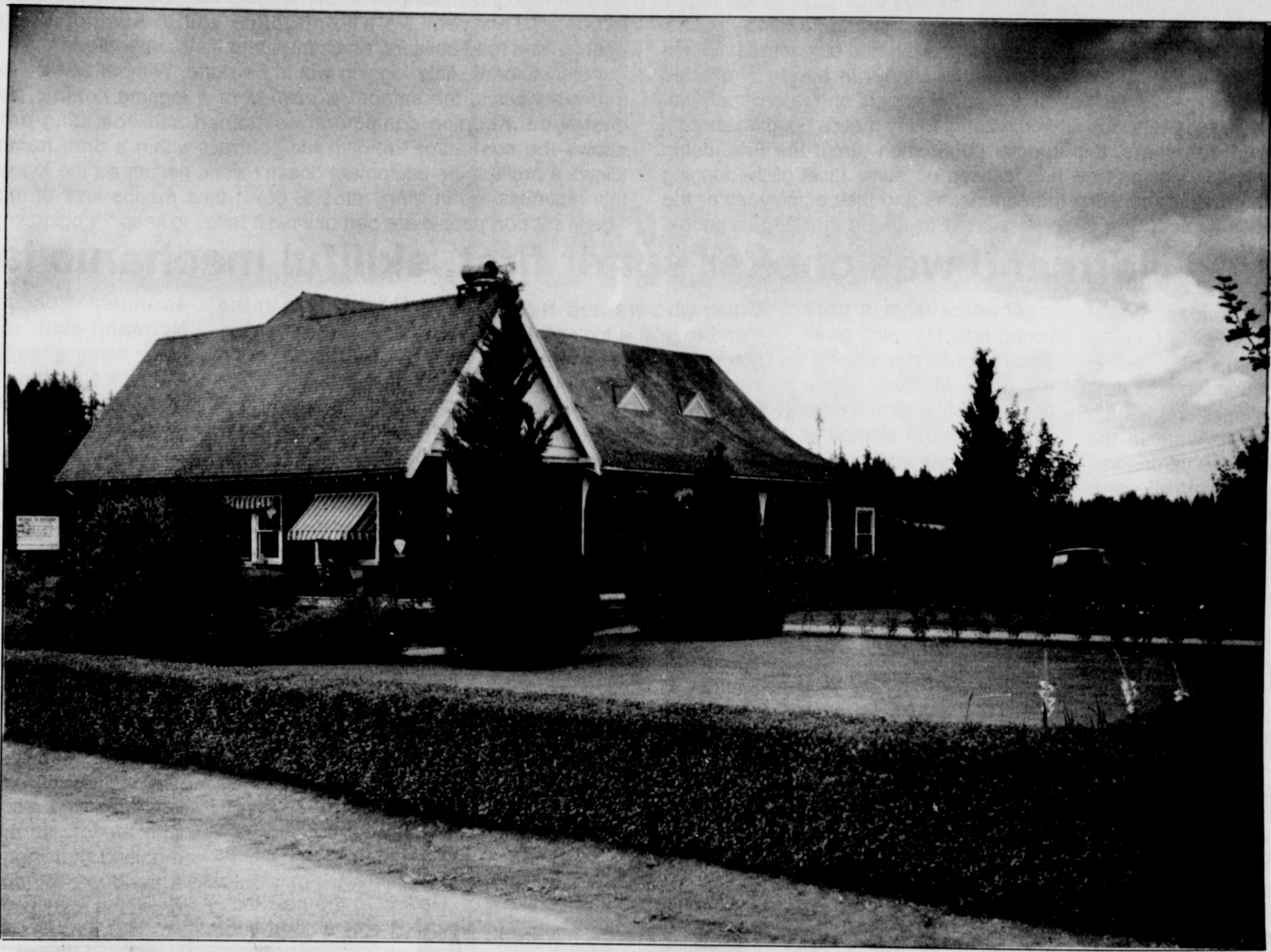


# Welcome to Vernonia . . .



## Unity = Community

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                | Page  |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Logger Support Services.....   | 4     |
| Donald Normand.....            | 6     |
| Gratter's Tire Service.....    | 7     |
| Craig Tolonen.....             | 7     |
| Tim Eastman.....               | 9     |
| Al Delemos.....                | 9     |
| Buckner Land Salvage.....      | 10    |
| Banks Auto Parts.....          | 12    |
| Alternative Stage.....         | 13    |
| Logging Show.....              | 14    |
| '94 Logging Show winners.....  | 15    |
| '95 Sponsors.....              | 15    |
| Schedule of Events.....        | 16-17 |
| Vernonia, Center for Arts..... | 18    |
| Stage Band.....                | 18    |
| Robb Wilson.....               | 19    |
| Jeff Patterson.....            | 21    |
| Railroad Crossing Gallery..... | 23    |
| Antler Display.....            | 23    |
| Nora Keith.....                | 24    |
| Fishing Derby.....             | 24    |
| Arts & Crafts.....             | 26    |
| Worship Service.....           | 26    |
| Henry Anderegg.....            | 27    |
| Tae Kwan-do.....               | 26    |
| Jamboree Court.....            | 28    |
| Grand Marshal Robin Cody..     | 28    |
| Parade Viewing Area.....       | 28    |
| Fast Draw.....                 | 29    |
| Tae Kwon-do.....               | 29    |
| Hospitality Center.....        | 30    |
| Jamboree Committee.....        | 30    |
| Softball Tournament.....       | 30    |
| Cruise-in '95.....             | 31    |
| Hospitality Center.....        | 31    |
| Directory of Advertisers.....  | 31    |

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For information about the Friendship  
Jamboree, write P.O. Box 141, Vernonia,  
OR 97064.

Cover Photo: Bighorn Logging Co.

It is not possible to ascertain precisely why Vernonia, among many logging communities, survived as a community after its primary timber source was depleted, when others didn't.

A major factor, certainly, was that a community of pioneer farmers and small local mills were already established before the BIG mill moved in.

The earliest pioneers with names like Parker, Weed and Van Blaricom, had homesteaded in the Nehalem valley as early as 1873, and in 1891 the City of Vernonia was incorporated. So the community had existed for 18 years before it was incorporated. If you add the years from the date of incorporation to the date of the arrival of the BIG mill, you realize that the community was 42 years old when the mill went into operation. That's a whole generation of community development, and nearly a generation of trees!

Another critical factor is that, except for a short spell during the depression, the mill operated continuously until it closed in 1957. That was an additional 33 years in which the community developed the unity needed for survival.

During that period much of the old growth had been depleted, rendering a mill the magnitude of the O-A Mill obsolete. But also during that period, second growth and marginal stands of fir previously too small to bother with, were beginning to mature and within a few years became the nucleus of a beginning tree farming industry.

In the meantime, the greatest population loss suffered by the community was the labor force

occupying cabins, tents, hotel rooms and mill houses; a population that had never established any ties to the community other than a paycheck. That itinerant labor force, coming and going in response to the law of supply and demand, had no roots in the community. Most left when the mill closed. Some chose to stay on and become permanent citizens.

Not all of the workforce in the community during the mill's existence were loggers and mill workers. Many were employees of hotels, restaurants, taverns and service stations. There were three auto dealerships, Safeway and J.C. Penney stores and many other retail outlets that disappeared very quickly. But the community survived.

Through it all, this year's Friendship Jamboree theme was a key factor: Unity = Community.

The receding tide following the mill's closure has reversed itself as, today, new families are moving to Vernonia, partly because they want to escape from the urban area; some to retire, some to raise their families in a less threatening environment and some because they sense that in Vernonia, unity does equal community.

For Vernonians, an increasing population reinforces the need for unity as the city begins to cope with the burgeoning costs of water, sewers, schools, housing and a host of unanticipated needs.

Unity held the community together when the BIG mill closed. Unity will hold the community together during the next development in the town's evolving history.