

## **JUNE 24, 1947 – PENDLETON OREGON**

From *The East Oregonian* newspaper dated June 24, 1987:  
“*Man sticks to his report, Stories of UFOs started in Pendleton 40 years ago*—by Hal McCune of the East Oregonian

Pendleton – Bill Schuening figured the humming noise was a tractor. But instead, when his pickup rumbled over the rise and he looked across the field some 200 or 300 feet away, he saw a saucer-like object suspended five or six feet over the ground.

"I would have given anything to have had a camera with me," he says. But his memory of that moment 40 years ago today is as sharp as a photograph. Schuening, now 70, saw a flying saucer. To him, it's not a question of whether or not he thinks he saw it. He saw it!

"It was definitely there," hovering above the rolling farmland some 25 miles north of Pendleton, he says. No one had heard the term UFO at the time - there had been no cause to coin it. Schuening helped usher in the era of unidentified flying objects. But it was an airplane piloted by Boise who drew the headlines. Kenneth Arnold landed his plane in Pendleton on June 24, 1947, and told *East Oregonian* reporter Bill Bequette he'd just seen nine shiny, flat objects streaking across the sky at incredible speed. The story was spread nationwide by the wire services and Arnold was marked the rest of his life as the man who started the UFO craze. He died in 1984. Schuening says he saw a flying saucer the same day as Arnold did. But he didn't tell anyone until after Arnold's story was published in the *EO*.

"My boss told me about a flying saucer story and I told him I saw it too," Schuening says. Lester King, for whom Schuening was ranch foreman for 17 years, convinced him to go to town and tell others what he'd seen.

"I told my wife about it. She said that I was crazy to say anything about it," Schuening recalls. "Everyone said we were just seeing things." Arnold said he saw nine flying objects traveling in formation across Eastern Washington, weaving over the Cascade Mountains at speeds he clocked at up to 1,200 mph. He spotted the objects about 30 miles west of Mount Rainier and clocked them to Mount Adams.

"It seemed impossible," he told the reporter, but added, "I must believe my eyes." Schuening's description was similar, although he says the shiny, silver objects were perfectly spherical, while Arnold reported the objects as more crescent-shaped. Another area sighting was made the following Sunday by Mrs. Morton Elder, a McKay Creek farm wife, who said she'd seen seven "perfectly round, umbrella-like" objects flying north of her farm. The EO ran a lengthy front-page story on June 26, 1947, regarding Arnold's unusual observation. A much shorter story ran on Page One four days later that quoted Schuening saying he's seen "flying discs" the same day as Arnold and mentioning McKay's sighting. But Schuening was the only one of the three "witnesses" to claim he saw more than just a flying saucer.

"There were two little guys in green suits with white helmets standing right underneath it. They were no bigger than this," he recalled earlier this month, holding his hand at waist level.

"It didn't scare me at all," Schuening says. He was too amazed to be frightened. Schuening says he watched the helmeted creatures for a few seconds and then "they were gone. How they got in (the craft) I'll never know. Suddenly they were just gone." Moments later the craft zipped away toward the river, made a big circle, and headed over the mountains. "The last I saw, the sun was shining on it." The craft was "silver, all top and bottom," with no seams or doors, Schuening says. He figures he watched it for nearly a minute.



*Bill Schuening, 70, has lived and farmed in the Pendleton area all his life. He maintains he saw a flying saucer one some rolling farmland 25 miles south of town exactly 40 years ago today.*

**Reliability evaluation:  
medium**

**one witness only, probable misinterpreted helicopter,  
he used words said by Arnold "weaving in and out of  
formation", he saw something without relation with UFOs**

