

# Salem Couple Spur Search for Uranium

## Johnson Claim Starts Boom at Wilhoit Springs

By CHARLES IRELAND  
Valley Editor, The Statesman  
SILVERTON — Did the minerals in the Wilhoit Mineral Springs water that Grandpa drank in the Gay '90s include uranium? A Salem-area man and his wife are gambling \$2,000 and a lot of their time that the answer is "yes."

Nestled in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains in southwestern Clackamas County — 30 miles northeast of Salem — Wilhoit Mineral Springs today is a faded and near-forgotten resort.

The name of the once-famous health spa was revived three weeks ago when 34 mining claims were filed at the Clackamas County Courthouse in Oregon City.

Responsible for filing the 34 claims were a former Minnesotan and his red-haired wife who live at Kelzer.

Practically all of the recent speculation about uranium at Wilhoit Springs can be traced to this couple, Mr. and Mrs. Lester Johnson.

### Tried Polk Co. First

Over two years ago, the Johnsons bought a Geiger counter and went traipsing around the valley in search of the stuff that dreams and A-bombs are made of. "We're great people to get out in the backwoods, anyway," said Mrs. Johnson.

Early prospecting by the Johnsons centered in Polk County. It was a tip that they might find bauxite, rather than uranium, that first sent them to Wilhoit Springs.

Wilhoit Springs is 14 miles northeast of Silverton via a winding, roller coaster country road.

### Made Many Trips

The Johnsons have made numerous prospecting trips to the area in the past two years. With them they lugged their Geiger counter, the gadget that has transformed many Americans into weekend prospectors.

A Geiger counter (the Johnsons recommend purchase of a "good one," costing about \$300 new) is a portable device with a needle that flickers on a dial when radioactive elements are within its range.

While most worthwhile deposits of uranium in the United States have been found in Colorado and Utah, the Johnsons are convinced that Western Oregon has some, too.

The gyrations of the needle on their Geiger counter at Wilhoit Springs have strengthened their conviction.

### 'Hot' Reactions

So three weeks ago they filed claims to mineral rights on the government-owned land where they got some "hot" reactions.

The law limits one person's claim to 20 acres. That meant Mr. and Mrs. Johnson could file claim to a total of 40 acres. They decided to cut their friends in on the adjacent land.

As a result, 34 claims were filed within a few days by the Johnsons and their friends. They report that the 34 claims comprise all available land in the immediate area. All of the claims are near the Wilhoit Springs resort.

Cost of filing a claim is \$1 for each 20 acres. This gives the claimant just the mineral rights to the property for one year. The claim is renewable if \$10 is spent during the year on development.

The Johnsons' prospecting entered a new phase Saturday when they began to drill into the ground at a spot their Geiger counter indicated was particularly "hot."

Their home-made drill is powered by a 5-horsepower, 140-pound motor that had the Johnsons puffing Friday as they lugged it 100 yards from their pick-up truck to the drill site.

### Can Drill 300 Feet

They have equipment on hand to drill 300 feet into the earth. Samples of what they find at various depths will be labeled and sent away to be assayed. Their investment to date they report is "about \$2,000."

If the Johnsons should strike important quantities of a radioactive mineral, they say they would leave the mining to a big mining company. They estimate that it would cost several hundred thousand dollars to set up a mine.

The Johnsons nearest "neighbor" to the east is Theodore Madrone, who has had a mine in



SILVERTON—Erecting home-built drilling rig on his mining claim in Wilhoit Springs area, 14 miles northeast of Silverton is Lester Johnson, 5169 Verda Lane, Salem. Johnson began drilling Saturday for uranium or other radioactive substance that could spell big money. (Statesman Photos)



SILVERTON — Talk of uranium deposits has failed to impress Theodore Madrone, shown standing at entrance to shaft of mine he operates adjacent to the Johnson claims in Wilhoit Springs area. Madrone sells product of his mine as soil builder.

operation for many years.

With his own hands, Madrone has burrowed a shaft 2,000 feet into the hills. But he is interested primarily in a peat-like substance which is used as a soil builder.

Madrone takes a fatherly-tolerant attitude toward the newcomers and the talk about potential-rich veins of uranium at Wilhoit.

Madrone has mined in the area for 15 years. He has learned a lot of geology the hard way. He says somebody else can make the first uranium strike. Until they do, he's skeptical.

Meanwhile, the Clackamas County clerk's office reports that publicity given the Johnson filings has prompted many inquiries and a few independent filings

in the southern part of the county.

### Named for Daughter

The Johnsons have chosen the name Lucky Linda Mining Claims for their holdings. They have a daughter, Linda, at North Salem High School.

A brother of Mrs. Johnson called his World War II fighter plane Lucky Linda, and it returned him safely from every mission.

The Johnsons expect to be flying high, too, if they can get their Lucky Linda mining operation off the ground.

## Detroit Lake Boat Concession Aired

DETROIT — Boat-rental concessions at Detroit Lake were discussed Thursday at a meeting of nearly 50 North Santiam Canyon residents and Alvin Sorseth, Detroit District ranger.

Sorseth said no decisions were reached at the meeting. He said the next step likely would be the awarding of concessions to several parties. He said the meeting was held to "get the feeling of the people" about the subject.

## Fire Damages Dallas House

DALLAS—Fire of undetermined origin Saturday caused considerable damage to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Otjen, 505 E. Salem Road.

The blaze, which started around a bracket type chimney, was discovered by Otjen about 3:30 p.m. when he returned home from the family's downtown floral shop. No one was at home prior to the discovery.

Damage was confined to the upstairs, roof and chimney by the Dallas volunteer fire department. The loss was covered by insurance, it was reported.

The Otjens were the victims about four years ago of another fire which almost destroyed their home.

## Sister Schindler Dies at Queen of Angels Convent

MT. ANGEL—Sister Stanislaus Schindler died Friday at Queen of Angels Convent here after a three-year illness.

She was born in Wollentzoven, Bavaria, Germany, March 22, 1875, came to the United States in 1889, and made her religious profession here in 1891. For many years she performed domestic tasks at the convent and its branch houses.

Surviving are a brother, George Schindler, Ocean Lake; several nieces and nephews including Mrs. Teresa Koch, Salem, Sister Mary Schindler, Mrs. Victoria Susee and Martin Schindler, all of Mt. Angel.

Services will be at 9:45 a.m. Monday in the convent chapel with Father Sebastian Terhaar officiating. Interment will be at the convent cemetery under direction of Unger Mortuary.

### MRS. GILHAM RECUPERATING

VICTOR POINT — Mrs. James Gilham is reported making satisfactory recovery from major surgery at a Salem hospital.

## Four-H Show Opens May 2

SILVERTON — The Marion County 4-H Spring Show will be held May 2-6 at Silverton Armory with Silverton Junior Chamber of Commerce as sponsor.

A judging contest will be held at the armory on April 23 with cooking, clothing, and homemaking judged in the morning and special home economics in the afternoon. April 30 will be spent in preparation for the spring show.

First demonstrations will be May 2 from 6:30 to 9:30 p. m. Judging and demonstrations will continue each day at the armory until Thursday when the style revue judging will be held in the Eugene Field auditorium at 1 p. m., followed by the revue at 8 p. m. The grand parade will start at 1 p. m. on closing day of the show.

Planning committee for the spring show includes Mrs. Melvin DuRette, Mrs. Okley McCreight and Mrs. William Simpson.

## Woodburn BPW Club Elects New Slate of Officers

WOODBURN — Elected at the meeting of Business and Professional Women's Club Thursday night were the following officers: president, Mrs. J. A. Evans; first vice president, Marie Thompson; second vice president, Viola Farmer; recording secretary, Mrs. Walter Miller; corresponding secretary, Mrs. Tom Baldwin; treasurer, Mrs. O. J. Adkinson.

Installation will be held June 16 at a dinner meeting. Delegates were Mrs. Evans, Marie Thompson, and Viola Farmer. They were appointed to represent the club at a state convention to be held in Salem this month. They were appointed to represent the club, Mrs. George Timm, and Mrs. Clara Stange, outgoing president.

The next meeting will be a social dinner meeting in the Elliott Prairie district, April 21 at 7 p. m. at the home of Mrs. Paul Burkert.

## Polk County Court News

DALLAS — The following complaint was on file Saturday in Polk County Circuit Court: Dorothy Bergstrom vs. Philip Bergstrom; Plaintiff alleges cruel and inhuman treatment, seeks divorce and custody of two minor children, \$100 monthly child support. Married Sept. 22, 1935 at Colerain, Minn.

## Willamina PTA Elects Mrs. John

WILLAMINA — Mrs. Carl John was elected president of the grade school PTA at its April meeting. Other officers are first vice president, Mrs. LeRoy Elliott; second vice president, Mrs. Paul Yoder; secretary, Mrs. James Monaco; treasurer, Mrs. George Weber.

The 40-piece grade school band entertained the group. Mrs. Grace Herzberg's sixth grade room won the award for having most parents present. At the May meeting, the new officers will be installed.

## Egg Hunt Today In Mill City Park

MILL CITY—Boy Scout Troop 49 will have charge of an Easter Egg hunt in the City Park at 1 p. m. Sunday, according to Scoutmaster Elmer Steiner.

Those participating will be divided into four age groups, six years and under, six to eight, children from eight to 10, and youngsters from 10 to 14. Those who find "lucky" eggs will be awarded prizes.

## \$25,000 Sheridan Reservoir Approved

SHERIDAN — The City Council has approved construction of a new water reservoir for the city water department. The new \$25,000 reservoir will increase capacity by 250,000 gallons. Adequate storage has long been a problem due to increased consumption.

## Brother Suda Dies at Abbey

MT. ANGEL — Brother Dominic Suda died in his sleep early Saturday at Mt. Angel Abbey where he had professed his Benedictine vows in 1934. He was 41.

Born Jan. 20, 1914, at Winnipeg, Canada, he was christened Frank Suda and later moved to Salinas, Calif., entering the monastery here in 1932. He later worked for two years at the monastery's Indian Mission in British Columbia. He also was mail carrier for several years at the abbey.

Survivors include a brother, Joe Suda, Salinas; and a sister, Mrs. John Dwyer, San Francisco. Services will be at 8:15 a.m. Tuesday at the Abbey Church following rites of divine office of the dead at 7:25. Interment will be at Abbey Cemetery under direction of Unger Mortuary.

## Births At Valley Hospitals

STAYTON—To Mrs. Roselle Meyers and the late Jerry E. Meyers, Idanha, a daughter, April 7, at Santiam Memorial Hospital.

To Mr. and Mrs. Donald Cox, Aumsville route 1, a daughter, April 7, at Santiam Memorial Hospital.

## BOY'S EYE INJURED

SHERIDAN — Arvid Ekman, 9, is in a Portland hospital with serious injuries to his eye, received in a game, when a pointed stick injured the eye.

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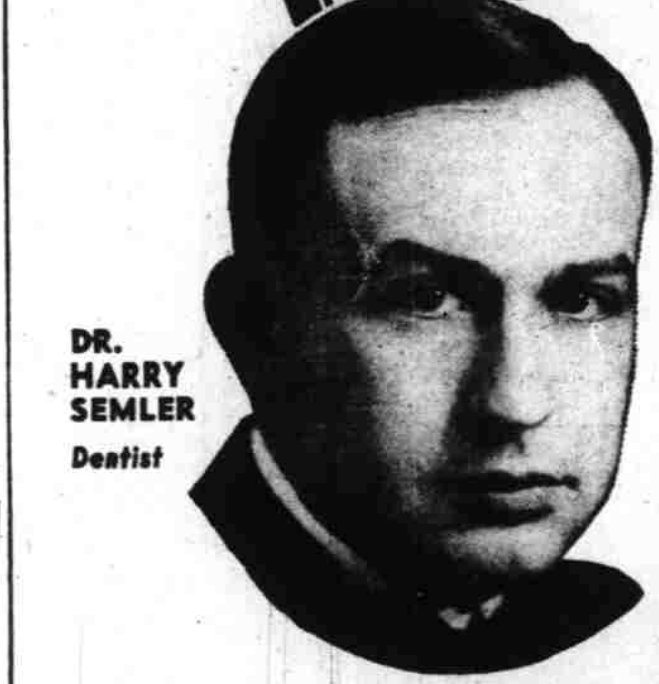


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