

MY HOME TOWN

by Mildred "Millie" Thacker Graves

Vernonia, Oregon is my kind of place~
It is peaceful, and calm, away from the rat race~
Its death was predicted but that was not the case~
Upon my return, I feel, I've reached Home Base~

In the past, the town was known because of the mill~
The O-A Lumber Company, up on the hill~
And loggers and mill workers with pockets to fill~
'Til 1957 when the saws were still~

Vernonia has evolved during all these years~
There was a time of only gloom, doom and tears~
It has survived, in spite of everyone's fears~
It has diversified and now we hear some cheers~

We look to the future but remember the past~
How the timber came down and the boom didn't last~
We couldn't believe that it happened so fast~
Men and women, young and old, were all aghast~

I'm proud of Vernonia, so come take a peek~
There's the lake, the rivers---Nehalem and Rock Creek~
The fish are just awaiting and they're mild and meek~
You'll find the quiet and solitude that many people seek~

Come on over and meet the people and its land~
Come and see the families, walking hand in hand~
The loggers, the Axmen, and their mighty band~
Living in the coastal mountains, oh, so grand~

There are all kinds of trees reaching for the sky~
Seeking and searching for sunlight, giving it a try~
You may even see a spotted owl though mainly on the fly~
They changed the lives of loggers, even made some cry~

The movie, Ring of Fire, was our claim to fame~
We thought that Vernonia would never be the same~
It soon became peaceful and quiet--and much too tame~
But that was a time much before the Axmen came~

It's been a joy to see the town blossom and grow~
To put floods behind us with the rushing waters flow~
And return to peaceful waters as the currents finally slow~
But minds still replay those times when we see rain and snow~

All joined forces when the water swept the land bare~
And we showed a toughness of which we were unaware~
It brought us all together to find we really care~
Our town is our jewel and a place that is truly rare!

[*Groundwaters*, v5 n2 p20]