

# The Good Ol' Days

By Tobie Finzel

## Tree of Mystery

We were pleased to have a museum visit from KGW-TV's Grant McComie who was producing a segment about the Banks-Vernonia Trail for one of his Grant's Getaways programs. He spent an hour interviewing the museum board and then had his accompanying cameraman film a live interview. One of the photographs from our collection chosen for filming was a framed newspaper clipping of two men in early day logger attire lying across the undercut of an enormous tree. Two other men holding long axes stand on opposite sides of the cut. The caption reads "Men stand before a giant Douglas Fir, measuring 22 feet in diameter, taken from Deer Island," but we didn't refer to that during the filming.

A few days after the piece first aired, we received a call from Brian O'Brian, an Oregonian who is exceptionally knowledgeable about Pacific Northwest trees and is a self-described tree detective. He noticed the picture that we held during the filming and asked what kind of tree it was. We read him the caption, and he questioned whether there could be a Douglas Fir that big because the biggest ones were usually no more than fifteen feet in diameter. Speculating that perhaps it was a cedar, we scanned and emailed the clipping to him so he could better see the bark and heartwood. That led to a series of telephone and email conversations based on his research into this particular tree. He ultimately found the original photograph in the Clark Kinsey online collection at the University of Washington. The actual identification of this tree is a giant redwood harvested in Humboldt County, California. The framed newspaper photo had been clipped from what we presume was a St. Helens newspaper in the 1970s. Was this a hoax or misinformation? Perhaps one of our patrons will let us know. Meanwhile, we are grateful to Mr. O'Brian for his research and will append a correction to the caption.

If you missed the Grant McComie segment on television that aired on March 15th, you can still see "Rolling through History" online at <http://www.kgw.com/lifestyle/grants-getaways>.

## From Virgil Powell's Diary

Virgil Powell was a long-time resident whose family had a farm in the Upper Nehalem Valley between Natal and Pittsburg. Each year from 1906 until 1955, he kept a regular diary of his activities. We recently read a clipping of a Vernonia Eagle interview with his widow, Inez, in the 1960s in which she recalled that they were the first to own a car in the Upper Nehalem Valley in 1915. Virgil's diary shows the purchase was actually made on April 4, 1916. A few of the other early 1916 entries indicate that he had been thinking about an automobile for some time, but when he visited a friend in Portland who took him driving, that apparently clinched it. It's unclear who actually owned the car and who did the driving before he had his first lesson. Entries following the purchase show Virgil busy with automobile maintenance and confirm what Inez stated in the interview - he enjoyed taking people for rides on the primitive roads of that time.

*Tuesday, April 4, 1916: Bought a Ford car at Clatskanie first thing in morning and got*

*over home about 2 P.M. Went up to Vernonia after the mail after we got home. Rained a very little all day.*

*Wednesday, April 5: We all went down to Petersons in the Ford. Took my first lesson at driving and drove nearly all the way home. Cloudy most all day. Got home about 2 P.M.*

*Thursday, April 6: Went up to Pittsburg to look after the cattle and sheep first thing in morning. Also fixed some fence. Worked on the road up in the woods for a while in afternoon. Went up to Vernonia about 3 P.M. I drove nearly all the way. Fine bright day.*

*Saturday, April 8: Disc harrowed till noon. Hauled up some wood and washed the automobile in afternoon. Cloudy most all day and looks very much like rain. Was up to Pittsburg late in evening to look after the stock.*

*Saturday, April 15: Worked at putting up auto house all day and got it pretty well along. Bright and fine all day.*

*Sunday, April 16: Washed the auto first thing in forenoon. Bend & Wilda came down. Went for a ride at 2:15 up as far as Weeds. Cloudy most all day and rained late in evening.*

*Monday, April 17: Went up to Detrick place and hauled down shakes for the garage. Worked at putting roof on in afternoon. Rained considerable all day.*

## Terry's Gym



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*Sunday, April 23: We all went up to Smiths and spent the day. Went up to Kist for a ride in afternoon. Got stuck in a mud hole 2 1/2 miles below here in morning. Cloudy all day and pretty cold. Got back home about 5:30 P.M.*

*Wednesday, April 26: Left 8:30 A.M. for Clatskanie in the Ford and got there at 11:15. Got home 6 P.M. Fair in forenoon but rained considerable in afternoon.*

The Vernonia Pioneer Museum is located at E. 511 Bridge Street and is open from 1 to 4 pm on Saturdays and Sundays (excluding holidays) all year. From June through mid-September, the museum is also open on Fridays from 1 - 4 pm. There is no charge for admission but donations are always welcome. Become a member of the museum for an annual \$5 fee to receive the periodic newsletter, and if you are a Facebook user, check out the Vernonia Pioneer Museum page created by Bill Langmaid. The museum volunteers are always pleased to enlist additional volunteers to help hold the museum open and assist in other ways. Please stop by and let one of the volunteers know of your interest in helping out.

# The Birk

"it's not that far"

- APRIL 4TH... CARRIED AWAY
- APRIL 5TH... BRITNEE KELLOGG
- APRIL 11TH... JUST PEOPLE
- APRIL 12TH... CHAMPIONSHIP
- APRIL 13TH... GUITAR SHORTY
- APRIL 18TH... COUNTRYSIDE RIDE
- APRIL 19TH... LEWI LONGMIRE
- APRIL 25TH... THE SMOKING FLOWERS
- APRIL 26TH... THE STACY JONES BAND
- MAY 3RD... KEVIN SELFE & THE TORNADO
- MAY 10/11TH... ROGUE RIVER BAND
- MAY 14TH... RICK ESTRIN & THE NIGHTCATS
- MAY 17/18TH... CALICO THE BAND
- MAY 22ND... FREEWAY REVIVAL
- MAY 23/24TH... SUGARAY RAYFORD



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