

# The Good Ol' Days

By Tobie Finzel

## Mildred Weed Memories

Mildred Weed Evans was the daughter of Oscar Weed and granddaughter of Judson Weed, one of the earliest settlers in Vernonia. She passed away last October at the age of 102. Mildred was born August 4, 1915, on the Weed homestead on Timber Road. In 2004, Bill Weed, another descendant of Judson and the primary Weed family historian, interviewed Mildred about her memories of growing up near Vernonia. Several members of the Weed clan visited Vernonia recently and left a set of notebooks including the transcription of that interview.

The 1912 Weed farmhouse, which replaced an earlier cabin, still stands but has not been occupied by Weed family members for many years. Mildred and her parents, Oscar and Bessie Weed, lived on the same property but in a different house which is no longer standing. When Oscar was elected Columbia County Sheriff, the family moved to St. Helens for eight years, shortly before Judson's death in 1929.

Mildred was only 14 when Judson died and had few memories of him, except that he was a gentleman like her father. She recalled that he always participated in Memorial Day services as a member of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), the Civil War veterans group that later became the American Legion. When she was a child, Judson was one of the three remaining GAR members in Vernonia and was leader of the group. She remembered seeing him sitting in a car and riding in the Memorial Day parade that went down Bridge Street to the Pioneer Cemetery where marchers put flowers on the graves. Along the way, those walking in the parade dropped flowers into Rock Creek from the bridge.

Mildred's grandmother, Emmaline Van Blaricom Weed, was a real pioneer woman who could do just about anything. She always kept a pan of cookies in her cupboard, baked bread and pies, but she was also handier than Judson at repairs and could out-fish most of the men. When she did her town shopping, she traded farm eggs for needed goods. She was considerably younger than Judson as she had been an 18 year old stu-

dent when he, 36, taught in Vernonia's first school. The Van Blaricom clan and the Parkers were the first two families to settle in Vernonia in 1874. Judson and his cousin, Ozias Cherrington, arrived in 1876. When Judson and Emma married, her parents gave them a cow which they brought along with them on their several mile walk to his homestead.

Before he was elected Sheriff, Mildred's father, Oscar, had a dairy with Jersey cows and a dairy route. He sold milk for twelve cents a quart. A neighbor had a Holstein cow dairy and sold milk for ten cents a quart, but Oscar's milk had more cream put back in so people were willing to pay the extra two cents.

When he moved to St. Helens to assume his sheriff's duties, he brought with him his wife, four sons and two daughters. By the time they returned to Vernonia, all of the children except Mildred were grown and gone.

Mildred went to college to become a teacher and returned to Vernonia to teach third grade. When World War II was in progress, she joined the Navy and became a gunsight trainer stationed on Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay. Her service ended with an Honorable Discharge in 1946. She then moved to Pasadena, California, and trained as a legal secretary and retired from that profession in 1982. She spent the remainder of her long life in California and was honored for her WWII service on her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

We are fortunate that her nephew, Bill, recorded her memories of the early days and vignettes of some of the area's earliest residents.

## 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. The summer months were full of ball games and farm chores.

*Tuesday, July 14, 1908: Hoed some in the kale in the morning. Went up to Clarks in the afternoon to look after fire. Today is my first day's work as fire patrol. Butchered a sheep in the evening.*

*Wednesday, July 15: Jim Elliott came over and cut hay for me. Did not do much of anything. Went up to Vernonia after supper horse-back. Played ball a little up there. Got back about 10. Cloudy all day.*

*Thursday, July 16: Finished cutting hay about 3 P.M. Went over to Elliotts and brought the rake over in the evening. Cloudy most of the day. Went down to Rays after supper horseback and got Mart to come up and help me in the hay. Got home about 10.*

*Saturday, July 18: Raked hay and finished shocking at noon. Took the hay rake home in the afternoon. Started for the dance at Mist at 7. Saw Ada and had a dandy time. Got home about 6:30 (a.m.) and went up to the ball game at Vernonia. Very hot all day.*

*Sunday, July 19: Started up to the ball game between Natal and Vernonia at 7:15. Played ball in the afternoon. Score 18 to 14 in favor of Natal. Awful hot all day. Got home at 6 P.M.*

*Tuesday, July 21: Hauled hay all day. Very hot all day. Went up to Clarks after supper. Got back home about 9:30. Received a letter from Alder Grove Base-Ball Team.*

*Friday, July 24: Went up to Clarks in the morning and got back about 11. Rained a little in the morning. Started for the doings at Fishhawk at 3:45. Jim went down with me. Stayed in Mist for supper. Got to Fishhawk about 8:30. Got back home at 4 A.M. Was almost froze.*

*Saturday, July 25: Went up to Clarks in the morning. Did not get up till about 9. Started for the dance at Natal at 6:45 and got down almost to Mist and met Ada and she told us that there would not be a dance so came back. Got back home about 9:45.*

*Monday, July 27: Hauled a load of bark in the morning. Went down below in the afternoon to look after fire and post some notices. Not very warm any of the day. Went up to the Post Office in the evening. Got my buggy a year ago today.*

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.vernoniahandsandsonart.org](http://www.vernoniahandsandsonart.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.

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