

# Wendling Memories 1930 - 1944

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This is a place which brings many very safe and secure, and, very pleasant and friendly memories of my beginning years. I know I arrived in what is now called the Sacred Heart Hospital in Eugene and lived for twelve years in a home with my parents, Hallie and Lillian Peterson, near the "old swimming hole" and then two years in a home on C Street "down town" in Wendling before we moved into Eugene.

I can remember being in the front yard during fire season and watching the wind blow burning branches across the ravine in which we lived and see the fire start on the other side. I was aware that some times my father and other men would go out at night and no one said where. Later I picked up the word "spot lighting" and realized that was what the husbands were doing during the Depression to keep meat on the table for their families. The Ranger stationed in Wendling was aware of this action but no one was ever arrested. The men who did this did not waste the meat and it certainly was not for sport.

My mother and my aunt and cousin, Evelyn and Eileen Lawrensen, would go up the logging roads when the wild black berries were ripe. They were all over the area where the timber had been cut. We had the old Crisco pails with handles and were suppose to help pick berries but we also had our dolls with us. One time there was a very scary and funny sound. We could not see our mothers so we took our dolls, climbed into the car, locked the doors, and tooted the horn. Our mothers appeared immediately and after also hearing that scary noise we were informed it was grouse birds, nothing which would hurt us. I never felt any fear to go alone or with my cousin, Eileen Lawrensen Pollard, up the dirt road or trails beyond the swimming hole to look for trilliums, lady slippers, or whatever that might be seen, like big fat slugs! I was not to go as far as the CCC Camp. Later when the Camp closed and the foundations were left, our Brownie and Girls Scout troops had cookouts and overnights there, respectively. We always had to look out for Mr. Mulligan's red and white cattle and the other Wendling residents' milk cows grazing beyond the ball park which was across the road from the swimming hole. The cattle I watched very carefully when they had wandered down near the big wooden gate where the Company homes began, and, I had to walk by them to and from school.

I could watch the logging train come around the corner up on the hill and gradually work its way down to pass by the CCC Camp and just about 3:30 or 4:00 p.m. every day come down the other side of the creek from

My mother was Sunday School teacher at the Methodist Church. It sat in a big field behind A and C Streets. Mother taught the preschool in a room behind the altar. She had a pump organ to create music. We, in the main part of the Church, had a piano, and at the old age of eleven, I was asked to play the piano for Sunday School. That meant a maximum of seven song choices for each Sunday. There were not that many people who attended Sunday School and could play the piano, so we all did our best.

The area around the Church was a good area for ball games and other games for the young people. One year the high school age people got together and cleared it so we really could have a good playing field. We had Scout programs for boys and girls. The Girl Scouts met in a garage which Donald Stolberg donated for our meetings. It seemed like forever to talk my Aunt, Evelyn Lawrensen, who was Scout Leader, to let us younger girls have "night meetings".

Finally when we were 10 and G.S., we could meet from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. During the winter months it was dark when we walked home. Sometimes I would walk all the way home following the railroad track and cross the creek on a bridge my father and uncle, Roy Holm, built, to our home which was near the swimming hole, or, I would walk through the Mill and out by the Cookhouse where Mr. and Mrs. Mix and family lived. I usually met the watchman who had a big belt across his shoulder with a clock on it. Sometimes he would walk with me and, if he didn't, he would tell me to be careful. It never occurred to me to be afraid of walking home in the dark.

I worried about the men who rode the logs which floated on the pond. I don't remember any falling in, but that was another "no-no" (but I knew the older boys did it and they weren't suppose to).

Mother's Club was a monthly meeting of the women in Wendling. They had "secret pals" and there were ideas about how to cook and sew and deal with depression economy. My mother went to Eugene to several meetings held by the Land County Extension Service and once in a while one of the ladies would attend their meeting. Every lady received a set of tea towels with designs and the givers name or initials. (I have a few of my mother's which she had saved!)

The HALL: what a marvelous place. This was the place for Mother's Club potlucks and volley ball games after dinner; the pool room and the bowling alley (all those men sitting there playing cards or pool and, we would have to go through that room to the bowling alley); the fountain where ice cream bars could be purchased for five(5) cents each; interschool basketball and volleyball games with Marcola, Mabel, and Thurston were played; bridal showers were given by the ladies for a Wendling girl. (This was attended by all the women and young girls, and, a ritual: a big circle of chairs, games,

the picket fence, which parts were always knocked down, and pull weeds from the stones and markers while he did his work and then we would walk down the hill. We never spoke of this area except when the two of us were up there. After reading many of the CONVEYOR articles, this must be the old cemetery of family members of people who were in Wendling from 1890s. There were names on some of the worn stones, but mainly crosses in very bad condition. Most had had names on them but they were hard to read. I enjoyed the Thursday youth night of games, songs, and nibbles at the Guy Pattee home. Everyone, seventh grade and older, was invited and it was such a nice time. Of course we had to go to see who else would come. That was very nice of them to offer their home for young restless people. We became very "cityfied" when Frances Stuart Abel had a beauty shop next to her parent's home. We could get a permanent with those heavy wires put on hair curlers to heat the hair and curl it. Later Alice Keeler went to Eugene for a while so she could attend beauty school and then she continued the beauty shop for Wendling ladies and young girls.

The men who did not qualify for the WWII draft organized the Home Guard. They marched on the school baseball field and planned safety measures to protect the Wendling citizens. They were in charge of explaining how to cover the home windows so that the night lights would not show and checking all the homes each night. The Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts collected tin cans and learned how to cook meals for large groups in our door atmosphere. We thought it was exciting. Studies now show that the lumber mills were marked for damage and, if the citizen was caught, the President had Executive Privilege to forego any trial during war time.

In June 1944 we moved to Eugene, but we would return for the Saturday night dances, our friends would come to our home in Eugene, and we never lost contact with many of the people. My father "quit" his loading lumber into box cars job at the Mill; therefore, according to Federal law, this was a "defense" industry and he could not be hired by other companies (regardless of industry) for six months. He found that other sawmills would hire him for 30 days so he worked at all the small sawmills along West 6th Street and he worked the night shift at the Eugene Cannery. At the end of the six (6) months he was hired by Firestone to learn the retreading business and worked for Firestone for over twenty years in various sales positions and later in real estate. My mother taught Kindergarten at Francis Willard Grade School until she also retired in 1968. I finished Woodrow Wilson Jr. High School and Eugene High School. My parents continued to live in Eugene. I left Eugene to attend college at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, and graduate school at University of South Dakota, Vermillion. I taught Latin and U.S. History at Albany

our home. On Friday night there was a great deal of car traffic coming down from the Camp and on Sunday night those who lived there would go back home.

We all took Red Cross swimming lessons in the swimming hole, including my mother. She was the only adult in the beginner's class that first year. We would swim all afternoon and when the, mill whistle blew we had to get out and go home, always hoping we could return after dinner. The three foot and six foot diving boards from which we all had to jump were at first terrifying. Only the older boys dove off the tower which had two levels of boards and was on the opposite side of the creek. My father and other men obtained fire lumber from the mill and built dressing rooms for the men and the ladies.

The funniest thing happened, at least we girls thought so, the knots in the wood were pushed out so we could see into the men's as we walked by and the boys tried to look into the ladies' when we were inside. We had to walk by the men's dressing rooms. Sometimes the boys would spit, toss water out, or put their wiggling fingers out of the holes as we walked by. When the boys loudly came over to the women's dressing room to look in the holes and/or hit on the walls, we girls would yell and act scared and disgusted, but loved every minute of it!

I remember my father was so upset that the boys would do that. He and others fathers quickly collected tin cans lids so they could nail over the holes. (Now, I wonder if in their men's circle they didn't laugh about it.)

We were able to build snow men in the yard and sometimes we had unauthorized snowball fights at school. I spent kindergarten through eighth grade in Wendling Grade School and I do know it was an excellent educational facility. I never missed many days of school because my cousin, Eileen, who was already going to school, was thoughtful enough to bring measles, chicken pox, etc. home and share them with me before I even attended kindergarten. The young single women who came to teach were very good. When I was in the first grade under the firm guidance of Miss Jordan, my mother became the kindergarten teacher. My parents often invited the teachers, Miss Gesme, Miss Huston, Mrs. Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Dolan, and others to our home to dinner. I discovered that they could laugh, talk about other things, and sometimes about Wendling residents, and I also knew I WAS NOT to talk about those dinner conversations. The merry-go-round in the middle of the "old" school was very busy during recess and noon. Often I went home for lunch because I could walk back with Mother when she went to teach. We could hear the "10 'til 1" mill whistle and knew that was how much time we had before 1:00 when the next whistle would blow and time for school.

and two little children chosen to pull the decorated wagon with the gifts to the bride; all the gifts were passed around so all could see "what she got"; she said thank you; a dessert was served. I never knew what happened after each party.); the school Christmas Program (This meant we walked from school to the Hall everyday, starting Monday after Thanksgiving until THE night, to practice all stanzas of many carols and the eighth graders acted the Birth of Christ play correctly. Lots of bathrobes were put to use. I know that our three (3) were used every year, THE night Santa came and we got a sack with an orange and some candy. I don't know if the PTA paid for the treats, but I know my parents were involved in getting the sacks ready. I think everyone in town was there because every child had some part in the festival.); and the Saturday night dances; (The great orchestra composed of the local talent of Delores, Marge, Wayne Marjorie, and others played excellent dance music. We girls danced together and also all the dads would dance with us--this meant that wife sat that dance out!)

I can remember when my father came home saying Booth-Kelly had agreed to a closed AF of I Union Shop. This had meant many night and weekend negotiating meetings in which he participated. Then one Sunday on the way home from Sunday School, as Mother and I were walking between Raines' and Bunch's homes, they both came out to tell us Pearl Harbor had been bombed. They all were crying and very concerned.

We took part in the twenty-four hour airplane reporting watch. For a while it was in a small room next to Dr. Atwood's office and then later down beyond the Grant home, near the Downing home. Many of us young people were able to do the 4 to 8 p.m. shift and it seemed like so much fun to hear airplanes and talk on the phone. Audrey Keeler, Teresa Kuykendall, and I often worked together. When we moved down to C Street into the Company house, R seemed so close to everything. I found that many of the wooden sidewalks were not too conducive for roller skating but we all managed to do some skating. We also found it was interesting to sit on the bridge near the Hall and watch who was going in and out of town.

My parents belonged to two pinocle clubs. These were great social Saturday night activities during the Depression and 40s. If some couple could not attend the potluck and games, we young ones GOT to play and that was great.

One of the members of one of the clubs was Mr. Frost, who was in charge of climbing the hill behind C Street and the Methodist Church to check the water tanks. I don't know what he did, but he let me go with him. I found in the woods near the water tanks a cemetery in complete disrepair. He told me I must not take anything because maybe they belonged to people in town, or, maybe a family would return someday. So I would fix up

High School, Albany, Oregon, for three (3) years and then in 1956 I moved to Sacramento, CA to teach Latin. There I met my husband-to-be who was also teaching at Norte del Rio High School.

One of the first places I took my husband, and later our two (2) children, was to Wendling and the swimming hole to swim in clean moving water. July 1996 Eileen Pollard took my Dad, Ed and me up to Wendling.. It certainly required a great deal of memory and mind-pictures to bring back where I grew up. It was the last car trip my father took before he died.

I am glad we have MANY photos of our lives in Wendling. Our children, Ellen and Robert, are very well informed about Wendling as they spent all their lives, until they went away to college and work, in Sacramento. When we visited in Eugene, they always wanted to go see Wendling and go swimming.