



## Obituary

**Died:** Wednesday, February 5, 2020

William F Thissell, known by most as Bill passed away at his home on Feb 5, 2020 in Burns, OR.

Bill was born Feb 22, 1929 in Canyon City to Fred and (Viola) Grace Thissell. He joined older brothers Clyde, Walt, Glenn and Don followed by brother Richard ( Dick) and sister Linda. He lived mostly in Grant and Harney counties and a few early years around the Alsea area. He went to grade school and a very short time of high school in Grant county. In the Mid 40's the Thissell family moved to Harney county, living at the old Thissell place above 5 mile dam. Bill as a teenager worked with his father for Harold Baker, hayed for Barnhardt ranch, and as a ranch hand for many other ranchers. He did a lot of fence building and trapping. They also worked up in the Seneca area haying for John Biggs. When Bill was in his early 20's and working on the Biggs ranch, he met a logger's daughter from pioneer stock named Clara Stratton. He and Clara dated while he served in the army at Fort Lewis for 2 years. While serving in the army Bill came home for leave to go deer hunting and Clara was home from Beauty School they got married in John Day on Oct 4, 1954.

After getting out of the service Bill and Clara lived in Seneca where he worked for Edward Hines Lumber Co., and also John Biggs at the Biggs ranch. While working in Seneca, Bill's family started to grow. In 1956 their first child Monte was born. In 1957 the second child Diane (Duke) was born. After John Biggs passed away in 1958, Bill became manager of the ranch and moved his growing family to the Biggs ranch.

After moving there, they had two more children, daughter Joanne (Peterson) in 1959 and son Kelly in 1960. For many years he worked the ranch with his brother Dick. During that time, he did many things like trapping, haying, fence building, and working for Edward Hines in the off season. In 1969, Bill moved his family to a ranch outside of Burns after the Biggs ranch sold. For the next 15 years, Bill worked swing shift for Edward Hines while also running his own ranch. During that time Bill helped his brother Clyde gather wild horses on Murderers Creek and also helped with logging contracts. After the mill sold Bill started getting government logging, horse chasing and fencing contracts. Bill and his brothers worked together with sons, son-in-laws and nephews to fill these contracts. Bill worked as a government contractor until his mid-70's at that time he started working as a private contractor building fences and still cutting cords of firewood for private sale. Bill's health started failing in his mid-80's and when his horse died, he had to quit riding but was still very much involved. He was haying the last years of his life still finding ways to get up in the swather when his legs were giving out on him. Bill hayed his last haying job the summer of 2019. Bill enjoyed hunting with his family packing six

## Service Summary

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### Celebration of Life

1:00 PM Sat Feb 22, 2020

### Bible Baptist Church

101 E. Pettibone

Hines, Oregon 97738

miles into the Strawberry Mt. Wilderness every year for elk season. Bill wore many hats in his life-time but the love of his life time was his family and the ranch. He enjoyed working and he lived his dream.

He is survived by his wife of 65 years Clara Thissell, children Monte Thissell of Burns, Diane and Sam Duke of Burns, Joanne and Jeff Peterson of La Grande, and Kelly and Shauni Thissell of Ontario. Also survived by brother Dick and Beverly Thissell of Burns, sister-in-law Zora Thissell, brother Don Thissell, 12 grandchildren and 28 great grandchildren. Bill was preceded in death by Fred and Grace Thissell, brothers Clyde, Walt, Glenn, sister Linda, sister-in-law Lucille Thissell, nephew and niece.

Memorial service will be held at 1 pm on Feb 22, 2020 at the Bible Baptist Church in Hines. Potluck to follow at the Senior Center. Please come and share your stories. Contributions in Bill's memory can be made to CAN Cancer, 557 W. Washington, Burns, Oregon. LaFollette's Chapel is in charge of funeral arrangements.