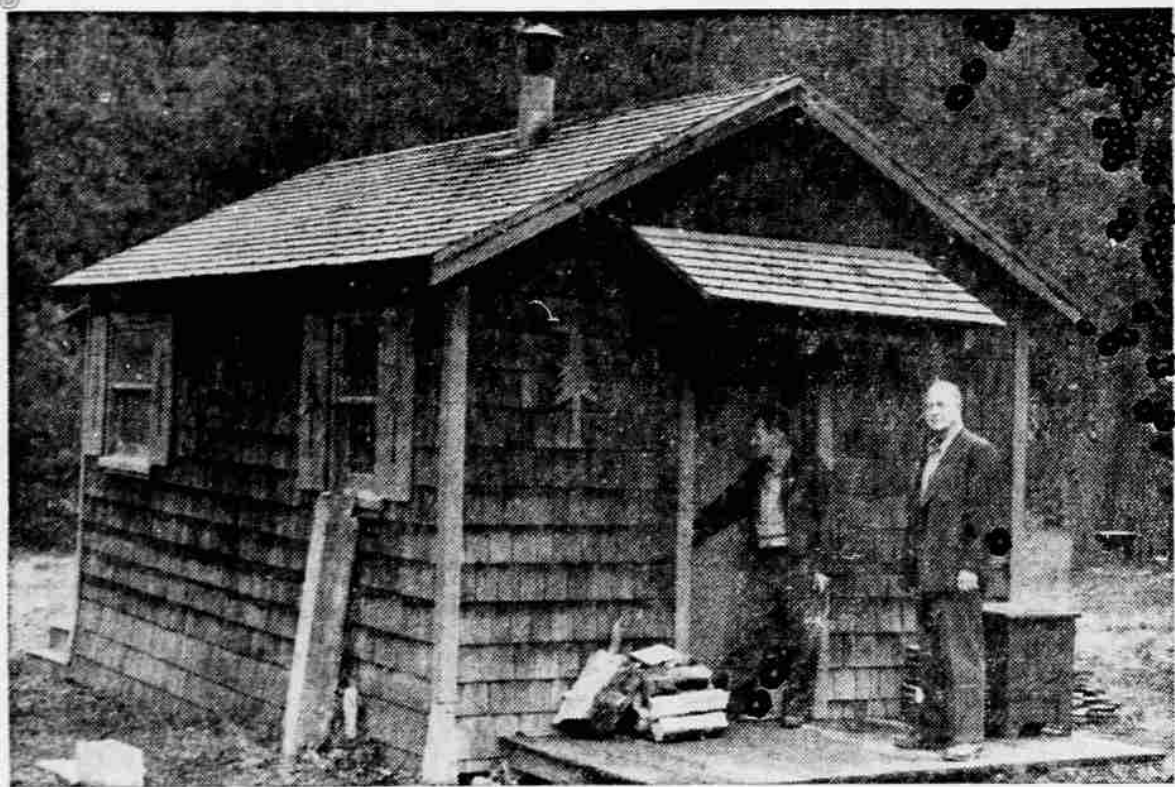


Hobby of McKee Man Grows Into Business



TIE FACTORY — This tiny one-room cabin at McKee trailer park on the Applegate is where partners Kenn Paine, left, and Mike Wilmoth manufacture their popular bolo neckties that are decorated with polished pieces of southern Oregon stone. The two men and their wives, and often the Wilmoth

children, work long hours around a big wood stove polishing the stones and assembling the ties for distribution over a wide area of Oregon and California. One reason for their popularity is the individuality of the design and color of the stones. It would be impossible to cut two alike, Paine said.



BOLO TIES — Christmas ties in this area may take on a "new look" this year in the form of the popular bolo neck ties decorated with polished semi-precious stones, which are manufactured by Kenn Paine and Mike Wilmoth at McKee bridge trailer camp on the Applegate. In the picture above, some of the stones in the endless variety of shape and color are shown before mounting. Four

of the completed ties, boxed and ready for shipment, are shown on the right. The two ties on the left are decorated with slices of thunder eggs. Other types of stone used are Oregon agate, obsidian, jade, jasper and petrified wood. The men have been selling the ties to retail stores in Oregon and California at the rate of over 400 per week.

Ex-Medford Man Buys Trailer Camp To Work on Rocks

By MAUDE ZIEGLER
Mail Tribune Correspondent

About 18 months ago Kenn Paine of Medford, who wanted to "get away from it all," bought the McKee trailer camp and cottages on the Applegate from Ben Twiss so he could relax and pursue his hobby of collecting rocks.

Whatever plans Paine had for taking life easy never were realized because his "hobby" has turned into a thriving business and he and his partner, Mike Wilmoth, have little time to do anything else.

It all started when Paine traded a geiger counter and scintillator for rock cutting equipment. His friend, Wilmoth, joined him in the venture and both families plunged manfully into the business of polishing gems. Now the four hobbyists are in the midst of a growing industry that has overflowed most of the cottages at camp McKee and is bringing a steady flow of out-of-state dollars into southern Oregon.

Chief Product

Their chief product is a commercial "bolo" necktie, clipped with a polished semi-precious stone from southern Oregon.

Early in October Wilmoth loaded up his car with packaged neckties and several hundred pounds of southern Oregon rocks to trade for gems from other areas. He travels every week to points in Oregon, California and Nevada, contacting retail merchants and selling more than 400 ties on a trip. But lately Wilmoth has had to stay home to help catch up on orders, while another man takes his route.

The industry is so new that a passerby never would guess that a few shingled cabins house the gear for cutting, grinding and polishing rough stones. Paine says he calls his place the "Applegate Rock Shop," but he hasn't had time to put up a sign yet, nor to build a shop.

Cardboard Boxes

Dozens of cardboard boxes and tubs stored around the camp contain the rocks and gems in the rough. There's beautiful pink rhodonite, jade, agate, pastelite, jasper, and gold and silver sheen obsidians and petrified wood as well as a petrified dinosaur bone weighing about 50 pounds, which is 200 million years old. The bone came from Southern Utah. There is a 200 pound limb of petrified palm tree, eight inches in length.

Other stones include mahogany obsidian, obsidian nodules, and thunder eggs, which are very popular and sell at an average price of \$2 per pound. Chunks of petrified periwinkle from an ancient ocean bed in Arizona are in the age range of the dinosaur bone. Much of the rock is from Lakeview, Ore. About 90 per cent of the collection the Paines and Wilmoths have they collected themselves.

Gather Rocks

They gather from stream beds, and when the source ends they take to the adjacent hillsides, seeking the source from which the stream was supplied. There are some nice gems in every river and stream in southern Oregon, including the Applegate, Paine said.

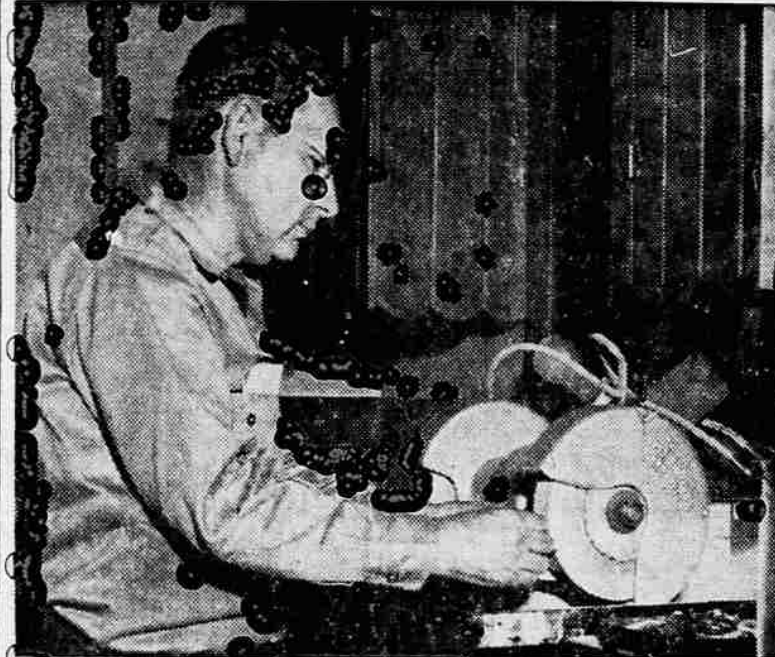
Wilmoth, who has been a salesman most of his life, with the Volkswagen shop in Medford before coming to the Applegate, and takes to the business of selling ties. "I've never seen anything that sells on sight like these," he said. He has had about four years in uranium business and was president of Colorado Plateau mining and developing Inc., at Norwood, Colo.

As first, as Paine applied a chemical to analyze his stones, Wilmoth wanted to smash the rocks to see if they contained chrome, platinum, or manganese. Although he is selling stones at present, he sees great possibilities of mining being developed into a sizeable business in the Applegate area.

Repair Shop

Paine formerly operated Kenn's Repair shop for radio and appliances in Grants Pass and later moved to Medford. With his knowledge of mechanics he has developed much of his own machinery, some of which is new to the rock cutting business, speeding up production and enabling them to sell their product more cheaply.

A good deal of his equipment has been converted from wood working sets. He has a table saw with a removable top, a ripper fence, and miter gauge. Perfection of their product is the aim of these four rock enthusiasts, and long hours of precision work go into producing a tie. First a stone is sliced, cut into pieces, and trimmed with a trim saw. Then it is shaped on a grinder and is ready for the rough sanding, which will be followed by two more sandings. Then the final polishing is done



SHAPES STONE — Kenn Paine, above, shows how a common power sand stone is used to shape the slices of stone that form the decoration for the bolo neckties that are being made at McKee bridge camp on the Applegate. A good many of the designs come out as "free form" while others are made into shapes resembling arrowheads, pistols or special emblems. Sometimes the rough outside shape of the stone is used to form part of the design. Paine's family for three generations before him were jewelers in the east. His hobby, before it got out of hand and turned into a thriving business, was rock collecting.



GRINDS STONE — One of the processes in the manufacture of bolo neckties being made by Mike Wilmoth and Kenn Paine on the Applegate is the rough grinding of the slices of semi-precious stones, being demonstrated here by Wilmoth. The machine is a wood-type belt sander that was converted to grinding stone by the addition of a silicon carbide belt. Wilmoth had a regular sales route that he toured weekly until recently but he sold so many ties that he had to come off the road to help out on the manufacturing end.



FINAL POLISHING — Mrs. Mike Wilmoth, left, and Mrs. Kenn Paine have to don protective clothing when they work on the horizontal polishing lap that puts the final finish on the stones. Water is used on the wheel to aid in cutting. Another hazard in using the

wheel is grinding the skin off one's fingertips and both women have given up wearing long fingernails. The Wilmoth children, Gloria, 10, and Benjamin, 8, also help out in the manufacture of the neckties and are eager "rock-hounds" themselves.

which process may be repeated several times.

Desirable Qualities

Only the stones that have a certain desirable quality and shape are used, Wilmoths says, and since his wife has a particular flair for recognizing beauty of pattern and shape and matching color to a particular tie, that job is hers. She sits at the muddy wet shaper wearing her rain coat and has the time of her life, Wilmoth said. The grinder is cooled with water, which also keeps the stone free of stone grit.

The entire business means creating a thing of beauty from every slice of stone, and heart and soul go into this work — a cylindrical periwinkle may form one pattern of interest, while an arrow-shaped piece of obsidian may form another. Mrs. Wilmoth prefers cutting odd shapes such as a pistol outline to make uniform designs.

They set many of the stones with Elk and Masonic and other popular lodge emblems. Metal portions are fastened to the stone, which is clipped to the tie. They are packaged at Wilmoth's house, and are ready for market.

Assembles Belts

Paine assembles his own belts for grinding gems, buying 150 foot rolls of silicon carbide belt. Present equipment is capable of turning out 1500 stones a month. Mr. and Mrs. Paine attended the "Gemorama" in Los Angeles in July and there their idea for adding a stone to a bolo tie was perfected. They made a few samples, which were accepted by friends and relatives with enthusiasm.

The two partners desire to keep their business on a family basis, for they fear they will encounter the same complexities of life which already had sent them in search of quiet and peaceful living. The Wilmoth children, Gloria, ten, Benjamin, eight, and

Faith, three, have become rock hounds, too, and often do a little valuable trading.

Paine will have advertising in national magazines soon. They have been requested to display their games in a resort museum near Marysville, Calif., which will show Oregon and California stone. Paine expects to set up machinery so the two women can do the work, and he will be out gathering stones again. He plans to sell jade by the pound, and has sent samples to be analyzed for ore content.

Tumbler Polisher

A power drive from an antiquated fish screen will be made into a tumbler to polish stones for novelty jewelry. Wilmoth draws attention to the interesting study presented in the geological formation and changing character of the stones, such as jasper that has become agatized, and opalized wood that has resulted from entrance of chemicals.

Paine has devised a set of compact wooden carrying cases for Wilmoth to use on his sales trips. He also designed display cards of red and green velvet. Medford stores carrying the ties include Sandler's, Weisfield's, Gibson's, Maddy's, and Robinson's Clothing store. The Oregon Inn at Grants Pass also carries the product as does the J. C. Penney store in Ashland. To Wilmoth that is not just another sales job. "I am selling beauty that has been created by hand," he said, "and whenever I show the stones I enjoy them all over again."

Paine's family before him has been in the jewelry business for three generations in Massachusetts, and Mrs. Paine said he had never given any thought to engaging in the business for himself, but it has just happened to him.

Paine purchases genuine leather throngs from a tannery in Portland and dyes them for ma-

Water Districts To Elect Officers

Commissioners in the Kings

Highway and Maple Park Water districts will be elected at annual elections Monday, Dec. 2.

Donald L. Bryan is candidate to succeed himself in the Kings Highway Water district for a five-year term. He is now secretary of the board of commissioners.

Polling place will be at 1833 South Peach st., the Wayne Troxell residence and hours will be between 2 and 8 p.m.

Three commissioners will be elected in the Maple Park Water district. They are Donald Casper, seeking a five-year term; Gail Durbin, seeking a four-year term; and Mrs. Geraldine Graham, seeking a one-year term.

Casper is seeking the office vacated by J. T. Neff who decided not to seek reelection; Durbin is seeking to fill the unexpired term of LaDale Herrman, who moved from the district; and Mrs. Graham is seeking the unexpired term of William Hughes, who also moved from the district.

Polling place will be at the Graham Electric Service, 1205 Sage rd., and hours will be between 2 and 8 p.m.

Ford Scholarship Won By L.A. Girl

Detroit — Frances Brown, 17, Los Angeles, won a full four-year college scholarship over 134 others in Ford Motor Co.'s "National Teen-Age Press Conference" competition.

Miss Brown was one of the high school students who attended the conference Oct. 15-16 as representatives of major newspapers on the occasion of the motor firm's 1938 model introduction for the press.

She represented the Los Angeles Herald and Express. The contest was based on news stories written by the young reporters at the conference, where they had interviews with top company officials, and on their grades and answers on a lengthy questionnaire.

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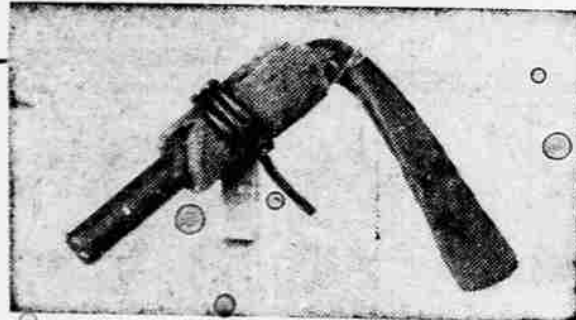
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This Week's HISTORY MYSTERY



Can You Identify This Object?

CLUE: In 1855 this object was instrumental in delivering a message from Charles F. Johnson of Oregon City to Thomas J. Dryer, then editor of the Oregonian.

ANSWER: The object is one of the early, crude insulators used on the first telegraph line between Portland and Corvallis. The line, which ran through Butteville, was erected in 1854. The first message was sent Nov. 16, 1855, by Charles F. Johnson, chief promoter of the telegraph company, to Thomas Dryer, Oregonian editor.

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Ashland Dec. 3rd, 8 p.m. Women's Civic Club
Medford Dec. 4th, 8 p.m. Sr. High School, Room 244
Grants Pass Dec. 5th, 8 p.m. Larry's Drive In Banquet Rm
Crescent City Dec. 6th, 8 p.m. Del Norte Hi School, rm. 8

Sponsored by Medford Branch National on the Beam Club

Teenagers Gather To Work On Code Of Conduct Rules

Salem — About 300 young people gathered here Saturday for the state's first youth conference. The high school students heard Gov. Robert D. Holmes tell them they were one resource the state could not afford to waste.

Then they got down to work on a code of conduct for high school students which, when approved, by the delegates, will be presented to the Governor.

The code on which the delegates are working is adapted from a Minnesota youth code dealing with driving, drinking, smoking, dating and other topics of importance to teen-agers.

Dr. H. C. Chamberlain, a psychiatric consultant and youth leader from Sacramento, Calif., also addressed the group.

The code deals harshly with teen-aging smoking and drinking — prohibiting both on grounds they are illegal.

Support Withdrawn For Guard Armory

Portland — Plans for a five-million-dollar National Guard armory in Portland suffered a setback Friday with the announcement by Maj. Gen. Thomas Rilea of the Oregon National Guard that the federal government had withdrawn its offer of financial support for the program.

Rilea revealed that the National Guard bureau in Washington, D.C., had once set aside \$2,080,000 for half the cost of the building but that it has withdrawn the fund because Portland and the state of Oregon failed to provide money for the other half.

Rilea said that whether the sum would be restored would depend on economic trends and the revival of interest in national defense.

Rilea asked the city council to move ahead with its plan to put a fund-raising measure on the ballot next May on the chance that such action would prompt restoration of the fund by the bureau.

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