

Ed Swingle's metal-detecting treasure chest includes musket balls, silver cuff links, jewelry and a sleigh bell.

Staff photos by Jack Milton

... And discovers this 1926 penny.

Buried relics lure metal-detecting hobbyists

By Shoshana Hoose
Staff Writer

THEY look like Martians, descending on the beach all wired to control boxes and headphones. While others laze in the sun, they keep busy as beavers, sweeping their metal detectors across the sand in search of buried treasure.

It seems an odd way to relax. Recreation for the restless, and for those obsessed with hoarding pennies.

But talk to avid treasure-hunters, as they call themselves, and you will discover metal detecting has more to it than meets the eye.

Many hobbyists are far more interested in unearthing military artifacts from the Civil War, colonial coins or other relics than in retrieving spare change. Some spend hours in the library poring over old newspapers and history books as they seek out the locations of forts, fairgrounds and inns which have long since disappeared.

Said Ed Swingle of South Portland, whose prize finds include an ornate sleigh bell and a set of antique, silver cuff links, "The archaeologist in me wants to find some old things."

Popularity surges

Metal detecting began as a hobby in the 1930s. It has enjoyed a surge in popularity during the past four years or so, according

to John Fetner, sales manager for Kellyco, a Florida mail order house which sells metal detecting equipment.

Fetner credits the growing interest largely to the discovery of the 17th century galleon, Atocha, which sank off the Florida Keys with more than \$400 million of precious metals in its hold.

New models of metal detectors also have made the hobby more attractive by eliminating much of the trial and error. Computerized detectors can screen out trash and virtually tell the treasure hunter what is in the ground.

About 70 percent of all treasure hunters are men, said Fetner, but he added that women increasingly are picking up the hobby. Enthusiasts point out that it is good

exercise, and one of the few hobbies which can pay for itself.

Hundreds of metal detector clubs now meet throughout the country, although none apparently in Maine. Eight magazines devote themselves to treasure hunting (or, as they write it, TH'ing). Metal detectors and archaeologists even organized a lobbying effort to open up more public land for their hobby.

Catching on in Maine

While no one knows how many Mainers spend their free time searching for treasures, anecdotal reports suggest the numbers are increasing.

Please Turn to Next Page

doctor. He doesn't have a lot of two-hour slots open even then."

I wait and shortly the phone is picked up again and I hear the dentist's voice. "If you can't make it this Thursday," he says, "I'll have to schedule you after March. My schedule is crammed full."

"I wouldn't break an appointment if it were anything other than bridge."

"My receptionist told me."

"Of course, if we don't find a substitute for the woman who is thoughtlessly running off to pick up her husband coming in from someplace overseas, I could keep the appointment."

"And when will you know about that?" he says.

"I'm making the calls right now to find a sub. I should be able to find someone."

"And how long is the bridge game?"

"Look, Doctor," I say, "even if I skipped the lunch, I'd still be needed to play from two to four which is the time of the appointment I'm breaking."

"You play exactly between two and four?"

"That's right."

"I'm free between two and four Thursday," he says. "Where's the game?"

Marge Eliscu is a Telegram columnist who lives in Poland.

They made Whoopie!

Bakery employees retain fond memories of famous pie

By Allene White

Do Telegram readers know anything about whoopie pie history? You bet they do.

In a recent column, readers were asked if they could tell us when and where the whoopie pie recipe originated.

The response was overwhelming.

While not everyone knew the story of its origin, most who wrote could remember not only when they had their last whoopie pie, but where they ate it.

An astonishing number recalled the Berwick Cake Co. of Roxbury, Mass., which baked the original and authentic Whoopie! Pie (the name is patented) until 1977, when the firm went out of business.

One of our letter writers was Mazie O'Reilly.

When Mazie went to work for the Berwick Cake Co. in 1926, the whoopie pie had yet to be invented. "It hit the conveyor belt a year later," she says.

The price then: a nickel, retail.

As a fröster and packer, Mazie could have eaten

as many pies as she liked, but "I allowed myself only one a day — I'd send word down the line, 'Frost two, bottom halves only.' And that's what I'd have for lunch."

Eddie O'Reilly, a shipper, and Mazie Brown, packer, were married in 1941. Eddie had been at Berwick since 1923 and when he left, nearly half a century later, he liked to say that his job was "making sure that all the truckers heading Down East had their quota of Whoopie Pies."

On retirement, Mazie and Eddie moved Down East of Boston, too — to Summit Street at Old Orchard Beach.

Fond memories

They have fond memories of the Berwick Cake Co. and of the friends who worked with them. It was a small, privately owned company, says Mazie, averaging 75 employees, who were proud of their reputation for quality baked goods.

"No one knew anything about additives then," says Mazie. "When I buy a whoopie pie now, it doesn't taste the same."

Please Turn to Next Page



File photo

A pile of whoopie pies. Many readers fondly remember the Berwick Cake Co.'s version.

Whoopie pie history whips up sweet memories

Continued from first page this section

The Berwick Cake Co. actually began in 1887 as the Oak Grove Farm Creamery in the Roxbury section of Boston.

William Parks, the company's first president, heard about a particular sponge cake that was being sold at the North Berwick railway station, a point in Maine about halfway between Boston and Portland.

The trains, all steam-driven, had to stop at North Berwick to take on water. Passengers who got off to exercise their legs and grab a bite to eat would rave about the sponge cake sold by the wife of a railway employee there. So Parks purchased the recipe, renamed his firm The Berwick Cake Co. and went into production turning out both pound and sponge cakes.

Around 1925, Parks and his master baker, Bert Eaton, decided to "do something different" and the result was the invention of the Devil Dog, for which they had a special cocoa flour blended in New Jersey and shipped to them in Massachusetts.

The first Devil Dog, marketed in 1928, had a chewy brownie-like texture that we might not recognize today, with a marshmallow filling. It was patented, and later sold to the Drake Bakeries. Even though the product is still on the market today in a somewhat altered form, the Devil Dog's real claim to fame, according to many people, is that it was the forerunner of the Whoopie! Pie.

Instant success

Mazie O'Reilly remembers that the whoopie pie became the Berwick Cake Co.'s best seller almost immediately.

"I wrapped them in waxed paper when they first came out," she says, "eight to a box."

The man who received much of the credit for the whoopie pie's success was William Egan, now of Quincy, Mass., who invented the creme filling.

This filling, according to William Goodale, who was with the company for 82 years and succeeded William Parks as president, was the secret of the success of the whoopie pie.

Goodale, now a vigorous 81 and living in Milton, Mass., still remembers every ingredient put into the creme filling that was made in 340-quart batches.

He talked about it for us by phone recently, interrupting a game of gin rummy with "my young sister — she's just 75." He had just come in, he said, from 18 holes of golf.

The filling, he said proudly, "was made of pure fondant, with the best ingredients that were available."



Staff photo by Merry Farnum

Eddie and Mazie O'Reilly of Old Orchard Beach remember the Berwick Cake Co.'s whoopie pie heyday.

"It was boiled to 240 degrees, cooled, then rolled in a fondant machine in order to achieve the desired texture."

The cake itself was made with fresh eggs and Dutch water-processed cocoa, using a recipe for a high-ratio cake that is particularly moist and sweet. (In this type of cake recipe, the weight of the sugar exceeds the weight of the flour; a special "high ratio" vegetable shortening is needed to hold the extra sugar.) This particular recipe turns out one of the best (and most expensive) cakes known today.

It seems impossible, looking back, that a profit could have been made by selling a real Whoopie! Pie for only 5 cents, even 60 years ago.

But Goodale remembers the cost breakdown perfectly: "Three cents went to the company, one cent to the distributor, and one cent to the retailer."

Cantor makes whoopie

"What a memory," wrote John K. Jenkins of

Harrison, "licking completely around the edge before taking the first bite."

"I brought one to school in the fourth grade and my teacher made me eat it in front of the class as punishment. In reality, I was the envy of the class!"

In 1927, Eddie Cantor was starring in a musical production in Boston called "Whoopie." It is not clear exactly which came first — the song, or the pie — but during one performance, whoopie pies were tossed out to the audience while Eddie Cantor sang "Making Whoopie."

The timing couldn't have been better: the whoopie pie was well and truly launched. Its fat round shape so convenient to hold, the delectable creme filling, the light and chocolaty cake, all combined to make it a favorite throughout the New England states.

The Berwick Cake Co. closed its doors in 1977. "When I heard it was closing," said Evelyn Gabriel Morton, a former employee who lives in Newton, Mass., "I went right down to Roxbury to the plant to cry with my friends."

Annual reunions

Now the organizer and force behind the Berwick Cake Co. Alumni Association, Morton arranges an annual get-together, inviting around 30 people, among them the O'Reillys, who are still around and can remember making whoopies.

After 1977, there were no real Whoopie! Pies made ever again, says Morton. However, recipes abound in community cookbooks all over New England that are named for the original delicacy that we all remember so well.

It would be impossible to produce a high-ratio chocolate cake, its batter dropped onto 36"-by-22" sheet pans and baked in a commercial oven from 4 1/2 to 5 minutes, two of the cakes put together with fondant creme stirred in a 340-quart machine, and sell the finished product for 5 cents each.

It's doubtful whether a mass-production bakery could even turn out such a quality product nowadays, but if it did, the price for a single whoopie pie would be at least a couple of dollars.

And at that, it would be a bargain.

And here's how to make 'em

Although the Berwick company began making the pie in 1926, the first recipe for whoopie pies that could be baked at home appears to have been published in the Manchester, N.H. Union Leader sometime in the 1950s.

This was the Union Leader version, as sent to us by Susan Wilhelm of Drésden.

Whoopie Pies

1/2 cup shortening
1 cup sugar
1 egg
2 cups flour
1/2 cup cocoa
1/4 tsp. each soda and salt
1 cup milk
1 teaspoon vanilla

Filling
3/4 cup shortening
1/2 cup confectioners sugar
1/2 cup marshmallow fluff

Cream sugar and shortening; add egg. Sift dry ingredients and add alternately with milk and vanilla. Drop batter onto greased cookie sheet in equal spoonfuls. Bake at 425 degrees for 7 minutes. When cool, spread with filling and put together.

Allene White is the Sunday Telegram's regular food columnist. She lives at Blue Hill Falls.

Italian Tapestry

In deep, rich, antique colors adds texture and pattern to our Urban Tote.

The Urban Tote (19"x15"x5") is roomy enough to carry a day's worth of gear. We make it in sturdy canvas with leather grips and zipper. The tapestry front panel is a deeply gusseted, baised compartment that is big enough for legal size file folders. For "hands free" carrying it also has an adjustable shoulder strap.

\$64.50

H. Lush, deep green floral with rosy pastels. 1 Persian carpet design, navy background with burgundy and gold.

This week don't say, "I just didn't get around to it." Call us. Classes start October 31

Period I (8:15 - 9:35) Mon-Thurs.

AC 121-1 Principles of Accounting II
BA 209-1 Strategies, Policies, & Pro.
CS 133-1 Programming Logic
GE 110-1 Business Writing
LS 194-1 Law
LS 195-1 Psychology of Personal Dynamics
SS 141-1 Intermediate Typewriting

Period II (10:15-11:35) Mon-Thurs.

BA 100-1 Principles of Management
CS 233-1 Systems Analysis
EN 170-1 Basic Writing
EN 270-1 Experiences in Literature
GE 110-2 Business Writing
GM 281-1 Medical Office Procedures II
LS 255-1 Microeconomics

Period III (11:45-1:05) Mon-Thurs.

AC 121-2 Principles of Accounting II
AC 222-1 Intermediate Accounting I
BA 100-2 Principles of Management
CS 135-1 Intro. to Micros and Database
GE 110-3 Business Writing
GM 161-1 Medical Terminology
LS 100-1 Psychology