firm, in 1907.

In 1910 he organized with his brother the Rogers Brothers Company, of which he was president until 1922. The company then bought out the Union Rock Company and then sold to Consolidated Rock Company in 1929.

BUILT COUNTY ROADS

Under these banners Rogers built and helped build hundreds of miles of streets and roads in Los Angeles county. Another enterprise of which Rogers was president was the District Bond Company formed by him in 1914.

He was a member of the Los Angeles country Club, California Club, Los Angeles Athletics Club, University Club, Westport Beach Club, California Yacht Club, Newport Harbor Yacht Club and the Tuna Club.

He was affiliated with the Almalika Temple in Los Angeles.

Rogers leaves his widow, Mrs. Ethel B. Rogers; his daughter, Mrs. Binney; a son, James Rogers; two brothers, L. L. and T. C. Rogers; two nephews, Howard and Al Rogers, and two grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements were not completed last night. The body is at the Dickson mortuary in Costa Mesa.

TEAM WORK. Back in the dim and distant past when harbor development looked rather hopeless, the late George Rogers (he gave his life for the harbor), A. B. Rousselle and R. L. Patterson, went to Washington in the dead of winter to interest congress and other big moguls to enact legislation. Their work made possible the teeming waters and the community's vast growth of today. What occasioned the outburst was a little item that came in the other day to the effect that the Army engineers had just awarded a contract for repairs to the jetties amounting to \$28,150.

No Pressure Needed. This award was made in the regular course of harbor operations by the engineers, who have taken over and who study needs and make allocations. There was a time when it almost took an act of congress to get a U. S. official to look at the "mud hole" that Newport Harbor was supposed to be. Prior to 1933 it had taken some 20 years to persuade Uncle Sam to make surveys, etc. After the 1933 effort came a matching appropriation and a hard-fought county election to get the initial \$1,200,000 for dredging and jetty work. Those pioneers of yesterday are certainly entitled to all the credit a careless community can give them for our prosperity of today.

GEORGE ROGERS' DEATH.

Taken from a loose newspaper clipping. Left: Original size 12" x 2". (Rogers #2225); Above, Top: Original size 12" x 2". (Rogers #2226); Above, Bottom: Original size 4" x 2"; (Rogers #2219); Right: Original size 7" x 2". (Rogers #2228)

Funeral Planned For George A. Rogers

Funeral arrangements were being made today for George A. Rogers, 61, "father" of Newport harbor, who died yesterday of a heart attack while on board his yacht, Memory, so-named in memory of a son, George jr., who was drowned in Newport harbor a few years ago.

With Mr. Rogers at the time of his death was his daughter, Mrs. Albert Binney, who immediately had the 110-foot craft headed for shore when her father was stricken. A physician was called by radio to meet the boat as it docked, but just as the yacht reached the strip of sand in front of Rogers' home he died.

He was given credit for the improvement of Newport harbor, where young Rogers drowned when his small boat was capsized by a wave.

Title of honorary port captain was given to Mr. Rogers and a huge rock monument stands at the mouth of the bay—a tribute to him.

Mr. Rogers came to California in 1905 from the east coast, where he had a prosperous contracting business. He formed the George A. Rogers, Inc., highway machinery firm, in 1907. In 1910, with his brothers, he organized the Rogers Bros. Co., of which he was president until 1922.

His company then purchased the Union Rock Co. and later sold out to the Consolidated Rock Co. in 1929.

Mr. Rogers was a member of the California Yacht Club, the Newport Harbor Yacht Club, the Tuna Club, the Westport Beach Club, the University Club, the Los Angeles Athletic Club, the California Club and the Los Angeles Country Club. He also was affiliated with the Al Malika temple in Los Angeles.

Surviving relatives are the widow, Mrs. Ethel B. Rogers; a daughter, Mrs. Binney, a son, James Rogers; two brothers, T. C. and L. L. Rogers; two nephews, Al and Howard Rogers, and two grandchildren.

It is with great regret that we chronicle the death of George A. Rogers. Bro. Rogers died of a heart attack at Newport Beach on July 26th. He was known as "the father of Newport Bay." He had been associated with his brothers in the building materials and real estate business for many years. He was a member of the Craft at Long Beach. Lawrence L. Rogers, a brother, and Al Rogers and Carlton M. Rogers, nephews, are all members of Sunset. We extend sympathy.

Left: GEORGE ROGERS' DEATH. Taken from a loose newspaper clipping. Original size 1-1/4" x 2-1/4". (Rogers #2217)

Above: GEORGE ROGERS' DEATH. Taken from a loose newspaper clipping. Original size 3" x 4". (Rogers #2221); Duplicate: (Rogers #2223)

Last Rites for Newport Leader Will Be Today

Final rites for George A. Rogers, known as the Father of Newport Harbor, who died from a heart attack Sunday on his yacht in Newport Bay, will be conducted at 11 a.m. today at the Wee Kirk o' the Heather, with interment following at Forest Lawn Memorial Park. Dr. Ray O. Miller, rector of St. James' Episcopal Church, will officiate.

Resolutions in praise of Mr. Rogers for his services to the people of Newport Beach were adopted yesterday by the City Council and Chamber of Commerce of Newport Beach.

A caravan of automobiles carrying civic officials and civic leaders, and led by a police escort, will leave Newport Beach this morning to attend the funeral.

Rogers Paid Final Tribute

With nearly 500 prominent citizens of the Southland attending, funeral services for George A. Rogers, sportsman and financier who died on his yacht Sunday in Newport Bay, were conducted yesterday at the Wee Kirk o' the Heather.

The Episcopal rites were read by Dr. Ray O. Miller, rector of St. James Episcopal Church; entombment was in the Forest Lawn Memorial Park Mausoleum.

Among more than 100 outstanding citizens of Newport Beach who attended the services were Mayor Harry Williamson, Harbor Master Tom Bouchey, City Engineer R. L. Patterson and Harry Welsh, secretary of the Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce.

In respect to the memory of Mr. Rogers, the Harbor Commission of Los Angeles adjourned at the conclusion of its business session yesterday and attended the funeral in a body.

GEORGE A. ROGERS

Though George A. Rogers spent years in road building and other construction activities in Southern California, he will be best remembered for his furtherance of the improvements to Newport Harbor, which have made that bay one of the finest yacht anchorages of the world. He made the improvement of this harbor his particular job after the tragic death of his son, drowned when his boat capsized in swells at the harbor entrance; and living to see it completed, was seized by a heart attack almost at the spot where his son went down.

Mr. Rogers was a California resident some thirty-one years and became prominent in all sorts of construction activities, particularly those connected with highways. In recognition of his services to Newport, he was given the title of honorary Port Captain, and his name was placed on a huge rock marker at the entrance to the bay.

No community can ever have too many men of this sort.

GEORGE ROGERS' DEATH.

Taken from a loose newspaper clipping.

Left, Top: Original size 3-1/4" x 2". (Rogers #2212); Left, Bottom: Original size 3-1/4" x 2-7/16". (Rogers #2213); Above: Original size 3" x 2". (Rogers #2215)

City of Newport Beach ♦ ♦ ♦
 Newport Harbor
 Chamber of Commerce

August

1936



Resolution

Whereas: the Supreme Ruler of the Universe in His infinite wisdom has seen fit to take from our midst one who has rendered great service to the community which we in part represent. and

Whereas: no greater tribute can be paid to any Citizen than that of expressing a full measure of appreciation of services so generously rendered, and

Whereas: in the person of George A. Rogers our departed Citizen and dear Friend, the community of Newport Bay, Orange County's Harbor has suffered a loss, the full measure of which time alone will truly value, now

Therefore: We, for the City, and the Newport Harbor Chamber of Commerce, for ourselves, our organization, and our community, do resolve that we herein express our sincere appreciation of the great work and effort which our late Director & Friend so whole-heartedly expended on our behalf, his personal considerations laying aside for our interest, and further resolve in this hour of deep sorrow, to express to the widow and family, all the sympathy which we, each and all of us, feel at their immeasurably greater loss, and we pray that this burden of sorrow be gently laid, and that they be given the greater strength with which to carry this burden of grief. ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

City of Newport Beach

James S. ...
CLERK

Harry H. Williamson
MAYOR

Newport Harbor Chamber of Commerce

A. B. Russell
SECRETARY

W. A. ...

Geo. ...
SECRETARY

RESOLUTION honoring George Rogers by the City of Newport Beach following his death in 1936, a year after completion of harbor improvements and ten years after the death of his son. Taken from a loose photo 8" x 10". Original size 8" x 10". (Rogers #1136)

GEORGE A. ROGERS

We are indebted to Harry F. Denton, a native Plattsburgher and for a number of years a resident of Patchogue, Long Island, before going to Pasadena, California two or three years ago, for the following editorial appearing in the Los Angeles Times on the late George A. Rogers, retired business man, who died suddenly in Los Angeles on Sunday:—

"Though George A. Rogers spent years in road building and other construction activities in Southern California, he will be best remembered for his furtherance of the improvements to Newport Harbor, which have made that bay one of the finest yacht anchorages of the world. He made the improvement of this harbor his particular job after the tragic death of his son, drowned when his boat capsized in swells at the harbor entrance; and living to see it completed, was seized by a heart attack almost at the spot where his son went down.

Mr. Rogers was a California resident some thirty-one years and became prominent in all sorts of construction activities, particularly those connected with highways. In recognition of his services to Newport, he was given the title of honorary Port Captain, and his name was placed on a huge rock marker at the entrance to the bay.

No community can ever have too many men of this sort."

Mr. Rogers was a native of Plattsburgh and a son of the late Robert H. Rogers of this city. He was a builder, as was every Rogers of whom we have any knowledge. George Rogers' grandfather was for years engaged in railroad construction work. His father, Robert H. Rogers, was originally engaged in railroad construction work, and later engaged in contracting on large construction jobs. He was, we believe, the first of the family to go to California. He was later followed by his son George, and eventually by his other sons. Later Robert Rogers returned to Plattsburgh but all of the boys remained in Southern California, where each was successful in his own way.

Regardless of what their original occupation might have been, all of the Rogers boys elected to enter the construction field in one way or another. George had been admitted to the bar and practiced law for a short time in this city, but went to California shortly after his father began operations on the Pacific coast. George gave up the profession of law to enter the construction field in which his father was already engaged. The late Robert Rogers, Jr., had been in the clothing business in this city in the employ of the late H. A. Wood and the two younger brothers, Lawrence L. and Thomas C. Rogers, also went to California and soon the Rogers family became among the most prominent in the construction business in the vicinity of Los Angeles, which had become one of the most rapidly growing in the United States.

Their story is an example of how wealth may be obtained through the very agency least thought of by the pioneer Californians. The early American in California thought only of gold. They had no time for anything else. They took the gold where they found it, wherever it was and discarded the rock.

The Rogers boys took the rocks and in this manner achieved more wealth of a substantial form than the wif-o-the-wisp gold which filled the thoughts of so many. It was through rocks that the Rogers family reached affluence. With a growing city such as Los Angeles, stone was valuable property. Their training had taught the Rogers brothers this and they dealt in rock, whether it was in the construction of great boulevards, massive buildings, or anything in which rock was used in quantities, the Rogers brothers furnished it. In their hands rock turned to gold and they became among the most successful in this line on the Pacific coast.

No one grudged them their success, for not one of them ever changed from the good-natured, affable men they had been as boys in Plattsburgh where everyone knew and liked them. Wealth they achieved, but it did not spoil them, nor did it cause them to look down upon the friends they knew in their youth in this city. George and Robert had been here in recent years, and two or three years ago, Thomas, now a successful banker, came to Plattsburgh. They hunted up their old friends, the plain every-day boys they had always known and we never heard of one old friend envying them their success for it did not go to their heads. And that is a trait to be admired.

George Rogers Estate Left to Kin, Secretary

George A. Rogers, clubman known as the father of Newport Harbor, who died suddenly on his yacht July 26, last, left the bulk of his estate in trust for the benefit of his immediate family, it was revealed by his will filed today in probate court.

While no official estimate was made of the value of the estate, it is known to consist of property in various parts of Southern California and would probably be valued at nearly \$1,000,000, it was believed.

Under the will, which was dated Oct. 23, 1935, his secretary, Horace V. Goodrich, was remembered with a bequest of \$15,000.

Ethel S. Rogers, of 2180 West Twenty-first place, the widow;

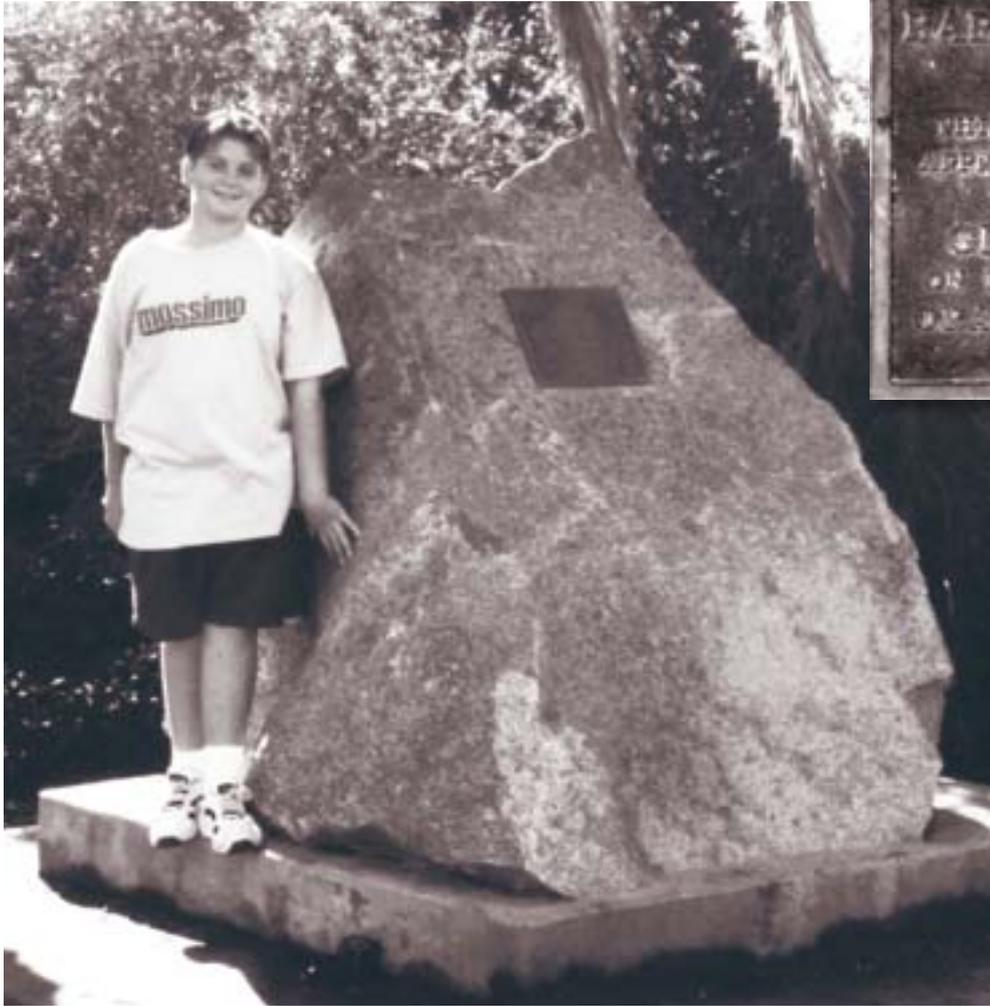
Helen Rogers Binney, daughter, and James B. Rogers, his son, were left \$5000. Lawrence L. and T. C. Rogers, brothers, were left \$100 per month with instructions that they use it to provide for a sister, Mary E. Rogers.

All the remainder of the property was ordered to be placed in trust with the Security First National Trust and Savings bank with a provision that one-half the income be paid to the widow, and one-half to be divided equally between the son and daughter during their lifetime.

On the death of the beneficiaries under the trust, the principal was ordered paid in various proportions to the descendants of the beneficiaries and to nieces, nephews and others.

Above: THIS ARTICLE appeared in the local Plattsburgh newspaper shortly after George's death. It contains two minor errors: As far as we know, Robert H. Rogers never went to California. Tom was never a banker although he was in finance. (Rogers #3496)

Right: GEORGE ROGERS' DEATH. Taken from a loose newspaper clipping. Original size 2-3/8" x 4". (Rogers #2224)



Above: PLAQUE thanking George Rogers, near "The Wedge" at the end of the Balboa Peninsula. (Rogers #3810)

Left: JOHN ROGERS next to the monument thanking his great grandfather's brother, George Rogers. (Rogers #3811)

Below: GEORGE ROGERS' Newport Beach Home. Dated October 4, 1958. Courtesy of Arnold Binney. Original size 3-1/2" x 5." (Rogers #4201)



Right: IN 2002 George Rogers' former bayfront home on East Edgewater, just west of the Bay Island footbridge, is being torn down to make way for two or more multi-million dollar bay front homes. (Rogers #3624)

Below: (Rogers #3816a)



THE END OF *THE MEMORY*

After George's death his 120-foot yacht, *The Memory*, was sold to a man who used it a few years later to move himself to the South Pacific. He apparently didn't understand boats, because he loaded a full size car onto the upper deck and removed the ballast from the bottom of the hold to compensate for the weight of the car. This precarious top-heavy arrangement made it to somewhere in the South Pacific where it was caught in a storm, capsized and sank.