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Mrs. Rogers lives in the house opposite The First National Bank on Commercial Street, opposite Winthrop Street. She is the mother of Irving Rogers, one-time selectman and the donor of many articles in this book.

The house may be seen in foregoing page at the right of B.H.Dyer's old store.

October 25, 1956

Steve's Own Corner

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By Steve Barrie



Meet Mrs. Joanna "Ma" Rogers: "Come in, dear," invited the soft, well-modulated voice, in answer to my knock on the door. As I walked into the bright, large living room "Ma" Rogers came toward me, beckoned me to sit down—and ensconced herself in her favorite rocking chair. Her warm smile and her friendly attitude filled the attractive, lived-in room—and at once, I felt that I had known Mrs. Rogers all my life, although this was our first meeting. Her gently persuasive manner and her congeniality are a direct and positive answer to those people who live with the fallacious delusion that all New Englanders are cold and austere folk. It isn't what "Ma" Rogers says or does. It's what she gives out—in spirit,—in good feeling for everyone, be he kin or stranger.

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Poem Tribute To "Ma": When I mentioned the beautiful poem, that was written by Dorothy L. Snow of Hamden, Conn. and dedicated to her, modest Mrs. Rogers moved uneasily in her chair, and stroked Minerva, her big white and brown pet cat who snuggled sleepily on her lap. "It's a lovely poem dear—and Dorothy's a lovely girl and a good friend. I was very pleased and surprised when I saw 'What Makes A Tourist House A Home?' printed in The Advocate. But, honestly dear—I don't do anything special for my friends. My home is their home when they visit me—and that's the way it's always been." And that is the reason ever since "Ma" Rogers has been taking in paying guests, folks from as far west as California, and as far south as Georgia—wend their way Summer after Summer to 167 Commercial Street,—their home away from home.

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Phebe Sings Her Praises: "She's just a wonderful woman," enthused Phebe Rogers. "Ma will always lend a helping hand—but she'll never interfere in our lives. I really love her." That's mighty high praise coming from "Ma" Rogers' daughter-in-law, who has been married to her son Bill, the town's Chief of Police for twenty years. With Phebe teaching English in the Provincetown High School and Bill kept so tied-up on his job, these two rarely get a chance to get away. When school is out for the special holidays "Ma" voluntarily leaves her Winter residence in Boston—(she lives there with her son Charles, his wife Hannah and the twins Charlene and Joanna whom she adores)—and journeys to the Cape's Tip so that Phebe and Bill can take a holiday. "Our boys, Billy who is 10.

—and Charles who is 8 just love it," smiled Phebe, "when Ma comes to stay so that Bill and I can have a vacation. She's an excellent cook—and the boys just love her apple pies and her molasses cookies."

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Big Bill Still "Ma's" Boy: It was a rainy day when Bill Rogers rang his mother's doorbell. As Mrs. Rogers opened the door she looked at Bill's wet shoes—and exclaimed: "You haven't got your rubbers on! You'll get yourself a cold. Come in out of the rain." As big, genial Bill recalled this incident his face brightened with a smile—heightening the strong resemblance he bears to the lovable lady who is his mother. "That's typical of Ma," said Bill. "Here I am a full grown man—past forty—and she still worries about my getting my feet wet. But that's how it is with all mothers, I guess. As far as they are concerned their kids never grow up."

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More Applause For "Ma": Manhattanites Stan and Nan Atlas were very much moved by the poem dedicated to "Ma" Rogers. They have been coming "home" to 167 Commercial Street for the last eight summers—and they add firmly in unison: "Home it is! It has warmth, a peacefulness, a beauty that only a wonderful human being like Anne Rogers could give it. Her love and understanding, her genuine goodness have won her the devotion of everyone who knows her. We feel ourselves very fortunate indeed to have 'Ma' to come to each Summer." When my good friend Mrs. Louise Malaquias of 398 Commercial St. heard that I was going to do a column on Mrs. Rogers she was delighted. "I can't think of anyone more deserving of some recognition," said Loiusue brightly. "She's one of the grandest ladies in town."

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It's Irving's Home Too: "I was born in the west end in the old Weeks house that is now up for sale," volunteered Mrs. Rogers. "I've been living at 167 since 1932. My son Irving lives here with me. You know him, don't you? He's the Welfare Agent of the town. I remember—and that's some remembering, dear—when we use to fetch our drinking water from the old well on Court Street. I also remember when the old Methodist Church that used to stand where the First National Bank is—just across the street—burned down. The fire was so intense that the windows in this house became so hot, we had to leave the place for fear of burning up ourselves. Must you leave now? Well do come see our big kitchen. We often sit around the kitchen table and visit." As I said goodbye to "Ma" I walked carefully across the newly painted floor of the piazza, "Ma's" favorite sitting place during the Summer evenings where she enjoys watching the "strangers" and "friends" stroll by.

