



Inez Smith Powell

Nehalem Valley People *those who were here*

Inez Smith Powell

by Jenelle Wiggins

Inez was one of eight children born to John and Johannah Smith, a pioneer family that homesteaded this valley in 1889. Both parents were of Scandanavian descent, John Smith was born in 1851 at Boetberg, Sweden and Johannah Helquist was born in 1863 at Sogndal, Sogn, Norway. But it wasn't until they were both living in Chicago that they met and were married in 1882.

The following year the Smiths migrated west to Portland and 6 years later left their comfortable home there to homestead in the Upper Nehalem Valley.

Inez recalls her mother telling about how she hated to leave her cozy home in Portland to come to a wilderness. Their homestead, 5 miles up the river between the Kist and Pleasant Hill area, was surrounded by dense old growth timber and Johannah would sit at night rocking Garfield, the baby, and listen to the coyotes howl.

Like all pioneer families the Smiths made do with what was at hand. They cleared a patch of forest in order to plant an orchard and garden, and utilized all clear grain cedar for boards and shakes to build their home, barn and out sheds.

Inez remembers how her mother and others living near-by kept their milk, cream, butter and meat from spoiling by putting it in the well. Wells were dug, lined on the inside with boards and covered with a lid. Because the water was always cool, the well was an ideal substitute for a refrigerator. Perishables were placed in a bucket and lowered down to the water level. According to Inez, once some city relatives had visited, and on their return to Portland they told everyone that people here got their milk from a well. They didn't know it was first taken from a cow!!*

Inez is the last member of her pioneer family still living here. "I've had two brothers who fought in World War I and two sons who fought in World War II so you know I've been around a few years."

When I asked Inez how old she was she hedged. "Do I have to tell you that?" she kidded. "Well at my age I guess it shouldn't matter. I'm 84. I was born February 8, 1895."

"Back in those early days we had to do the best we could. My mother was

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a very creative, industrious person. She made all of our clothing, knitted our socks and our sweaters. I can't remember ever seeing her sitting idle. There were four or five bedrooms upstairs and the floor of each room was covered with a homemade carpet woven from remnants of our old worn clothing."

At sixteen I went to work at the Mist Store for Johnnie Libel. The money went towards shoes and school supplies. Those days it was up to the kids to help out with expenses."

"I married Virgil Powell, also a pioneer who lived 5 miles down the river. Virgil and I owned the very first car in Vernonia. In 1915 we became the proud owners of a Model T Ford, the kind you had to get out in front and crank to start. I was husky in those days, and it was so much fun taking people for rides."

In 1918 my husband went into partnership with Shady Lane and bought the General Mercantile Store on the corner where the Treasures and Trash is now. We sold everything from fresh produce to clothing. The war was going then and most items were rationed. I recall my friends Bertha Malmsten and Eva West stopped there. Often times they had to buy substitute flour instead of the real thing, but whenever they baked they would always bring me a nibble down at the store."

Inez worked on the Vernonia election board for many years. "In the early days everyone voted at the cookhouse down in Colored town. I made a big pot of stew and put just about everything in it but my socks. We'd simmer that stew on the old pot belly stove while we worked. We counted votes by hand and sometimes it took all night to add the results."

An interesting feature of Inez's home is the red brick hearth, made from the same bricks used in the burner of the Oregon American Mill. The way she tells it, her husband was foreman of the night watchmen at the mill and when it got time to reline the burner he brought the old bricks home and built the lovely fireplace for Inez.

"I guess I take after my mother," Inez reflects. "I'm not an idler." You can say that again. The unusual braid rugs that cover her floor have been made from scraps of her sons clothing, and are considered priceless to Inez. Not your usual braid rug, she

Notes on Folks

Clyde Johnson is in Forest Grove Hospital after several falls recently. He is improving all the time and would enjoy visits.

Obituary

Isable M. Underwood Bond

Isable Bond died Friday, March 16 after several months in the hospital in St. Helens, Or. She was 73 years-old and born in Underwood, WA., March 14, 1905.

She is survived by husband Joe of Timber Rt. and several nieces living in Oak Grove, OR.

She was buried at Underwood, WA. last Monday, March 19.

New folks

Corry James Yokley was born Feb. 17, to Gayle and Cliff Yokley of Vernonia. He weighed 8 lbs. 2½ oz., and was 21 inches long. Grandparents are Mrs. Zelma Barker in Chowilla CA. and Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Welch of Vernonia.

Great-grandparents Mr. and Mrs. Archie Hogan of Mist and Grand-parents Mr. and Mrs. David Crawford Sr. and Mr. and Mrs. Richard S. Huntman, are proud to announce the birth of Donald Richard Crawford who arrived on St. Patrick's day and weighed 7 lbs. 1 oz., 20 inches long. The proud parents are Mr. and Mrs. Charles F. Crawford of Clearfield Utah. Mr. Crawford is in the Airforce. This is their first child.

has incorporated four and five strand braids to give the rugs a woven appearance. They have to be the prettiest braid rugs I have ever laid eyes on. Inez also quilts and knits. She has made afghans for each of her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. "When I got snowed in this winter, I knitted at lot," she laughs.

Inez is looking forward to summer days when she can sit on her lush patio, surrounded by the sweet smell and color of her geraniums, fuschias and begonias. "So many of my friends and relatives want me to move to Portland but I just laugh and tell them that my roots are so deep here I can't pull them out."

JOY THEATER

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THE BIG SLEEP

Fri. & Sat., March 23 & 24

Show Starts 7:30, Out 11:00

Square dance in Banks

There will be an old fashioned country dance and potluck at Banks Sunset Hall March 31. The potluck begins at 6 p.m. and the dance will start at 8 p.m.

The dance is being sponsored by Nehalem Valley Community Services, a non-profit organization. All ages are welcome.

Old fashioned dancing will include squares, contra's, waltzes, polka's and schottisches. All dances are explained and walked through and no previous experience is necessary. The band will be the Backwoods Backsteppers, whose members come from Vernonia and North Plains.

As an added attraction, the band will play in concert during potluck dinner. The concert will consist of traditional dance music of the English Isles, and Appalachia, in addition to original tunes inspired by life in the Northwest Oregon woods. The Backwoods Backsteppers feature two hammer dulcimer players, a guitar, fiddle, mandolin, concertina, banjo, string bass and piano. Don't miss the fun!!

Spring Dance at CSAC

There will be a dance to top off Spring Vacation at the Community Activity Center on Saturday, March 24 from 8 p.m. until 11 p.m.

Music will be records and tapes furnished by Sunny & Jo. If anyone wishes to bring their own favorite record or tape to the dance, they may do so. However, they should make sure their name is on the record or tape so it can be returned to them.

There will be mood lighting. The Snack Bar will be open for nibbling pleasure. The cost is 75 cents stag and \$1.25 drag.

If anyone wishes to take an active part in preparing for this dance, they can come in and help, more hands are always welcome, as are ideas and suggestions.

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