

June 2-3, 2006 Pioneer Queen and Grand Marshal

Queen Imogene Winn

Imogene Winn was born in Grinton, Nebraska in 1930. Shortly thereafter, the family moved to Wallace for school. She lived with four brothers, two uncles, and her grandfather who was blind. When she was quite small her grandfather died, and her mother had been so overworked taking care of all of them that her heart showed much stress. Doctor's orders were to leave the area and start a new life elsewhere. So the family started on a long adventure to find the place just for them.

Since there was little money in the depression, the family worked at many odd jobs to keep food on the table and lived in a tent. They went to many different states: Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Utah, Nevada, and California, picking various fruits and vegetables to make the daily bread. They worked for a contractor who had jobs mapped out before time. Since they went to various states, they saw many places of interest: national parks, the World's Fair in San Francisco, the mud pots in California, and various other scenes that were interesting to people from Nebraska.

When coming to Weston, the father worked in the pea fields pitching peas with a fork into a stationary viner, and the brothers drove various farm machinery in the harvest. It was then decided that Weston was a real good place to settle down.

Imogene started school in Weston in the seventh grade, graduated from high school, and later married a local farmer's son, George Robert "Bob" Winn. She has lived on the farm for 59 years, having raised four wonderful children: Jasper, Wesley, Preston, and Suzanne. Now there are 12 grandchildren and second great-grandchildren.

Education has always been important for the family. "George and all the children have college educations," says Imogene. "it has been a happy life, and with the Lord's help all are responsible citizens."

Imogene took several college short courses and worked for two doctors, a veterinarian, several grocery stores, a drug store, the telephone office, and helped with the strawberry harvest in season.

"It is an honor to be recognized as a senior citizen and be Queen of the Weston Pioneer Reunion this June," Imogene states. "Hope to see all of you there for the coronation and music from the family."

Grand Marshal Bob Winn

George Robert "Bob" Winn has lived on the farm northeast of Weston all his life. Most of the land has been in the family since 1875, when his grandfather, Jesse Z. Winn, settled there. The oldest building now standing is a root cellar constructed in 1900. The 1916 barn has been maintained, but is little used. It was constructed by his father, George W. Winn, as awning every board by hand, with his harvest crew hammering the nails, and Linton Moon as overseeing carpenter.

Bob's son, Preston, now lives on and tends the farm. Strawberries were an enterprise for over 50 years, but hungry deer devoured the crop one October and this was mostly what caused the Winns to close fresh sales of this crop.

Jesse Z. Winn found the going tough when the first wheat was raised after the Civil War. HE tried the variety Red Chaff, a rank growing wheat, and the first sacked grain was hauled to Umatilla Landing. There was a large family to support and his health failed, resulting in his death in 1887. Gradually, the family left the farm, but Jesse's son, George W., farmed with the widow Anna Grazelle Winn.

George W. married Anna Peyton Compton in 1921, and built a bungalow for his three children. Peyton, Ellen, and George Robert "Bob." Wheat, barley, peas, and cattle provided a living for them. The Winn brothers farmed together for seven years; then the irrigated crops were introduced: strawberries, carrots and green beans.

Bob, the youngest son, remained on the land in cooperation with his wife, Imogene, and children: Jasper, Wesley, Preston, and Suzanne. All attended schools in Weston and Milton-Freewater, and they heped out in harvest while growing up.

Strawberry pickers came from nearby communities, and there is nostalgia about teaching 12-year-olds the work ethic. The land lent itself well for growing this crop, and the fruit flavor came from the silt loam medium and elevation.