

Vernonia Eagle

VOLUME 33, NUMBER 2

PHONE 191

VERNONIA, COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 1935

LETTERS TELL EARLY DAY LIFE IN VALLEY

The following letters, written by Israel Spencer, father of Bob Spencer, to a brother-in-law in Michigan during the first few months of his residence here, gives a colorful picture of life in the Nehalem valley as it was then. Mr. Spencer was 32 years old at the time and his homestead comprised what is now known as O-A hill. The house of which he speaks stood near where Mr. and Mrs. Elmore Knight now live.

Nehalem Valley
August 12, 1876

Dear Brother,

Well, here I am in the state of Oregon, in good health and with a full belly, having just got up from supper and got my fill of warm biscuits.

I have got me a ranch in the above valley, the Garden of Eden and the Picture of Hell, with timber 360 feet high and no gaps. Have a house 12 by 16 two acres cleared, 12 acres chopped. The timber is vine maple, white, red and yellow fir, and alder, ash, cedar, hemlock or spruce. The alder is big trees, some of them 2 1/2 feet through and 50 or 60 feet tall, perhaps more. The timber, without exception, is the largest I ever saw.

I have been in here three months and been out but once. It means 30 miles to where we get all the stuff they have to buy such as flour and groceries and pack it in on horses, 150 to 200 pounds to the horse over the mountain, 1800 feet high and not much fun, you bet. But there is a pretty fair wagon road all the way but eight miles which we intend to cut through this fall. The weather is cool in the daytime and cold at night. I have worn one of my heavy woolen shirts all summer to chop in and not been very hot but when it comes to the night then a fire is the thing. No mosquitoes but lots of gnats and fleas in dirty houses.

What sort of weather have you been having this summer and how is the wheat? The crops are the best here that I ever saw. In this valley the soil is a black sand, clay loam or what you call it. It is the richest dirt that I ever saw. Wheat, oats and garden stuff grows beyond all account. The Nehalem river from which the valley takes its name empties into the ocean 22 miles from here on a straight line. It is 100 feet wide with good banks and soapstone bottom, very rapid. There is only five families here at present but 32 claims are taken since I came in. One man came in yesterday and took a claim today.

There is lots of game here: deer, elk, bear, beaver, and otter. Have been out hunting once with a man. Was out three days. Got not exactly lost but darn near it. I killed one deer and we could have got more and some elk, for we saw some, if we could have got them out to the settlement, but in the mountains it is so rough and cut up with so many canyons, you do not know where you are. Every one looks alike.

Am paying \$2.50 coin for board per week. Shall get in some provisions and keep house this winter. Have got some cabbage and bagas in the ground, besides tobacco. Wish I had the double barrel gun. Shall have to buy one. Get one of Remington in

Portland for \$35.00.

Have just written to Mort that we have had plenty of rain this summer, most too much, in fact. We have to burn down the trees here—some of them are six and eight feet through—the burn them in two, bore with an auger, start the fire and let them rip.

Cost me very near \$200 to get here. Do not need that 40 yet. Will let you know when I do. Have to discount paper money 11 cents here for there is nothing but gold and silver. The smallest coin is five cents and but few of them. 10 cents is a bit, that is the base; three bits is three shillings.

Write soon.

Israel Spencer
Mountain Dale
Washington County, Oregon
Nehalem Valley
November 7, 1876

Brother Corwin,

It has been somewhere in the neighborhood of two months since I answered your last letter and, thinking perhaps that you did not get it, as is the case quite often in letters going from the coast, here goes again.

Fine weather and lots to do. Have been putting in winter oats this week. Have not made much of a show but there has been a lot of hard work done. First you take a grub hoe and go down in the woods and see how long it will take you to grub up enough ground to sow 2 bushels of oats and one of wheat. Then take a rake and rake it in. That is the way I am doing it this winter but it will be different next year, you bet. Then get your own grub besides. That is the worst part of the program. But come up here and I will dish you up such a meal that you will be sick of home. Potatoes, bread, meat, coffee and gravy with a sprinkling of venison thrown in.

Have killed two deer and helped kill one bear. Saw four elk the other day but did not have my gun. Have got a new one, breech loader, re-loading cartridges. Shot a ball through an alder tree day before yesterday that was over 12 inches through. It is a big story but it is the truth, and no rot nor hollows either.

Well, to business. If father has received the money on those papers yet I would like for him to let it out to some good man again for not more than one year. I do not think I shall want it before that time, though money is at a discount here. Ninety cents is all you can get for greenbacks, 90 for trade dollars, 95 for half dollars silver, that is, in gold. My pile is down to 13 twenty dollar gold pieces and I calculate it will stay where it is until next spring, then to get me a cow and a horse or oxen.

We are going to commence work on the school house here tomorrow. There is a petition drawn up for a post office here but it will take a long time for it to get to Washington and back.

There is nothing doing in this part of the world that would be of interest to you. Have you had any of Emma's pictures taken yet? If so send me one.

Frost last night, the first one that there has been in here and that did not kill tomatoes. Have lots of green ones yet and tobacco

too is in posey yet. Have lots of flowers that are blooming and all of the time.

I must fill my pipe and stop. Good night.

Israel Spencer
Mountain Dale
Washington County, Oregon

New Fire Chief Plans For Drills

Newly appointed fire chief, Bob Thompson, called the first meeting for his department Monday night to map plans for efficient operation. He named Bob Curl as assistant fire chief and plans were made for having regular drills to familiarize all men with the operation of the equipment and to learn the part each should play in case of fire calls. The first of these drills will be held Sunday.

Chuck Johnson, former member of the group has rejoined it. Plans were made for men of this department to attend the County Fire-fighters' Association meeting at St. Helens at which members of the councils and mayors of the towns of the county were to be present and discuss plans for civil defense work by the fire fighters in the county. Larry Garner was elected as Vernonia vice-president of the county association, also.

Four Matches on Slate Thursday

A schedule of four matches will provide the entertainment for wrestling fans Thursday evening at the Legion hall at another in the series of bouts being arranged by the American Legion.

Spectators will see Man Mountain Dean Jr. as one of the evening's features in a match with John Cobb. Dean is billed as weighing 384 pounds and Cobb at 245 pounds.

Two other matches will bring Joan Barr into the ring with The Tiger Woman, Minnesota state champion and Fern LaVerne will meet Maria Bernardi, Italian champion. Last on the evening's agenda will be a tag team match. The evening's bill will open at 8:30.

Tax Assistance At Union Hall

The help offered each year by the internal revenue service to taxpayers in preparing federal income tax returns will be available here March 28 and 29 inclusive, according to notice from R. C. Grandquist, district director.

Internal revenue men will establish an office here at the Union hall for both days. Other places in the county where assistance will be available are:

Clatskanie, Tourist hotel March 30 and 31; Rainier city hall, March 28 and St. Helens Court House, January 27 and 28 and March 29 and 30.

All forms for reporting income taxes are available at the local post office, including W-2 forms.

Assignment Given Norblad

Representative Walter Norblad (R-Ore.) has again been selected as a member of the Committee on Committees by a Republican House caucus in Washington, D. C.

This Committee determines the committee assignments of all Republican members of the House of Representatives.

Dimes Line Grows

A steady increase in the line of dimes down the counter at Vike's cafe is evident from the total listed for Wednesday morning of \$46.80. Last week on Wednesday the amount totaled \$24.10. Contributions to the collection will go towards this area's collection for the March of Dimes.

C of C Hears Cheese Man Speak Friday

Details of Industry Told to Group by Tillamook Official

Ray E. Deaver, treasurer and assistant manager of the Tillamook County Creamery association and secretary of the Tillamook Cheese association, was the speaker for the membership meeting of the Vernonia chamber of commerce and a group of local guests interested in dairies and cheese manufacturing last Friday.

Deaver made a very interesting and informative talk, discussing the costs of buildings, machinery and equipment, payroll, storage, advertising, distribution, available milk and related subjects. He gave both the advantages and disadvantages of a cheese plant and recommended that if thought is given to starting one in the Nehalem valley, to get a specialty cheese to produce, hire a good cheese maker and do lots of advertising, especially building up mail orders.

John Davey, chief accountant of the Tillamook Creamery association, accompanied Mr. Deaver from Beaver.

Don Coin Walrod, Columbia county extension agent, attended the meeting. He said that agriculture is the largest single commodity in Columbia county, bringing in one and one-half million dollars this last year and that there are approximately 7,000 cows producing 50 million pounds of milk per year.

Lyman Hawken reported that he and Marvin Kamholz, industrial committeemen, had interviewed Dean McCallister, school of business administration, Lewis and Clark college, regarding a survey of the labor pool in this area. Plans are being formulated to do this.

Art Ostrander, roads and highways committee, told of his committee meeting with groups from Forest Grove, Rainier and Longview in the interest of getting Route 99W re-routed through McMinnville, Forest Grove and Vernonia to the Longview bridge. They will meet with the interested civic leaders and chamber of commerce committees the first of February to formulate plans and to consult with state highway engineers.

One new membership, the Standard Oil Company of California, Longview, was announced.

Warrenton on List Friday

The Loggers travel to Warrenton Friday, January 14.

Next Tuesday night will mark the next home game for the Loggers. In the preliminary game it will be the Vernonia grade school frosh versus the grade school team.

The highly talented graders' dropped a close one in their last venture with the Freshmen by a score of 26-25. Anything can happen in this one.

The varsity will run up against the Pacific Frosh team which was the victor in a previous game this year 45-32. The Loggers will have the problem of stopping Bill Braun, former Logger, now U.U. man.

Braun has been playing regularly for the Frosh team. The Loggers have shown a great deal of improvement since the last encounter and should give the Frosh team a good battle. Game time is 6:30 p.m. Tuesday night at the local gym.

Practice Shoot Dated

A practice shoot is planned for Sunday at the O.A. ball park by the Vernonia trap club, an officer of the club said Wednesday morning. Those interested in shooting are invited to be there at 10 o'clock.

Bid Awarded For New Shop Construction

A new, modern truck repair shop building will be constructed at Pittsburg this summer. Crown Zellerbach officials indicated earlier this week when bids were opened for the job and the award made.

Day and Nite Furnace Company, Inc., of 11916 N.E. Halsey, Portland, received the contract for the work. The building will be 40 by 69 feet of concrete block and steel construction to handle repair work now being done at the shop in Riverview.

Schoolmasters Attend Meeting

The annual crab feed banquet for the Columbia County School Master's Club was held Monday evening at St. Helens and was attended by Superintendent E. E. Dove, Bill Ferguson, Harold McIntire and Bill Johnson, from the local high school, and Superintendent Darrold Proehl, Walter Harris, James Johns, Dan Lawler and Lyle Frazier from the grade school all of whom report a wonderful feed and an occasion well worth attending.

Credit Union to Name Officials

Members of the Vernonia Federal Credit Union will vote on the question of declaring a three and one-half per cent dividend when they attend their annual meeting Saturday of this week, January 15, at the IWA hall.

A recommendation of the amount of the dividend was made at the union's board of directors meeting last Saturday. Also scheduled for the annual meeting session is the election of officers to serve for the coming year. Refreshments will be served at the meeting.

Lions Hear Officer

Rupert Gillmouth, Hood River county sheriff, was the guest speaker at Monday evening's Lions club meeting. He graduated last year from the FBI school at Washington, D.C. and spoke on the FBI at the meeting.

Judge Heads Mint Men

County Judge John W. Whipple was re-elected president of the Oregon Essential Oil Growers league last week at the league's annual meeting at Oregon State College. The judge is a Rainier mint grower.

Mill Lease Renewed

Announced late last week was the renewal of the lease to J. M. Johnson by Elmer Bergerson for another year. The mill operation is located eight miles south of Vernonia on the Timber road.

Loggers Capture Victory In First League Game

Lower Columbia league play opened Friday night, January 7, with Vernonia defeating Scappoose 69-61. St. Helens edging out Seaside 52-51, Clatskanie defeating Neakahnie 57-47 and Warrenton walking over Rainier 53-40.

The Vernonia Loggers displayed championship form in the first quarter against the Scappoose Indians by scoring the first 15 points of the game. Hank Bass led his Logger team in the first canto by hitting the hoop for 8 points.

In the second quarter Jim Nutter, Scappoose guard, began threading the needle with an 8-point outburst and closed the gap, Vernonia leading 32-26 at the half.

The third period was nip and tuck, both teams scoring 19 points. Holsey, Fulton and Bass con-

Bank Marks Up Record Gain in '54

Vernonia Branch Shows Deposit Total Amount Of \$1,588,211.35

The United States National bank marked up a record gain of more than \$86,000,000 in deposits during 1954. Deposits for the state-wide banking system now stand at \$748,300,328.

Part of this outstanding growth has resulted from the merger of the Commercial Bank of Oregon group and the Bank of Albany with the U.S. National last November. In addition, U.S. National acquired branches at Dufur and Brookings earlier in the year.

Deposits for the Vernonia branch total \$1,588,211.35 according to George A. Remnant, manager.

Loans and discounts also showed a steady increase and now aggregate \$270,178,235 for the entire system.

The Vernonia branch reported loans and discounts totaling \$292,162.81.

Growing with the state it serves, U.S. National lists total resources of better than \$810,000,000. This represents a gain of more than \$95,000,000 during the past 12 months.

"The year 1954 has been one of increased service opportunities for this bank," E. C. Sammons, president, commented. "U. S. National now serves the people of Oregon with 58 banking offices throughout the state."

The U. S. National is Oregon's only state-wide banking system that is home owned and home operated, Sammons pointed out.

Juvenile Safety On PTA Program

The PTA will meet next Monday, January 17 at 8:00 p.m. in room 4 at the high school. The program topic will be Juvenile Protection and the speaker will be Reverend George Trobough of St. Helens, chairman of safety and protection for the Columbia county council of the PTA.

Claude Shaw will also be present to give his views on what is being done in the Vernonia area on juvenile protection. The public is invited to attend.

Flue Fire Calls Trucks

City firemen and trucks were called to the home of Shorty Monaco near Riverside Drive Saturday because of a flue fire. Damage was reported to be light.

THOSE WHO ARE IN IT

Ale LeRoy Thomas left Monday for Lincoln Air Force Base, Nebraska after spending 18 days here visiting at the home of his father, Charles Thomas of Treharne.

55 Juvenile Cases Heard In County During Year

During the past 12 months there were a total of 55 juveniles against whom cases were filed in Columbia county juvenile court, according to County Judge John W. Whipple. Of these cases, 21 were filed as delinquents and 34 were filed as dependents. In addition to the above court cases, some 19 juveniles were brought before the court and handled in an advisory manner with the formality of a charge having been filed.

All juvenile delinquents tried were placed on probation either to their parents, or an officer, with the exception of one girl

who was sent to the Louise Home for girls, and two boys who were committed to the MacLaren School for Boys at Woodburn.

In the dependency actions, the temporary custody of all 34 minors involved was placed with the Columbia county public welfare commission and by them placed in foster homes or otherwise cared for.

In addition to the above cases, 17 adoptions were handled by the same court. There were 15 individuals committed to the state hospital and four cases filed involving feeble minded persons, according to the judge.