

History of Celebration Indicates Start Took Place in 1956

Perhaps there are those in Vernonia who have forgotten just how the Vernonia Friendship Jamboree program began and there are new residents and others who have not actively participated in the development of the program who may be interested in a recap of the affairs.

In 1956, the Veterans of Foreign Wars under the leadership of Harvey Redmond, commander, sponsored Fourth of July fireworks, the first to be fired here for many years. The VFW had solicited and received contributions from 45 business firms and individuals amounting to over \$200 which was used for the purchase of materials used.

The organization had sponsored the display because so many families here found it impossible to go elsewhere to see fireworks and when they did go, found the crowds and expense such as to take much of the pleasure out of the trip.

The local effort was rewarded in an outstanding way when an estimated 1000 people turned out for the show which was presented on the field back of the Washington school. Comments following the event were that it had been one of the nicest such displays that many had ever witnessed and the VFW felt their efforts had been well worth while.

Fireworks Plan Grows

In February, 1957, VFW Commander Harvey Redmond, with members Edwin Ade and Leonard Rausch, met with the Vernonia chamber of commerce directors and committee members to present their ideas for a real Fourth of July celebration for which they would again sponsor the fireworks if the rest of the community would cooperate with other events. The chamber board passed a resolution to cooperate with the VFW and those present agreed that a three-day event would be a natural since the 4th fell on Thursday.

At the next meeting of the chamber board February 28, they set March 1 for a meeting to which representatives from all organizations in the community were invited to make preliminary plans for a Fourth of July celebration. Representatives of ten organizations turned out for this meeting and gave approval to the idea for a three-day event which would call for a full-scale community enterprise.

Jamboree Name Chosen

As a result of the Friday session, a three-man committee with Louis Towne as chairman was appointed by Guy I. Thomas, chamber of commerce president, to work out a schedule of events for presentation to another group meeting on March 15.

At the March 15 meeting the name, Vernonia Friendship Jamboree, was selected for the celebration from a number that were suggested. Louis Towne, Jack Thompson, Pete Brunzman, Bill Horn and Sam Hearing Jr. were named as the planning committee.

Meetings were held regularly from then on and plans took form for the events. Jamboree buttons appeared in May as did wooden nickels, 10,000 of them, and advertising of the July 4 event was getting into high gear.

In spite of many pessimistic forecasts that the celebration could not be a success, when the great day came, there was a big turnout of local people and visitors for all events which included: displays in 35 windows, a shay on display at the S.P.&S. depot, golf tournament, Caylite

open house, swimming events, logging events, a kiddy and pet parade July 5 and the grand parade July 6, tour of the International Paper company mill, trapshoot, horse show events, a bike race up Rock creek, greased pole, greased pig and chicken scramble in city park, soft ball, a square dance and a street dance, and of course, the bigger and better than ever fireworks on the evening of July 4, seen by a capacity crowd.

In recap meetings after the Jamboree, reports showed that the affair was a financial success and that a back-log had been built for another year.

1958 Plans Laid

January 16, 1958, at a meeting held at the West Oregon building, Phil Steinmetz, manager of the Vernonia Branch, United States National bank, was named as chairman for the 1958 Friendship Jamboree and Louis Towne, outgoing chairman, was named as secretary-treasurer. A decision was reached to limit the 1958 celebration to two days, July 4 and 5 which fell on Friday and Saturday. Representatives were present from 16 organizations, from the 46 that had been sent letters inviting participation.

At the next meeting, in February, the name Vernonia's Second Friendship Jamboree was chosen and plans for line-up of events began to take shape. At the second February meeting, the decision to have a queen and a queen's ball was reached.

In March, chairmen for various events were named as follows: Golf, O. T. Bateman; VFW fireworks, Lyle Vroman; July 4, Henry Hudson; July 5, Bob Thompson; queen contest, Mrs. Ben Brickel; window displays, Mrs. Marvin Kamholz; concessions, Pete Brunzman; Nehalem Valley products, Mrs. Ruth Steers publicity, Louis Towne and kiddy parade, James Johns.

Horseshoes Added

In May, a decision was reached to add the Pacific Northwest Horseshoe pitching tournament for which Carl Schaumburg and Julius Enevoldsen were asked to be chairmen. Also, plans were made for a high school reunion and a registration of old timers in connection with the historical display.

Voting for queen got underway the first of June with Joyce Sullivan, Catherine Floeter, Carolyn Garlock, Evelyn Kyser, Mary Mills and Janice Pearson as candidates. Votes were cast on the basis of dollars spent in Vernonia business places where ballot boxes were placed. Also, the candidates were selling booster buttons.

Shay Is Featured

Also, early in June 10,000 wooden nickels were received and

placed on sale. These bore the picture of the shay which had been given to the city by International Paper company and which was to be on display for the Jamboree.

The week end of June 21 and 22, volunteers worked long and hard to move the shay to its present location. Chet Alexander steamed up the engine on Friday in preparation for the move.

Weather was extremely hot for the Jamboree week end, but attendance was good, topping the previous year, and all events were successful. Carolyn Garlock was crowned as queen at the dance the evening of July 3, Don Hite's orchestra from Portland provided the music.

Over 600 signed the guest book at the gem and fossil show, 130 former students and teachers registered at the high school where the reunion was held Saturday afternoon, and about 100 registered at the Old Timers reunion in the West Oregon meeting room. Enough horseshoe pitchers entered the tournament for four classes. The parade was bigger and better and the float of Essie Nance took the sweepstakes trophy. The heat caused curtailment of some of the horse events, but those presented were greatly enjoyed.

Attractions Varied

Along with the window exhibits, which this year included an art show for the first time, the shay on its lot and the engines 104 and 105 owned by Weaver Clark which were on the tracks near the depot were all prime attractions during the entire event.

Again, it was voted a success and among the things it had accomplished was the sparking of a clean-up, paint-up campaign which improved the appearance of the town and the letting of the outside world know that Vernonia is still very much alive.

1959 Date Changed

Early in February, 1959, an even dozen people met at the West Oregon building and decided to go ahead with a 1959 Jamboree and tentatively agreed it should be a one-day celebration on July 18.

At the second meeting called for February 20, a seven-member steering committee was chosen composed of Mrs. Evelyn Heath, Mrs. Marvin Kamholz, Mrs. Lloyd Garlock, Bill Horn, James Johns, Don Webb and Gordon Reed. When this committee organized, they named Mrs. Kamholz as chairman. The July 18 date was confirmed and the Centennial theme was adopted to make this celebration Vernonia's part in the observance of the 100th birthday of the state of Oregon. At the next meeting they decided to have a Centennial Queen contest open to women who had been residents of the Nehalem Valley for 50 years or longer. Mrs. Guy Thomas was named as chairman for the queen's ball to be held Friday night, July 17.

When Mrs. Kamholz was hospitalized for an eye operation June 1, Bill Horn was named to carry on as Jamboree chairman. Wilbur Wilson took his place as finance chairman.

Queen Race Exciting

Eleven candidates entered the queen contest: Ella Wood, Eda Parker, Hilda Keasey, Irene Spencer, Janet Bridgers, Alice Lindsay, Pauline Schmidlin, Louise Smejkal, Nevada Rainwater, Marie Christensen and Helen Christensen.

Contestants were judged on the basis of stories about their lives, community participation, historical background, etc. The night of the ball, Mrs. Bridgers was crowned as queen and the next day rode in a buggy in the parade with the 10 princesses in

the surrey drawn by a six-horse team.

Centennial costumes were worn by the queen and princesses and by many other residents. The parade was bigger and better than ever, as were all other events.

Stanley Anderson of Portland was grand marshal for the parade, overall sweepstakes trophy was taken by the Rainier Daze entry and there were 50 entries in the parade.

There were 29 entries in the horseshoe tournament and Bob West won the Schaumburg revolving trophy. Lynn Michener took top honors in logging events. In exhibits, the sweepstakes trophy went to the art exhibit. Over 75 horses and 33 riders took part in the horse show Saturday evening at the city park.

Breakfast Served

The Rebekah lodge served cowboy breakfast to 150 in the city park Sunday morning. About 135 signed the roster at the Legion hall Saturday afternoon. Again,

weather was hot, hot, hot.

1960 Head Works Hard

Thus ended the Third Vernonia Friendship Jamboree and now the time for the fourth such event is at hand. Horace Hertel, one of Vernonia's newer citizens, has put in many long hours of hard work as its chairman and all the heads of various events have been doing the same. Sometimes they have been so discouraged at the lack of support and help from the many citizens who could help if they were willing to that they have wondered if it were worth it all.

Just this past week, things have shifted into high, many folks seemed to come awake and get into the act. Now, it looks like this will be the biggest Jamboree yet, with two excursion trains, the Vernonia Society picnic in the new park and other new features added to the usual ones.

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THURSDAY, JULY 21, 1960 7

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