

# Ed Miller closes Cedarwood shingle mill after 31 years

by Lesta Weed Garner

"All good things have to come to an end sometime." This statement was made by Charles E. (Ed) Miller recently as he contemplated retirement at the age of 68, and the sale of his shingle mill which had been a vital part of his life for 31 years. Both are undoubtedly very traumatic events in the life of this man, as well as the close of an era for Vernonia.

Ed Miller first saw the light of day in Kansas City, Missouri on March 16, 1913. When he was five years old his family moved to Raymond, Washington and there he grew up and got his education. He was part of a large family; four boys and five girls; and he was the second in that line.

With a large family and many mouths to feed, everyone worked. Ed first went to work at age 10 in a dairy and his earnings, small though they were, helped feed that big family.

In high school he worked in a printing shop and became a 'printer's devil', but after graduation he turned his attention to the mills in the area and learned the art of the 'shingle weaver', the trade that was to become

his life's blood.

By strange coincidence, a family from Michigan, with an attractive 18 year old daughter, moved to Raymond. The daughter, Rose Innonen, a pert little Finnish gal, soon caught Ed's eye, and before long they were married.

Ed continued to work in shingle mills around Raymond until the start of World War II when the shipyards opened. Then they moved to Vancouver and became a part of the great army of people who did their part for the war effort in one capacity or another.

After the war, they again followed the shingle business in various places, and in July 1945 they came to Vernonia. Ed recalls that at the time there were seven shingle mills in this general area. There was plenty of good cedar then and all the mills were working. Some were 'mom and pop' operations to be sure, but the mill Ed began working in was the one in Vernonia and the largest of the seven, owned by L.C. Cotner of Los Angeles and known as Cedarwood Timber Company. They first lived at the Hy-Van hotel and took their meals at Ma Vike's Cafe. Rose became a shingle packer and they both worked hard at their trade.

In September 1949, Ed bought the mill from Cotner. They moved to the house near the mill that literally was

their life from then on. The railroad was still working at that time and a spur ran to the mill. Carloads of shingles were shipped to California, and Ed recalls that the first carload he shipped brought \$6.25 a square. A square is four bundles. The next year he got over \$14 a square for two carloads. Then the bottom seemed to drop out of the building trade and shingle business was bad for awhile. (Now with inflation, shingles run from \$50 to \$60 per square).

At the peak of his business, Ed had three shifts a day, with 10 men in a crew. The whirr of the shingle saws lulled Vernonians to sleep and welcomed them when they awoke. The pungent smell of cedar was always with them. That fragrance, and the smoke from the burner, has been a bone of contention these last several years between Ed and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) which contend that "smoke from the burner went straight to Portland and right down Burnside Street."

Just recently, Ed sold his shingle mill to the Strassel Brothers, and one momentous Saturday, all hands were called to help load it on a big flat-bed truck ready to move. The mill weighed two tons and was unwieldy to handle. One bad move could have dropped it and all would have been lost. But the task finally was

accomplished and the truck pulled out, ending the shingle era in Vernonia.

Ed went with the truck to the location on Strassel Road, just off Sunset Highway, where the Strassel Brothers had a mill built all ready to receive the machinery. Again, the great struggle was accomplished and the mill was in place. Ed bid it good-bye, knowing it was in good hands.

Miller will continue the shake business with a crew of three. But many houses throughout this county and the Portland area will stand as a monument to him for many years because of the perfection of their shingle roofs, many of which Ed put on or supervised.

All the 31 years that he ran the mill and shingled houses, Ed Miller was also a vital part of the community. He served 12 years on the city council and five years on the planning commission. Two things he claims credit for while he was on the council. First, he persuaded the water crew to modify some machinery to greatly increase the volume of the water intake at the pumping plant, thus

providing water for more residents. And, after three years of dickering, he secured the site for the present concrete covered reservoir on Stony Point from Longview Fibre.

## VHS wrestlers pin Warrenton Warriors

WRESTLING

The Vernonia Logger Wrestling team pinned the Warrenton Warriors in a 36-22 victory Thursday night at the Vernonia High School gymnasium. The audience of around 30 shouted and applauded early in the match as Howard Eskin wrestled his opponent to a decisive, and for Vernonia that night, typical victory.

The team is 2 and 1 in the league, according to Terry Nimz, coach, who added, "They looked real well that night, they wrestled real tough," he said. "They like to beat Warrenton," he added.

Both teams appeared to have equal support from their small audiences. "We like to go where the team goes, when we can, and support them," said Angela Howard, parent of a Warrenton team member. "The boys try real hard, and they deserve a lot of support from the town," said Rita Wood, whose son, David is a Logger.

### VHS ATHLETIC SCHEDULE

- Feb. 5 - Girl's basketball game at VHS. Opponent - Scappoose.
- Feb. 6 - Varsity (only) boys basketball game at Corbett. Game starts at 7 pm.
- Feb. 14 - Boys basketball game at VHS. Opponent - Knappa. Game starts at 1 pm.
- Feb. 21 - Wrestling - district.

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## Vernonia High School Honor Roll

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1ST SEMESTER</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 4.0                 | Teresa Robinson<br>Ann Serby<br>Leslie Sutherland<br>Eric Wilcoxen<br>Jane Wohlfarth                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Wayne Lubbes<br>Salena McDonald<br>Tammy McMaster<br>Gina Martin<br>Wendie Morishige<br>Sonya Olson<br>Melodie Parrow<br>Karen Pitt<br>David Proehl<br>Larry Rider<br>Melody Sauer<br>Kim Stevens<br>Shawn Stevens<br>Tracy Wilkerson<br>Dwayne Zadow |
| 3.49-3.0            | Tammy Adams<br>Sonia Aldrich<br>Tawna Arnold<br>Leora Battrick<br>Joe Batty<br>Ross Bellingham<br>Joe Budge<br>J.J. Cahill<br>Bruce Carter<br>David Carter<br>Doyle Dunaway<br>Charles DuVall<br>Barry East<br>Howard Eskins<br>Raquel Gonzalez<br>Steve Grady<br>Rod Hammerberg<br>Lila Harrison<br>Barbara Heath<br>Heidi Heisterman<br>Dean Johnston<br>Kim Kleinman<br>Kristen Knight<br>Mark Lamping<br>Janet Lubbes |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 3.99-3.50           | Brenda Bodenhamer<br>Julie Buxton<br>Brooke Crowston<br>Gigi Curl<br>Mary Denckla<br>Dianne Dickey<br>April Durst<br>Heidi Fuller<br>Polli Goodman<br>Lana Green<br>Ken hostetler<br>Robert Jackson<br>Dave Kleinman<br>John Laughlin<br>Cyndie Miner<br>Becky Nice<br>Kristi Reinsch<br>Heather Remsen                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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