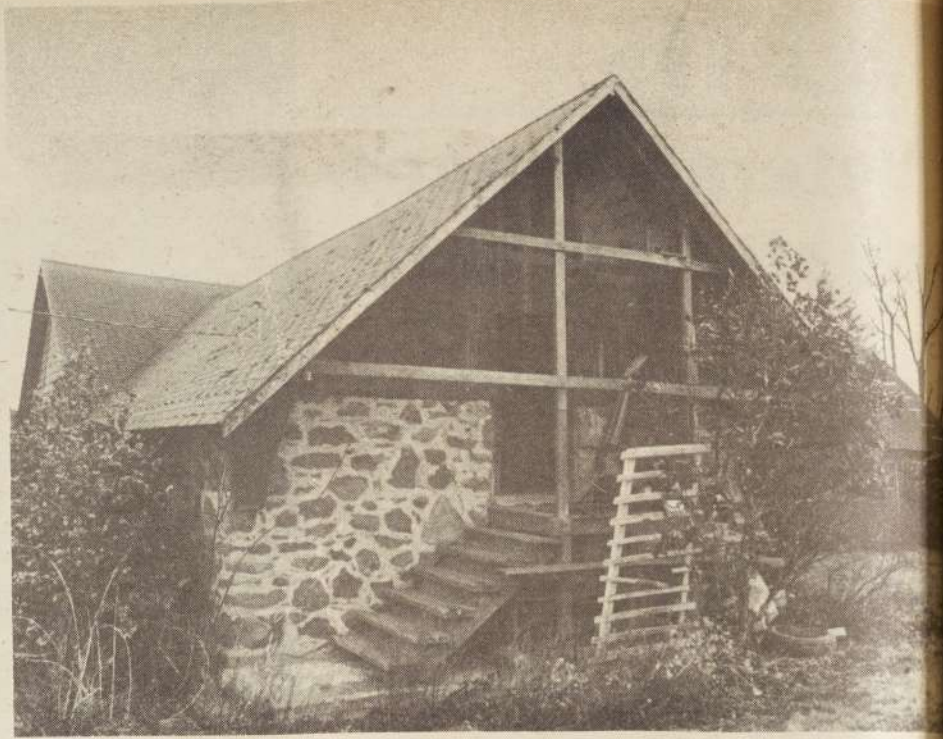


Generations later

Polehn Farm remains a Redland landmark



The world had not yet seen the 20th Century when a homesick German names Frank Polehn found kinship with the community of Redland, Oregon, an area that reminded him of his homeland, the Black Forest.

It was within that haven of nostalgia that Polehn eventually settled. He planted his roots on a hill about eight miles southeast of Oregon City, found a job in a sawmill, married and started a family.

Twenty years later, Polehn's roots were more firmly established upon this site. He completed the family home, a large white structure that capped the top of the hill.

According to Lois Vancil, granddaughter to Polehn, life was simple until it became complicated by the Depression of the 1930s.

"My grandfather was caught in a typical bind at that point of the Depression," she recalled. "He had many debts."

"Eventually, he asked my dad (his son, Richard Polehn) if he couldn't make a go of it," she continued, "with hopes that the family wouldn't lose the farm."

According to Vancil, Polehn Farm was "dropped" on Richard Polehn in 1935. An Oregon City man, Polehn had a wife, Gladys, and three children, Clara, Lois and Bernie. Until 1935, he had supported his family by cutting wood.

Lois Vancil was 12 years old when the big house began to shelter a second generation of Polehns.

"My grandparents moved in to another house on the farm," she recalled.

Ingenuity, combined with devotion and hard work, proved to be a profitable combination, as Richard initiated the long climb out of a hole of debts. First, Polehn abandoned the work horses, with which all previous farming had been

done. A tractor was acquired and that became the nucleus of the farm's production.

Arriving at a state of production was a slow process. "Dad got involved with the county agriculture extension officer, John Inskeep," Vancil recalled. "They worked together, trying to figure out which crops could grow on the depleted soil."

Inskeep assisted Polehn, assisted in experimenting with crops and fertilizers, and in evaluating the results.

Among crops of clover, meadow fescue, meadow fox-tail, and chewings fescue, or-

chard grass appeared to thrive the best. But that crop ended up producing only heartache.

"We had a beautiful crop of orchard grass, over 40 acres," said Vancil. "Then one day we got a hot East wind, and within an hour, the whole crop was on the ground."

"It was amazing to me, how well my father took it," she continued. "He just threw himself into the next project. It impressed me as a child to see his bravery."

Despite disappointments, however, the efforts paid off. The Polehn Farm began producing lawn grass seed. A seed cleaning mill was added to the farm, one of the first plants of its kind in the area.

With the help of the plant and hours of work, the Polehns realized their goal and set

Polehn Farm financially on its feet.

Farming continued to be successful throughout most of Richard Polehn's life. The farm saw many crops of grass seed as well as strawberries, blackberries and later prunes and pears.

In the meantime, the Polehn girls, Clara and Lois, were married. The only Polehn son, Bernie, was killed in World War II.

As years passed, Polehn Farm not only produced, but it expanded. Neighboring farms joined the Polehn Farm until, during the '50s, it reached its heights of 800 acres. As the '50s turned into the '60s, Polehn Farm produced its yearly crops and provided many jobs for local people.

However, the early '70s saw not only an aging Richard and Gladys, but decreased demand

