

VERN & RAY

WITH HERB PEDERSEN • SAN FRANCISCO – 1968

1. Band Intro

2. 20 Second Rag

3. How Many Times

(Ray Park – Fiddletown Music)

4. Muleskinner Blues (Blue Yodel No. 8)

(Jimmie Rodgers, George Vaughn - Southern Music Pub Co Inc,
Peer International Corporation)

5. Sweet Fern

(A. P. Carter - Southern Music Pub Co Inc, Peer International Corp.)

6. Intro

7. The Leather Britches

8. I Wonder Where You Are Tonight

(Johnny Bond – Red River Songs Inc.)

9. Little Georgia Rose

(Bill Monroe – Unichappell Music, Inc.)

10. The Buckin' Mule

11. The Bottle Let Me Down

(Merle Haggard – Sony/ATV Tree Pub.)

12. Ode To The Little Brown Shack

(Billy Ed Wheeler - Quartet Music Inc. / Bexhill Music Corp.)

13. Poor Ellen Smith

14. Hard Times

(Ralph Stanley)

15. The Touch of God's Hand

(Hazel Houser)

16. On My Mind

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17. Orange Blossom Special

Vern Williams – mandolin & vocals

Ray Park – guitar, fiddle & vocals

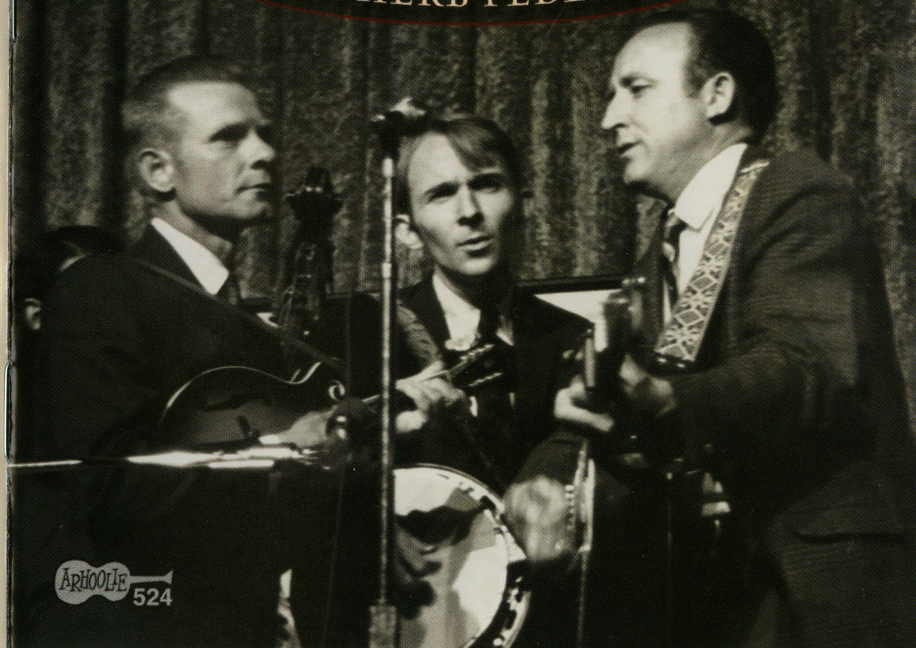
Herb Pedersen – banjo & vocals

Howard Courtney (aka Howard C. Howard) – bass

SAN FRANCISCO – 1968

VERN & RAY

WITH HERB PEDERSEN





HERB PEDERSEN

As a young banjo player, it was all in front of me. Having the chance to work with older, wiser, more experienced bluegrass musicians was something we all strived for, having grown up in the bay area. When local players like Scott Hambly, Mayne Smith, Al Ross, Neil Rosenberg, Pete Berg, Butch Waller, Rick Shubb, Pete Grant, Sandy Rothman, Eric Thompson, David Nelson, Jerry Garcia and I first heard Vern & Ray sing and play live it was a revelation.

Vern Williams & Ray Park came to California by way of Arkansas many years prior to their musical exposure in Berkeley and surrounding cities.

Their families were steeped in the tradition of rural country music, having many brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles who played string instruments primarily for family entertainment.

My tenure with Vern & Ray spanned several years, including a brief migration to Nashville, Tennessee, for the sake of finding work for our group. We played in and around the Nashville area, including being semi-regulars on the early morning "Smilin' Eddie Hill Show," broadcast live every morning from 5am to 9am on channel 5, WLAC. This was around 1967, just before I moved back to California.

Contained on this CD is a live show we did at San Francisco State College as part of their annual folk festival. We had our friend Howard Courtney play bass fiddle with us on this show. Just a few weeks before, Howard played with us at the famous Ash Grove club in southern California. Ray, who was constantly breaking strings, didn't let us down at the S.F. show either, and had to borrow a

guitar compassionately provided by the great Merle Travis, who was on the lineup that day as well.

If you look carefully at the picture of the three of us in the black & white photo (cover), you can see Merle's famous Bigsby neck/peghead on the guitar Ray is holding.

So there we were 38 years ago, with all the raw energy Vern & Ray would bring to one of their shows. They were the "real deal" folks, I'll

never forget what I learned from them and I'm still proud to have been a part of it.

I'm happy to say that Vern's son Del and Ray's sons Larry and Cary are carrying on the same musical excellence. As Ray used to say, "They got it."

Indeed they do...

— *Herb Pedersen,*
Los Angeles, January, 2006

RAY'S SON, LARRY PARK

One day Delbert and I were watching and listening to Dad, Vern, and Herb practice. (Something we always did between running in and out of the house wreaking havoc on the rest of the kids.) Either Dad or Vern (I can't recall) looked over at Delbert and me and said, "You boys pay close attention, and one day you'll be as good as

your daddies." Well, I'm still waiting for that day. I was truly blessed to have such an incredible musical upbringing, and talented father. Listening to this live show, takes me back to that special time in my life that I will cherish forever!

— *Larry Park*
January, 2006



VERN'S SON, DEL WILLIAMS

I can remember when I was a very young boy, Herb and Ray would come over to practice. I was always pestering Herb to show me how to play Buck-a-roo on the guitar. Herb always had time for me. And as the years went by, I would sit and listen to them sing for hours. It was right about the time this recording was made, so you can imagine how

much this CD means to me.

My dad's singing brings big ol' tears to my eyes, and I am so thankful that I got to play in his band for many years. I got to feel the true soul he sang with. This CD reflects the love each one of these guys had for the music.

— *Del Williams*
January, 2006

RAY'S SON, CARY PARK

My memories of Dad and Vern... hmm? Margie (Vern's wife) always cooking fried potatoes served with kool-aid. Vern always yelling from the window at Delbert to get out of the god#*^! tree, and the six of us kids, Larry, Delbert, me, Lisa, Gloria and Brenda parading in and out of the house while they rehearsed. Dad always loved to

rehearse in the kitchen. Vern still has the funniest laugh of anyone I have ever met. I can still see Herb, after making the drive from the west coast, pulling up to our house in Tennessee in a Volkswagen with his record collection in the back. Dad and Vern were the 'real deal,' pouring their hearts into every song (you don't fully realize that when you're a kid, it's just, hey



that's dad I'm hungry!)

It knocks me out when I hear recordings of them now. They were amazing, and when Herb was in the

band, Vern and Ray had the best three part vocal blend on the planet!

— *Cary Park*
January, 2006



Although they were originally from the same area in Arkansas, Vern and Ray didn't meet until they were living in California.

Vern: *I never met him until I moved to California. And well, he lived in Stockton and so did I. I used to listen to Ray on the radio in the morning. He had a show he played with Logan Lamb and the Happy Hayseeds and they had a dance every Saturday night over here at Oak Grove on Highway 26. And, I used to go there hear Ray play, and see him there. But we didn't actually meet until about 1958 or '59, along there. And when we met, we just started playing a little music together at first my house and then his house and before you know it, we were out playing. Back then there was just nothing going on (in Northern California) in bluegrass. Ray, he grew up more or less play-*

ing country, country and western. But he loved bluegrass, he just never had run into anybody who wanted to play it.

The first time when Ray and I started playing in Stockton in about '58, '59, along there, we played together for I guess, a year and Ray played the fiddle, the banjo, guitar, he played everything. But I remember one time, we made up a demo tape. Ray was playing the banjo, I had an old banjo and he learned to play it pretty good. So, we made up a tape and one day after work, he worked for a canteen service, we got in his car and we drove over to Vallejo, I think. "Blackjack" Wayne had a live radio show over there and we went in with the tapes and everything. Introduced ourselves and told Blackjack, "listen to this." And he liked it, he loved it. So, he played it on the radio right there while we

were there and then he had us come back to his dance over at the Dreambowl, in Napa.

In 1961 a four song 45rpm EP came out of Vern and Ray on Starday Records (since reissued on CD.)

Vern: *We had met a couple of guys from Sacramento, Luther Reilly and Clyde Williamson. And they used to come down to Stockton, and we played music or we'd go up there and play. And Clyde had wrote a song, Luther wrote one, me and Ray wrote one. We decided we'd just record them and send them to someone and see if they want to put it out. So we went down to Modesto and a guy had a little, well, he had a Ampex recorder down there, we recorded that and sent it back to Starday Records and they put it out on an EP. That's how it happened. We*

just simply decided to go down there and record it and see if somebody wanted it and we sent it to Starday and they put it out!

However, their music careers took a back seat to their personal lives.

Vern: *Well, we thought about it but we just never did get around to doing it cause we were busy, we both had families. They come first. We just wanted to make sure that the families were taken care of and then if we got any extra time or got a chance, we'd go play music. We played an awful lot of music overall now. San Pablo Street there in Berkeley, Cabale Creamery, later on, the Good Buddy... and then the Jabberwock, we never did play there, that's where we met Herb. He was playing with Butch (Waller) and most of the guys,*



local guys around there. Herb was one of the most natural musicians and singers I'd ever seen. He had the drive, you know, the attack

thing, you know what I mean. He just got all over a thing and he learned fast, he was just amazing and he still is to this day. Herb

was really, really good and so we started playing with him, played for years with Herb.

We went back to Tennessee (in 1967), we all moved back there and we did a lot of picking back there. But we just couldn't get nothing going. We played a lot of local stuff, TV shows and this and that around but bluegrass just hadn't caught on back there. And we did a lot. We'd get up at 3:00 in the morning, go down and play the early morning show, God, it's hard to do at that time. But we used to do it. It was Eddie Hill's T.V. show, I can't think of what they called that show but it was an early, early morning show and they had, different people every day. They'd have Jimmy Martin, they'd have Jerry Reed, Vern Oxford, oh, God, I can't recall all of them offhand. It came on about 5:00. It was on for about an hour and we had to get

up real early to get down there. It was all live, nothing was taped.

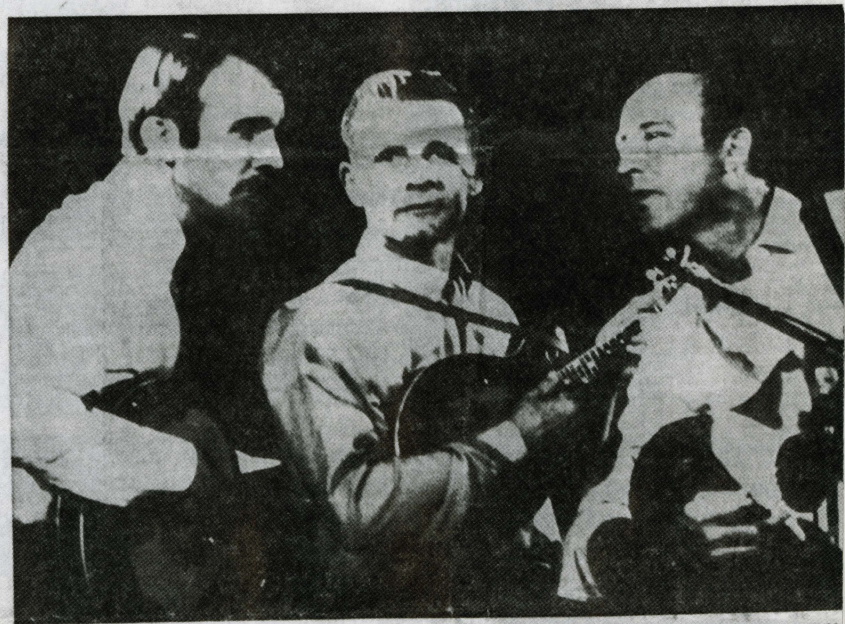
Nashville did not work out for Vern, Ray and Herb and they left by 1969. Vern and Ray eventually ended up back in Northern California and Herb moved to the Los Angeles area to pursue other musical opportunities. Vern and Ray continued to perform together until 1974. They had one other recording released "Sounds From The Ozarks" on Old Homestead Records (now long out of print).

Vern, Ray and Herb went on to separate musical endeavors and in 1999 had a reunion at the Wolf Mountain Bluegrass Festival (Grass Valley, California).

Ray passed away in 2002, Vern has retired from music and lives in the Gold Country of Northern California, and Herb lives in Southern California and is still a working musi-

WINFIELD DAILY COUR

WINFIELD, KANSAS, SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 1967



THIS BLUEGRASS TRIO, which goes by the name Vern & Ray, was just one of the groups that entertained last night at the first concert of Southwestern College's Folk Festival. A

second concert is scheduled for 8 tonight in Stewart Fieldhouse.

1,000 Attend Folk Music Concert

cian. He and his pal of almost 40 years, Chris Hillman, go out as a duet, and sometimes a quartet, utilizing the talents of Bill Bryson on standup bass, and Ray's son Larry Park on lead guitar. Herb still records

with other artists, and from time to time produces record projects.

— *Quotes from an interview with Vern Williams by Tom Diamant, October 27, 2003*

Produced by Herb Pedersen.

Recorded live at the San Francisco State Folk Festival, 1968.

Tape editing using ProTools – Libby Pedersen.

Tape transfer to FireWire – Matt Gillis.

Photos courtesy of Herb Pedersen, Marlene Park.

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Thanks to: Marlene, Larry & Cary Park, Del Williams, and Howard Courtney for their assistance. Also to Libby Pedersen and Matt Gillis for their technical advice and support.

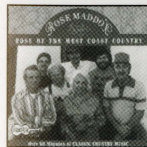
This live show is dedicated to the memory of Ray Park, to Vern Williams and their families and friends. This is the earliest release of their work since the late 50's I believe.

— *Herb Pedersen, Los Angeles, 2006*

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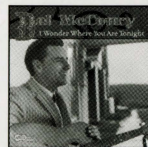
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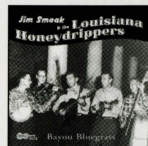
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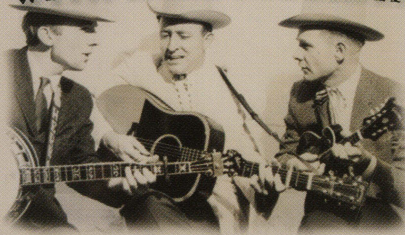
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 WITH HERB PEDERSEN



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(BLUE YODEL NO. 8)
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9. LITTLE GEORGIA
ROSE

Vern Williams – mandolin & vocals
Ray Park – guitar, fiddle & vocals
Herb Pedersen – banjo & vocals
Howard Courtney - bass

“So there we were 38 years ago, with all the raw energy Vern & Ray would bring to one of their shows. They were the ‘real deal’ folks, I’ll never forget what I learned from them and I’m still proud to have been a part of it.”

— *Herb Pedersen*

Recorded LIVE at the San Francisco Folk Festival.

10. THE BUCKIN’ MULE
11. THE BOTTLE LET
ME DOWN
12. ODE TO THE LITTLE
BROWN SHACK
13. POOR ELLEN SMITH
14. HARD TIMES
15. THE TOUCH OF
GOD’S HAND
16. ON MY MIND
17. ORANGE BLOSSOM
SPECIAL

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FILE UNDER: BLUEGRASS

