



Cecilia Wilhelmina Erickson

April 1, 1922 - March 14, 2009

Cecilia Wilhelmina Schieffer Erickson – Autobiography – written April 1999
(written by Cecilia for a student who was studying senior citizens)

I was born on the homestead at the foot of Rocky Butte. This was about thirty miles south of Beach. When I was about three years old, we moved to a farm just north of Beach. We lived there and went to school in Beach. We kids stayed with Grandpa and Grandma during the school year. Then when I was nine year old or so, we moved back to the homestead by Rocky Butte. By this time, I had several sisters and brothers. It was sometimes a hard life, but we had each other, and Dad and Mom were always there for us.

I finished grade school in a little one room country school. I didn't get to go to High School until two years after I was out of grade school. Then the Superintendent of Beach High School talked my father into letting me go. It was still the bad depression but I got some help from the school district by working under the Y.W.A. program, where we had to help the teachers and worked in different places, like the bank, grocery store, etc. This we had to do to get credit for different subjects we took in school. It helped me when I graduated, too. I got a scholarship for \$300 dollars from the bank and \$300 dollars from the newspaper to the commercial college in Bismarck. I didn't have any money, but Aunt Tina bought my ticket to Bismarck and Superintendent Miller got a place for me to stay and work for my room; and I

worked in a department store for my eats. I had a place to rest.

When I finished the two years at the college, the war was getting pretty bad. So, when the Navy started a program for girls, I joined on my 21st birthday. It was the 1st Company in the United States Waves. The first train load of girls started in Seattle and traveled all the way to New York City, picking up girls all along the way. The 1st Company had 1800 girls. My boot training was at Hunter College in New York City. I was in the top 10% of the Company when I finished, so I got to go to special training for nearly 5 months at State Teacher College in Cedar Falls, Iowa. When we were finished there, we were classified as Spec. X rating. After all that work, my first job was rigging parachutes in Pennsylvania. From there I went to Great Falls Naval Base for about 7 weeks and then I got my permanent base, which was on North Island, California. I was there for the rest of my time. While there, my husband (Oscar Andrew Erickson) came back from the Pacific. He was in the Marines. This was the 1st of January in 1945. We were married on the 8th of June. There were 23 couples that were all married at the same time. The 9th Naval District gave us a wedding reception at the Del Coronado Hotel.

I was discharged on November 13, 1945 as then was when the Navy closed out the Waves. That is as long as we could stay in. My husband was discharged in April 1946 and we went back to Wisconsin. While we were in California, I got my degree from the University of San Diego. When we got back to Wisconsin, we got a dairy farm, but Oscar wasn't a farmer. So, after a year or so, he joined the Air Force. I was pregnant with our first child (Marie Elaine). She was born in Marshfield, Wisconsin. During the time I was pregnant, my father got very ill and passed away. I spent some time with all my family, but had to go back to Wisconsin before my baby was born. When she was a little over a month, we went to Roswell, New Mexico where Oscar was stationed. We made our home there for the next 12 years. During this time, our son (John Albert) and daughter (Sheila May) were born. After 6

years in the Air Force, Oscar got out and became the manager of the Kenny Shoe Store. I worked for the City of Roswell as City Clerk and Treasurer for over ten years.

We saw every place of interest in New Mexico and most of Texas. Then the health of our young daughter got worse and worse; the doctors told us that if we didn't change climate she would never reach her teens. So when she was 4 ½ years old, we sold everything, including the home we had built, and left our jobs and came to Oregon. It was very hard, but after a year or so here, we saw a great improvement in her health. She didn't have to spend most of her time in bed or a chair. My father-in-law lived with us from the time our first baby was born until he passed away 18 years later. He was a God-send to me. He was the most wonderful baby-sitter.

While living in Oregon, I got to go home after many years of not able to. It was so wonderful to see my family. I missed them so much and was lonesome for them. It had been hard times, but after that, I came home as often as I could with my family. Our children all grew up in Portland and then went on to their own lives. Marie went to work for the Telephone Company. She retired from there last fall after being with them for 33 years. John, after graduation, went into the Navy for four years and then went into the hotel field and he is now general manager of a private gold club. Sheila is a hairdresser by profession, but now she manager of the food program for one of the large hospitals in Portland.

After working for 22 years for one company (Mason Supply) in Portland, I retired and Oscar and I went to Newport to run a nice motel (Whaler Motel) for 7 ½ years until Oscar was declared legally blind. For some time we traveled all over the United States. We saw most places of interest. Our children were in different places all over the United States. Our Grand-daughter (Amy) was

teaching in Panama, but she came back before we got a chance to visit. I was very disappointed. I don't know if I said, but we have six grandchildren and one great-grandson. All my children and grand children are around Portland except for my oldest grandson, Leif, who is in the Navy. In 1995, Oscar and I celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary in Glendive, Montana. As our children were all over the country, they just couldn't all make it home for it. Oscar was already very ill, but we made it anyway.

For the last 15 years, I have been working for a large hotel and motel corporation as an audit. My husband passed away in March of 1999 from cancer and other illness. My job has helped me so much in the last couple years. All my families and friends have been so wonderful. Of late, I have been doing things of interest again, like fishing, crabbing, etc., and lots of walking.

You asked what I remember of my ancestors. I had the good fortune of knowing my father's parents very well, and met several of his brothers and also his sisters. I met Mother's step-mother a couple times. Once when I was stationed in Florida, I went to Foley, Alabama, on a 5-day pass. I just don't remember ever meeting her father, our grandfather. I thought they were all wonderful, friendly people.

I just celebrated my 78th birthday last weekend. All my children came during a period of three days. On my birthday they made a dinner at one of the restaurants for 22 people. It was so wonderful.

I hope this helps you with what you wanted. My kids tell me I talk all the time. I do that much better than writing. If you have this typed, you can arrange the information any way you want.

Love, Cecilia

P.S. I don't have any pictures of our wedding, courtship or any picture during the early time in the service as all our things were lost or taken when shipped from San Diego to Marshfield, Wisconsin – even our clothes. It makes me very unhappy when I think of it.

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Tribute Wall



“ Cecilia Wilhelmina Erickson

January 28, 2023 at 02:51 PM



“ we miss you mom

sheila - March 28, 2009 at 12:00 AM



“ I always thought of Cecilia as a sister rather than a sister in law. She always was and always will be special in my thoughts

Paul Erickson - March 23, 2009 at 12:00 AM



“ Mom's quiet strength and sense of adventure was always inspiring. This inspiration will live on through all of us.

Karen - March 19, 2009 at 12:00 AM



“ We will miss you in life, but we know you live on in our hearts. Love You Mom

John - March 17, 2009 at 12:00 AM



“ Wonderful woman. I so enjoyed reading Cecelia's life story. It is so like the stories of my family and so many others who's strength and work ethic were the backbone and strength of this country. I know you will miss her very much. She was lovely.

Sandy Fairchild - March 17, 2009 at 12:00 AM

LE

“ *I don't know what to say... I miss Grandma... but I always miss Grandma.* ”

Leif Erickson - March 16, 2009 at 12:00 AM