

## Gold Pieces Unearthed at Pond

(Continued from page 1)

coins. Although the detectors were used around the dam and other spots in the area, no more was located.

The gold pieces were found apparently in approximately the same location where the boys found the \$5 gold pieces years ago.

### Some May Be in Dam

It is possible that some of the gold that may have been hidden there has been scooped into the dam itself, either at the time of original construction or in the silt removing and restoration operations.

Mrs. Ralph Thompson added some interesting background on Press Campbell Thompson, who is believed to have hidden the gold. He was the uncle of Ralph Thompson, who is one of Heppner's well-known citizens.

Press Thompson homesteaded on what is now a part of the Greenup place, and he had a house, barn, and other buildings at or near the present pond site. A creek runs through there and springs feed the area.

The homesteader is credited by some as bringing the first sheep to the county. He also ran cattle and at one time hired quite a crew of men. While he was a bachelor, he was not a recluse. He at one time owned a general store in Heppner and was a shareholder in a bank, Mrs. Thompson said.

He believed in banks but may have kept a considerable amount of gold on hand because of the distance to town and the fact that he needed it to pay his help.

### Money Under Rug

One story Mrs. Thompson mentioned hearing is that when men came to be paid, he rolled back a rug and took money hidden there to pay them.

Eventually, Press Thompson had a stroke. He attempted to tell his brother (Ralph Thompson's father) where the gold was hidden, but because he was paralyzed, could never reveal the location, Mrs. Thompson said.

Ralph Thompson was born near this place, in another canyon in the same area.

The homestead site of Press Thompson was sold eventually to George Curran, then became the Kilkenny ranch, and is now operated by the Greenups.

The True West article quoted an interview with an Irigon woman who as a child knew Press Thompson and rode by his house on the way to school. On her twelfth birthday, the man gave her a \$10 gold piece. She said that he told her he had been a successful miner before moving here and recalled that he took the coin from a wood box, about the shape and size of a cigar box.

This article said that the treasure is reputed to be \$36,000 or more, but Mrs. Thompson said that she does not understand how anyone could know what might have been hidden there.

The spot where the 28 gold coins were found is mucky because of heavy water content from the underground springs. Greenup said that they were bright and shiny when located, except for a little discoloration of one or two pieces, and were all in good condition.

The Minnesotans declined to give their names when they were contacted by the writer. They said that they did not want their pictures taken and declined all publicity. They camped at the site in their Volkswagen station wagon.

Shortly after, Greenup settled with them by dividing the coins, and they have departed from the area.

The pond and dam represent a sizeable construction, and if anyone undertook to do a thorough job of searching for additional treasure it would be a costly and exhaustive operation. The pond is of considerably more value to Greenup than a good many times the value of gold found to date.

Mrs. Greenup said, "I've probably walked over that gold a hundred times."

Probably the least excited of any persons about the whole thing are the Greenups themselves who have been bothered so much by others that it has become a nuisance to them. But they remain cordial and friendly when contacted on the matter—at least to the home folks.

Walking over the ground even brings some feeling of excitement and one has to resist the urge to dig.

As we told John Venard, manager of the First National Bank, while walking over the site with Greenup Friday afternoon, "Don't just walk along, John; kick up some dirt."

## Smoker and Dance Slated at Spray

Spray Rodeo Association invites the public to its Smoker and Dance scheduled Saturday, March 23, at the Spray High School Gym, Mrs. Joann Griffith of the association states.

The smoker will feature AAU boxers of Eugene and Portland, as well as some local bouts. Admission will be \$1.25 for adults and 75c for high school students. It will start at 7:30 p.m.

Dance following the smoker will feature western music, and supper will be served at intermission by the Spray High School student body. Adult admission is \$1.25 and high school students are admitted for \$1 each.

In past years, these events have drawn good support from the Heppner area, and this is very much appreciated, Mrs. Griffith said. Funds are used in promotion of the Spray rodeo which will be in May.

### Kathy Melby Serves On Dance Court

Kathy Melby, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Melby, was presented as a member of the Intercollegiate Knight court of Pacific University at the recent IK Ball.

Miss Melby, one of five finalists in the IK Duchess Pageant, is a freshman at Pacific majoring in music education.

The five finalists were chosen from 11 contestants by members of the Intercollegiate Knights. The young women were rated on personality, character, talent, beauty, and conversational ability.

## Private Parties Offer to Buy Impoundment Site

A group of private investors has offered to buy the Kelly Prairie site for a fish impoundment and hold it until such a time as the county is able to exercise an option to purchase the site, County Judge Paul Jones said Monday.

Purchase price of the property is \$45,000. The judge said the investors recognized the importance of the reservoir project to Morrow county and made the offer in the hope of seeing the project culminated.

Recently the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation said that it could not participate with federal funds, which had been counted on by the county and the State Game Commission, because it was felt that this would obligate the U. S. Forest Service to maintain recreational and sanitary facilities due to the fact that 85% of the shoreline of the some 500 acre lake would be on National Forest lands. Until that time it appeared that development of the site would start within a year or two.

The judge said that the county court is considering the proposal of the private parties. Meanwhile, the court met one day last week with representatives of the State Game Commission to see what could be done towards development of the project, and one thing suggested during the meeting was that the county acquire the property.

The present option on the property expires April 4. The county court is also continuing to explore the possibility that an impoundment at Penland Prairie be developed as an alternative to Kelly. This would be only about 150 acres, about a third the size of the proposed Kelly impoundment but five times as large as Bull Prairie reservoir.

A number of meetings have been held with the Forest Service on the proposals and additional negotiations are being held with them, the judge said. Also in the way of recreational development, the court is planning to arrange a meeting in the near future with the Corps of Engineers, State Game Agents Glen Ward and Jack Meland, and representatives of the Boardman Park district concerning the proposal that the county take over the park and boat basin at Willows. The park will be formed with the rising of the Umatilla reservoir of John Day Dam, and construction work is now in progress on the park by the Corps of Engineers.

### Colleen Pinckney Dies in Kennewick

Mrs. Robert (Colleen) Pinckney, 40, sister of E. H. (Tad) Miller, Jr., of Lexington, died unexpectedly at her home on Monday, March 4, apparently from a heart ailment.

Funeral services were Thursday, March 7, at the Einans Memorial chapel, Richland, Wash.

Mrs. Pinckney was born and reared in Heppner and received her elementary and secondary education in Lexington and Heppner schools. She was a graduate of Heppner High school.

She had suffered from a heart ailment but only recently had undergone a medical checkup and appeared to be in good condition. She was home alone at the time of her death, since her husband was working, and died in bed, her brother said.

Surviving are the husband, Robert Pinckney of Kennewick; two sons, Ronald, a freshman at Willamette University, and Scott, a sophomore at Kennewick High school; her father, E. Harvey Miller, of Portland; two brothers, Tad Miller of Lexington and James B. Miller of Pendleton; and a sister, Miss Marlan Miller, who teaches at Oregon College, Monmouth.

### HOSPITAL NEWS

Patients who were admitted to Pioneer Memorial hospital during the past week, and are still receiving medical care, are the following: Bill Braman, Heppner; Jim Lindsay, Ione; Thomas Steagall, Lexington; Marvin Massey, Olex; Elsa Mott, Heppner, and Mary Glavey, Heppner.

Those who received medical care, and were later dismissed, were Pauline Gates, Arlington, and Helen Salter, Ione, transferred to Pendleton hospital.

Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin B. Hamilton of Spray are parents of a second daughter, Cheryl Renee, born on Friday, March 8, weighing 6 lb., 8 oz. She joins a sister at home. Grandparents are Virginia Kopsinsky of Estacada, and Leonard Kopsinsky of Prineville, and Mr. and Mrs. Al Pentecost of Condon.

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## Friend of Mike Bengé Writes from Vietnam

No further information has been received here on Mike Bengé, who has been reported missing in Vietnam since the Viet Cong overran Ban Me Thuot, where he was stationed, according to his sister, Mrs. Matt Hughes.

A letter to Mrs. Terrel Bengé from Gerald C. Hickey, however, explains details that occurred prior to the time that the lone man was reported missing. Hickey, who worked with the Rand Corporation and was serving in Vietnam, had been a friend of Bengé's for four years.

The letter, written under date of February 13, is as follows: "Your son, Mike, may have mentioned my name in letters from Ban Me Thuot. We have been friends for the past four years, and during my field trips to Kontum in 1964-65 and since then to Ban Me Thuot, I've seen a lot of Mike. He was a great help to me in gathering data on the social and economic aspects of the Highlanders' societies. In Ban Me Thuot he always extended the warmest hospitality, and at the time of the attack on January 31, I shared a room with him. The day before, we had all gone to Buon Kram where his adoptive father, Y Bham Nie and his wife broke out the jars of rice wine and invited us to eat with them.

"Among the Highlanders, both at Kontum and Ban Me Thuot, Mike was very much liked, and he did a great deal for the villagers. In fact, he did a tremendous job for the American government, and if we had more people like him, I don't think things would have gotten this bad. Mike did many things in an unconventional way, but he achieved a lot more than most U. S. government people do. Among the Americans who have been around a long time (like me), Mike is known as one of the most effective people in the provinces.

"It was his great concern for the Rhade that made him try to get to Buon Ale the morning after the attack. During the attack we were behind sandbags on the balcony (Mike had arranged a defense of the villa), and it was clear that Buon Ale, south of Ban Me Thuot, was the scene of heavy fighting.

"First thing the next morning, Mike got into one of the Scouts and disappeared. We figured that he went to Buon Ale-A as he had many Rhade friends there. As the day wore on (we were busy trying to organize the refugees coming in from areas of Ban Me Thuot that were burning) we began to worry, particularly since Buon Ale-A was not accessible—fighting continued in that area. I left Ban Me Thuot for Nhatrang late the following afternoon, and there still was no news of Mike. It was only when I got back to Saigon on February 3 that I heard about Mike being captured and the sad news about the missionaries in Buon Ale-A.

"I have a very strong feeling that he will not be harmed; the fact that it was announced by Radio Hanoi is reassuring, for they never have done anything to any of the civilian captives. Also, they undoubtedly are well aware that Mike is very well liked among the Rhade, both in Ban Me Thuot and in the villages, and to do him harm would be very adverse propaganda for the Viet Cong. It may sound strange, but the Viet Cong probably appreciate the good projects that Mike has realized. In the long run, his good reputation will be his best protection.

"Do have courage, and don't let yourself become discouraged. People here will do all they can to get Mike released. If there is anything I can do for you, please do not hesitate to ask, and I will pass on any news we get concerning Mike."

## Plans Underway For Church Auction

A planning meeting of committee chairmen and other workers for the Ione United Church of Christ's sixth annual Auction and Barbecue Dinner was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Keith Rea, co-chairmen, Monday night, March 4.

This annual event is scheduled for Saturday, June 1, at Willows Grange hall, with the auction to begin at 10:30 a.m. begun in 1963, it has become a most successful program and is looked forward to each year.

A special attraction again this year will be the Country Store, with many handmade articles and homebaked foods, plus boutique articles. Chairman of the Country Store is Mrs. Garry Tullis, with Mrs. Clell Rea in charge of food, and Mrs. Leiland McKinney in charge of fancy work.

Articles for auction are needed and anyone desiring to contribute merchandise, old or new, is asked to contact Bill Rietmann, 422-7296; Dan Bristol, 422-7122; Lindsay Kincaid, 422-7418, or Eldon Tucker, 422-7182. Articles can be picked up any time from now on and will be stored until auction date.

Fun for the children and adults also will be furnished by Norman Nelson, who is again supplying his Model T Ford for free rides for the youngsters. High school youth are planning a fish pond, plus a snack bar, with Mrs. Norman Nelson as chairman.

Mrs. Pete Cannon, chairman of the antique sale, has already collected some valuable antiques, and requests that anyone who wishes to donate antiques that need repairs should get in touch with her. Mrs. Bill Rietmann and Mrs. Bob Rietmann, chairmen of ticket sales, state that prices for

## Lincoln City Has Better 'Soaker'

When the Gazette-Times recently proclaimed 28 inch of rain on Monday, February 19, as "No Joke, Good Soak" in a weather report headline, it caught the eye of Mrs. Fred (Betty) Gimbel of Lincoln City, and she has sent a clipping from the paper there.

On the same day, February 19, Lincoln City had 4.33 inches of rain. (How lucky can you get!) In two previous days, a total of 2.73 inches was recorded. Total rainfall for the week was 7.06.

"We could well have used your headline but no one felt like joking on Monday the 19th," she said. "Do you know we've become so acquainted it really has to pour before we take too much notice."

The Gimbels, former Heppner residents, send best regards to their many friends here. Fred Gimbel is with Pacific Power Company and was formerly lineman-agent here.

the barbecue dinner to be served at noon will be \$1.75 for adults and high school students, \$1.00 for grade school children, and no charge for pre-school children.

Other committee chairmen besides those mentioned, are Milton Morgan, arrangements; Pete Cannon and Alfred Nelson, barbecue; the church deaconesses, dinner; Mrs. Bob Jepsen, publicity; Earl McCabe, meat wrapping; and Roy W. Lindstrom, meat carving.

### Pvt. Ron Croker Completes Training

Marine Private Ronald L. Croker, son of Mr. and Mrs. James

## Groups Combine Efforts to Stage Spring Carnival

Spring is just around the corner, and with it comes plans for the annual Band Carnival, which will be held this year on Saturday, April 20, announces Mrs. Wallace Wolff, president of the Heppner Elementary PTA.

This annual spring fund raising event will be co-sponsored by the Elementary school PTA unit, the high school PTA, and the Heppner school bands, under the direction of Arnie Hedman.

The carnival provides something for everyone in the family, with a family dinner being planned for 5:30 p.m., with the carnival following from 6:30-10 o'clock. A dance is being planned from 10-1 a.m., with music to be announced at a later date. Committees for the scheduled events have not yet been announced.

Proceeds derived from the evening's efforts will be divided between the band, the high school PTA and the grade school PTA units for scholarships and other needed student uses.

Publicity committee assigned to promote public attention to this year's carnival are Mrs. Robert Laughlin, who will make and distribute posters, Mrs. Wolff, and Mrs. Forrest Burkenbine.

H. Croker of Monument, completed two weeks of training under simulated combat conditions in the fundamentals of day and night patrolling, employment of infantry weapons, survival methods and assault tactics at Camp Pendleton, Calif.

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