



Joe Bowers photo Jenelle Wiggins

Nehalem valley people *Those who came*

Joe Bowers

by Jenelle Wiggins

Joe Bowers and his wife Harriette came to Vernonia in 1966. They first moved into a small house on Nehalem St. and later moved out Pebble Creek and into a house which had formerly been Crown Zellerbach's old office. Joe set to work remodeling their new home and Harriette worked in Vernonia and built terrariums in her spare time. Ten years later they are the proud owners of "Harriette's Garden" shop where they sell everything from house plants to dollhouses. The day I stopped by the garden shop Joe was minding the store and he chatted with me about his life and interests and how they came to live in Vernonia.

"I grew up working in the coal mines in Oklahoma," Joe tells me, "and then moved to the West coast in 1926. I worked in California for a time, went into the service, and then hired out with Weyerhaeuser in Longview. That was in 48. I worked there for 17 years setting up and feeding planers. It was a real highball outfit, and I watched six of my buddies drop dead of heart attacks. Then my turn came. The doctor told me if I didn't quit my job he'd sign my death certificate right there on the spot. So I took his advice and I retired."

What Joe calls retired I call working overtime. Armed with a hammer, nails, skillsaw and planer, there is just no stopping him. Joe completely remodeled their home and garden shop and remodeled Ozzie Ray's home. He helped build a house on Mist Drive, another on E Street and has built dozens of fireplaces for Oregon Home Builders. Joe claims he's had no formal education in carpentry.

"I think of myself as a Jack of all trades and master of none. You might

say I'm stubborn headed. If I make my mind up to do something I do it. Like the time I built a house over in Rainier. I built it from the ground up, put in the septic tank and wired it throughout. That was the first house I'd ever built and it passed state inspection."

Joe is building a different kind of house these days. He and Harriette design and build elaborate doll houses in their spare time. These minatures take from 5 weeks to 5 months to make and come completely furnished with a double bed, a bureau, a vanity with real mirror, couches, stoves, and even delicate hand caned chairs to go around the little dining room table. One doll house had a neatly cedar shaked roof and the other was a log cabin made from cattail stalks which had been peeled and dried and cut into lengths. Just another of Joe's many hobbies.

"I first came to Vernonia to hunt back in 1948," Joe tells me. "We like Vernonia and couldn't move anywhere else and be satisfied like we are here. People have been real nice, and we are especially grateful to Bill Rhoades, who helped make our shop possible. It's taken a lot of work but we've paid off our home, and our shop and now everything we have is ours. We pay cash or we do without. Yes, I would say Vernonia has treated us real good!"

As I was leaving Joe told me his name wasn't really Joe, it was Arthur.

"In 1948 I was introduced to my sister-in-law in Longview. When she met me she exclaimed, 'I can't call you brother and I don't like the name Arthur, so I guess I'll just call you good old Joe,' and I've been Joe ever since."

Lincoln School sing-in

The students of Lincoln School will have a Sing-in of carols and music for the season during the afternoon of Wednesday, December 20, at 1:45 p.m. in the basement of Lincoln School. The music classes will join together in several songs and readings. Parents who wish to attend are cordially invited to do so. The short program will last approximately 30-35 minutes.

Mist School Christmas program

The children of Mist Grade School will present their annual Christmas Program Thursday, December 21 at 10:30 a.m. in the school Gym. The program of songs, music and a special play will feature all of the children in the six grades. Parents and friends are invited to the program.



Matt Parris



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Dear Vernonians and Surrounding Neighbors:

We would like to wish everyone peace and love as another year slips by. For my family it has been most eventful especially because we have come to such a wonderful town to live. In just a few months we have been fortunate enough to meet many of you and make many new friends. So we look forward to the new year and to the challenge of contributing our energy to the expanding life in Vernonia.

This holiday season will find our family in Chicago to visit relatives while friends Carl and Gene will be minding the house and animals.

Upon our return we will be ready to start working with Beaver Builders, your building problems are our business.

May the joy and peace of God be with you.

Yours Truly,

Norman and Patti Jensen
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