

The Good Ol' Days

By Tobie Finzel

Museum Notes

As published in the May 4th Voice, the new release of the Vernonia Historic Walking Tour is now available for \$3.00 at the museum and in multiple downtown locations: R&S Market, Vernonia City Hall, Vernonia Public Library, Black Iron Grill, Blue House Café, Cedar Side Inn, and All in Pub.

In that same edition of the Voice, we asked if VHS grads or their descendants might have the few missing yearbooks for our digitization project. We now have a source for the 1967 and 1968 books but are still looking for a 1928 Verhian or Memologs from the years 1973, 1974, 1984, or 2004. We just need to borrow them to scan. Call (503) 429-3713 and leave a message if you have one of the missing.

Vernonia High School

The second edition of The Verhian, Vernonia High School's yearbook name from 1924 to 1930, included a brief history of the school. To date this is the only record we've found about the forming of the high school, and the italicized paragraphs below were taken directly from that history.

"On September 10th in 1915, County Superintendent Allen called a meeting to organize a union high school in Vernonia. George Trageser was elected chairman of the board and F. E. Malmsten, clerk. The school board then rented a school room and equipment from District No. 47. Professor J. P. Claybaugh taught the first two terms of the new school."

The rented high school room was in the first Washington School that was replaced in 1930 by the former brick structure on Bridge Street, Washington Grade School. District No. 47 to that point only had elementary schools in its territory. Prior to that, school either stopped at eighth grade or students had to move to a community with a high school to further their education.

"Ten Sophomores and seven Freshmen enrolled the first term, but five dropped out later and two others changed schools. It was during this first term that our high school piano was bought. At the beginning of the second term twenty-one students started, but eight of the

boys joined the Navy during the term. They were Everett Tucker, Omar Sheeley, Glan Sheeley, Gale Stanton, Russell Stanton, Cyril John, Curtis John and Dewey Van Blaricom. Eighteen enrolled for the third term and only one dropped out. It was that term that our VHS put out its first graduating class. Mr. J.B. Wilkerson was the principal that year and was elected for a second term with Miss Deerwester as his assistant. Twenty-four students entered school the next term under Mr. G. W. Brown and Miss Davis. Lola Brown and Hazel Malmsten were Vernonia High's first debating team. The next term (1920-21) thirty students entered school. The high school entered the State Athletic Association and put out its first basketball team."

The exodus of the eight boys into the Navy coincided with America's entry into World War I so we presume this was the reason for the group's departure. By the time the basketball team was assembled, the war was over and male enrollment numbers were sufficient to field a team. By the early 1920s rumors of a big lumber mill brought hundreds of new residents to Vernonia in search of jobs. A new high school was built the north side of A Street where the first one room school in the central city had stood. We have not found historical proof as of this writing, but we understand that the Oregon-American mill funded its construction as it had done with the grade school at Camp McGregor.

During the 1923-24 school year, the first girls' basketball team was established. They went on to win the county championship followed in 1924-25 by winning the upper Columbia district championship and the next year the lower Columbia district and competed at the state level. The population continued to soar throughout the 1920s and the school enrollment grew along with it.

From Virgil Powell's Diary

Virgil Powell (1887-1963) 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. In May he got a new rubber-tired buggy and retired the old one and worked on road improvements. He's still corresponding with the mysterious 55131.

Friday, May 17, 1907: Sawed some wood in the forenoon. Took a bicycle ride in afternoon and went where they were working on the road by Wood's. Cloudy all day and looks very much like rain. Guess I will begin work on the road Monday.

Saturday, May 18: Sawed wood in morning also hauled wood. Rained quite a little all day. Did not do much of anything in the afternoon. Grange day at Natal. Sent postal to Alice. Received a letter from 55131.

Sunday, May 19: Went up to Omar Shannahan's in the buggy. Got back to Vernonia about 2:30 and Fisher crowd were there. Sold my old buggy. Rained quite a bit all day. Got home about 5 P.M. The road gang went down below to work.

Monday, May 20: Went up to Vernonia the first thing in the morning and got a Post Office Order to send for my new rubber tire buggy. G.P. came and got the old buggy. Got home from Vernonia about 1 P.M. Rained most all day. Ordered my buggy in the afternoon.

Tuesday, May 21: Sent for my new buggy. Very warm all day. Sent a postal to Alice.

Wednesday, May 22: Worked putting ceiling on up stairs. Pretty hot all day. Ma and Grace went down to Mist.

Thursday, May 23: Went down to Hattie Deeds funeral. Started down at 11:30. Cloudy all day and looks much like rain. I will commence work on the road tomorrow.

Friday, May 24: Commenced work on the road down by Haseletts. Cloudy most all day.

Saturday, May 25: Worked on the road again. Cloudy most all day. Done quite a lot of blasting.

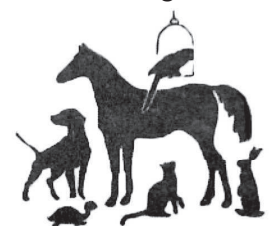
Sunday, May 26: Took a little bicycle ride down the road in the morning. Awful hot all day. Wrote a letter to 55131. Went up to Pittsburg in evening and mailed some letters.

Monday, May 27: Worked on the road. Pretty warm all day. Commenced to grade. Worked with scraper most of the day.

The Vernonia Pioneer Museum is located at 511 E. 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. We now have a page on the Vernonia Hands on Art website, www.vernoniahansonart.org If you are a Facebook user, check out the Vernonia Pioneer Museum page. 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.

Vernonia Veterinary Clinic

Small and Large Animals



Open

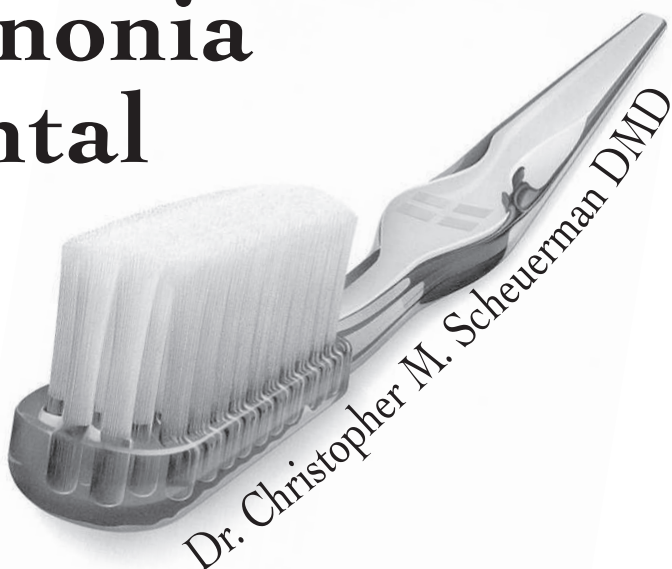
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Call for Appointments
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700 Weed Ave. Vernonia, OR

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Vernonia Dental



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