



**Queen Bernadine Beamer Towne and
Grand Marshall Patrick H. Van Winkle
2003 Pioneer Days Royalty**

Bernadine Beamer Towne

This is an honor to be Queen of the 2003 Pioneer Picnic. When I was a little girl, I always dreamed of being the Queen some day. When Bernice called me, I was shocked for 2 days, and so excited; but I had to promise that I wouldn't tell anyone.

My two grandfathers, Jess York and John Beamer were about 16 years old and lived in Mt. Airy, North Carolina. They worked in the tobacco fields for 10 cents a day. They decided to come west by train and work in the Weston brick yard for 25 cents a day. The brickyard was located where Smith's Freezing plant is now. Grandpa York was born June 13, 1865. He met my grandma Sarah Key, (born Feb. 14, 1872, died April 17, 1908). They lived 5 miles North of Weston where they farmed and raised 6 children.

My other grandfather, John Beamer, was born April 3, 1862 in Mt. Airy, North Carolina, died May 1938. He met my grandmother Emma Badgett (born April 17, 1868, died in 1951), on the train on the way to Oregon. They were married in 1890, and lived about 1/2 mile down the road from Audrey Lieuallen on Pine Creek west of town. They farmed 160 acres and raised 8 children.

Some of the most precious memories of my life was going to my grandpa and grandma Beamer's every Sunday and playing with 15-20 of my cousins. Once a year, we would go with my grandpa York to Pendleton, to pay the taxes and buy 2 barrels of flour for the winter. Coming home, we always stopped at the Adams Store to get a bottle of pop. I also spent every summer with my Uncle Jess and Aunt Pearl York, helping her cook for wheat harvesters. I did this from the age of 3 until I was married.

You've heard of squatter's rights? I consider myself a squatter as I have lived in Weston for 78 years. I was born August 12, 1924 at my grandfather Beamer's. I have never lived more than 5 miles from Weston.

My parents were Roscoe Beamer (born Nov. 4, 1900), and Winnie York (born Sept. 20 1905). They were married for 63 years. I was the oldest of 3 children. My brother, Larry lives in Athena and my sister, Joanne Fox lives 3 houses from me in Weston. My parents had 14 grandchildren. My father worked for Weston Grain Growers for 35 years, retiring in 1965.

We lived on a farm 5 miles North of Weston, owned by Jess Towery's grandfather, Jess Kilgore. My

grandfather York leased the land and my father worked for him. In 1930 I attended Dry Creek School, (1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades) There were 8 grades and one teacher in the 2 room school. My cousin and I were the only ones in my class. We didn't have hot lunches like they do today, I took a gallon of milk, because we had a cow. The teacher would make hot chocolate to go with our sandwich. Someone would bring potatoes and the teacher would bake them the next day. We had no indoor plumbing; the outhouse was out in the back yard, and you didn't stay long

when the snow was 3-4 feet deep. We didn't have snow plows and when the snow was at the top of the fence posts, our neighbor took us to school by horse and sleigh. We even stayed home for 3-4 weeks at a time.

They closed the school in 1933, as the district was combined with Milton, meaning I would attend the 4th grade in Weston. They paid my father to use his car, to bring the students into the Weston School. They included 3 Carmichael children, Larry and I, Betty Ann Johnson, Peggy and Gloria Powell.

In 1936, when I was in the 6th grade, we moved into town, (Lyn Johnson Delph's grandparent owned the house) where my nephew, Tom Fox now lives, on North Water. We were really excited; we had our 1st electric lights and a bathtub. That was my home until I was married.

In 1940, I was a sophomore in High School and not old enough to get a job, so I helped Beulah Sloan cook for the men in pea harvest. I graduated from Weston Union High School in 1942. That fall when McCaw Hospital was built in Walla Walla for the World War II injured soldiers, I was hired to work in the Post Engineer's Office, issuing supplies. My pay was \$105.00 a month, and I paid \$12.50 a month for an apartment. Kathleen McDowell and Peggy Tucker were great supporters, as this was my first time away from home. I worked there for 2 years, and then I was offered a better job at the U.S. Bank in Athena. I was paid \$125.00 a month and could live at home. As I couldn't drive and didn't have a car I rode with Mr. Crain, the bank manager. In 1946, Jim Kuhns approached me one day and asked if I would be interested in working in the office of the new pea cannery that was being built in Weston. It was called Eastern Oregon Canning Co. and was formed by 6 local farmers. Jim Kuhns, Bob Woods, Gail Herndon, Herb Culley, Leland Jenkins, and Cliff Price. The office was where the A & F Restaurant used to be. I was the only employee, besides the manager, Mr. Cook from New York. I got to make phone calls to New York, Wisconsin, etc. and ordered all the machinery and equipment.

April 1946, was when I met this "good-looking" man, Lester Towne. He came into the office with Gail Herndon, as he was being hired as the fieldman. He had just been discharged from the service in World War II. Our first date was special, we went to the 'Pioneer Reunion Dance', and went every year after that. On Jan. 31, 1947, we were married, we bought and moved into the house where I have lived for 57 years, on Franklin Street in Weston. We had 6 wonderful children: Melvin, Jim, Jerry, Vicki Kessler, Patti Greiner, and Debbie Von Borstel. There are 13 grandchildren, 4 step-grandchildren and two great-granddaughters. We were married for 50 happy and wonderful years. Lester passed away Oct. 1996.

As our children were growing up, our lives were very busy. Lester was maintenance supervisor for the school for 27 years. I was a Den Mother for our 3 boys cub scout troops, sang in the Methodist Church choir, bowled on a team for Weston Market, square danced, drove school bus for 17 years and chaperoned on bus trips, attended all football, basketball, and baseball games with our boys; and all basketball games, and cheerleading with all the girls. Putting aside all of these activities, my hobbies are: knitting, crocheting, working in my yard, going to my grandchildren games and I love to cook.

Our family has a lot of memories and those were "the good ole days". Again, I am honored to be the 111th Queen for the Pioneer Picnic. In my 78 years I've never missed a picnic. When I was a little girl, I prayed when I went to bed that it wouldn't rain for the picnic. Our relatives had a picnic in the park, when it was behind the City Hall. We enjoyed the big carnival which ran down Main Street and up to the old gym. My grandpa gave us 50 cents for the 2 days, as rides were only 5 cents each and hamburgers were a dime. The Pioneer Picnic has always been the highlight of my life and I look forward to many, many more.

Patrick H. Van Winkle

This is the life story of Patrick H. Van Winkle as prepared by him and read at the Pioneer Picnic by his daughter Gail Kroll.

My Great grandparents on the Van Winkle side came from Cass County Missouri in 1865. My Great Grandfather Lewis Carter Van Winkle was elected Captain of the 150 wagon train because of his experience as a freighter for the Home Guards during the Civil War. Great Grandmother Martha Washington Nailor Van Winkle had to drive the oxen, as Great Grandfather had to ride a horse at the front of the wagon train.

The train broke up when it reached Oregon in September 1865. The Van Winkle family spent the winter at Blue Mountain Station below Weston. The following July they moved to the present town of Halsey, OR. The next move was to Payette, Idaho but a cold and snowy winter convinced the Van Winkles to return to the Weston area, they homesteaded on Reed & Hawley mountain with their seven children Isaac, Sarah, Eleanor, Lewis R., Mary, Franklin and Edward. The family resided in and about Weston the remaining time. Martha always took great interest in political as well as church affairs, helping found the United Brethren church in Weston and is said to have been the first woman voter to cast a ballot in Oregon.

My Grandfather Lewis R. Van Winkle and Katie E. Carlisle were married on November 26, 1896. They began married life in Weston where he was the postmaster, had a livery stable and butcher shop. They had three children Lewis C., William E. and Gertrude C. Van Winkle. In 1898 they moved to the homestead on Reed and Hawley Mountain that had been left to Katie by her uncle, William Carlisle.

My mother's parents immigrated to America from Sweden. My maternal grandfather Aleck Johnson came to America in 1867, worked for the railroad until he had enough money to send for my grandmother Ida in 1869. My parents William E. Van Winkle and Minnie C. Johnson were married April 1, 1927. William and Minnie had four children-William J. Benny L., Janet M. and Patrick H. Van Winkle. Patrick was born July 8, 1932 in Walla Walla. In 1998 Patrick traveled to Sweden visiting relatives and went to grandmother Ida's home in Stamphult Sweden.

He was raised on the family farm on Reed & Hawley Mountain. He spent his first four years of school at Fairview School--a one room country school on Reed and Hawley mountain. He then attended Weston Grade school for 4 years and graduated from Weston High School as Salutatorian in 1950. Several of these years my dad rode a horse to school-(when we use to moan about riding the bus, dad would always remind us he had to ride a horse) Patrick has always loved sports so participated in football, basketball and baseball while in high school. He was also involved in class plays, band and was a student body officer.

In 1950 he entered the University of Oregon graduating in 1954 with a degree in Business Administration. While at U of O he was a member of Delta Tau Delta Fraternity. Upon graduation he received a R. O. T. C. commission in the U. S. Air Force. He was on active duty in the Air Force from August 1954 to August 1957. His service time in the Air Force started at Lackland Air Force base at San Antonio, Texas. His first assignment was to Supply Officers Course at Frances E. Warren AFB, Cheyenne, Wyoming. He left Wyoming in February and was sent to Anderson AFB on the island of Guam. What a change in weather from Wyoming to Guam! While on Guam he was assigned as AirCraft Service Unit Officer-responsible for spare parts and aircraft engines. In 1956 he received orders to Mountain Home AFB, Idaho as base petroleum officer. This was always a favorite time during his Air Force years as he and several friends spent winter weekends skiing at Sun Valley, Idaho. He is still an avid skier and introduced his three children to skiing; who have in turn started their children skiing.

In 1958 Patrick started his 30-year business career. His first job was with Fred Meyer, Inc. in Portland. He was then clothing sales officer as a civilian at Portland AFB. In 1959 he became a field representative with the A. C. Nielsen Co. in Chicago; then being transferred to Los Angeles and Portland. While in Chicago, Patrick married Kathryn Hughes of Portland in November 1959. They have three children, James, of West Linn, OR, Marilyn Miranda, of Coupeville, WA and Gail Kroll, of West Richland, WA. and have seven grandchildren ages 3 to 13.

From August 1960 to May 1966 Patrick worked as an Accounting Assistant for Standard Oil Company of California in Portland and Seattle. In 1966 he and his family moved to Wenatchee, WA where he was Plant

Controller for Keyes Fibre Co. While there he was responsible for accounting, purchasing, traffic and personnel operations for the plant.

During our years in Wenatchee, Patrick and his children took advantage of the many outdoor recreation activities. Two favorite activities were skiing at Mission Ridge and summer backpacking trips to the high mountain lakes out of Leavenworth, WA. Family vacations were spent traveling in recreation vehicles throughout the western states.

Patrick returned to the Walla Walla area in 1987 and farmed with his brother Benny until retiring in 1994. This was a new experience as dry land farming in Walla Walla County is different from Reed & Hawley. Also, we purchased equipment to be able to farm. The Challenger cat purchased was the first one sold in Walla Walla County.

Current interests are membership in Oregon Pioneers, Umatilla County Pioneer Association, Isham Saling House Restoration Committee and is a volunteer at Ft. Walla Walla. My father is very active in Reserve Officers Association and attends his Air Force Ninth Bomb Wing reunions.

My dad is a big Oregon Duck fan and has attended nine of the eleven bowl games from 1989 to 2002