



The Historacle

The Official Newsletter of the
Talent Historical Society

Volume 29 Issue 2

June 2023

THS Member Memorial - Remembering Our Friend - Myke Gelhaus

By Debra Moon and Other Friends

Our beloved THS newsletter editor, Myke Gelhaus, passed away quite suddenly from liver cancer in April this year. She had been with us as editor since December of 2019. In December of 2019, her first issue, an introductory article about her was published. Here are some excerpts from that article:

“...Myke Gelhaus volunteered to serve as editor for the *Historacle* and joined the THS Board. This was, coincidentally, in the same month as Myke Reeser joined, September 2019. We are blessed to have two Mykes on our THS Board.”

Myke Gelhaus resigned from the Board shortly after this but remained on in the organization serving as editor and helping with other projects.

“...Myke started her newspaper career at Denfield High School in Duluth, Minnesota as the senior editor of the school newspaper. She continued her interest in journalism during her college years. She found a job in journalism many years later in the town of Keenesburg, on the northern plains of Colorado. Myke worked as the editor of the weekly paper in this small-town community, north of Denver, for twelve years. The paper prospered during her years there. She took the paper from a 4-page cut-and-paste paper to a 36-page electronic production. Myke says, ‘I’ve always been interested in history. I’m a reader of history. I produced some special historical papers for Keenesburg. They were well-received. Nothing like that had been done before, and I enjoyed it. I did a lot of historical research for the area in the 33 years I lived there.’”

We originally met Myke at a TEAM meeting, where she mentioned to Ron Medinger that she might be interested in helping with the newsletter. I went to her apartment complex to recruit her after hearing this news from Ron. I left a note for her, and she called me and became immediately involved.

The things I admired about Myke were her intelligence, her knowledge of history,



Myreen “Myke” Grunke Gelhaus

NOVEMBER 16, 1946 -

APRIL 2, 2023

her willingness to share and reciprocate as a friend, and her ability with newspaper layout. She produced a beautiful newsletter. I had been a newspaper editor for one year of my life, so I knew just how hard it is to do that.

I didn’t know until she passed away, and I began helping her family members in cleaning her apartment and going through her belongings, that she also was an extremely talented seamstress and a champion of women’s rights. I heard stories from her sisters of times she’d protected women. “Vintage Feminist” was proudly registered front and center on her favorite T-shirt. I marveled at her sewing creations. She did applique, complex sewing of little baskets, ornaments, dolls, and more. She was truly talented.

Ron, Willow, I, and Lois Bousquet (another friend from THS and the Talent Book Club, of which Myke had been a member) helped her sister, Joan, make Myke’s apartment ready for her return from the hospital after she was diagnosed with the cancer, but she never did come home. She declined rapidly, and a few days before she passed, she was transferred to adult foster care and hospice, then she, seemingly peacefully, passed from us.

It took me a while to really get to know Myke and become her friend, but when I did, I talked to her almost every day. We would kind of “check in” with each other before dinnertime. We did a lot of planning for the newsletter together, but she was the one with the true layout skills. I was just a writer. We discussed topics of politics, religion, secrets from our childhoods, all the things that are supposedly taboo, but we got along well doing this. She was an admirable intellectual and a keen observer of life. I enjoyed our conversations and surely do miss them now.

Because I was so close to her, I knew she was sick, and I became aware of how serious it was over time. I was doing her grocery shopping for her and saw that she was getting worse, not better, and I knew that she was barely eating. I finally convinced her to let me take her to the emergency room where she was diagnosed. Her friends at the apartment complex and everyone on the THS Board knew what a treasure she was, and we were all very concerned for her. The cancer was very advanced when it was discovered. I miss her very much. I am thankful for the time that she was part of my life.

Here are some remarks from a few of the people who loved her.



I first met Myke Gelhaus when we were introduced by Ron Medinger at the Talent Historical Museum. She was new to the community and had experience as an editor, so Myke was a perfect candidate for our newsletter. Ron said, “Myke meet Myke” We both had never met or heard of another woman with our name.... we hit it off wonderfully! Our similar interests in history and each other sparked a connection. I will miss her professionalism and our great talks.

--remarks from Myke Reeser, THS Board Member

Talent Historical Society

The Talent Historical Society researches and preserves the history of the Talent area in southern Oregon

We offer a collection of historical archives to help local residents and visitors become

better acquainted with our area's rich history.

We are members of the Jackson County Heritage Association; a group of heritage nonprofits dedicated to the collection, preservation, and interpretation of Southern Oregon's cultural history.

We operate a museum and meeting place located at:
105 North Market Street
Talent, Oregon

The museum is open
Wednesday and Sunday
12:00PM to 4:00PM

General Business/Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 582

Talent, OR 97540

Phone Number: (541) 512-8838

Email: info@talenthistory.org

Web Page: www.talenthistory.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/talenthistory/

Blogspot: [talenttowninflames@blogspot.com](http://talenttowninflames.blogspot.com)

The Historacle is published quarterly.

Editor: Ron Medinger
r.medinger@talenthistory.org

You may submit your written work about historical Talent to be considered for publication in this newsletter. Our research library is ready for you to get started on an interesting local article! We are especially looking for more tales from early to middle 20th Century.

Museum Hours Wednesday & Sunday 12:00 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Memberships Since Last Issue

New Members:

Carol & Fredric Berger
Donna Bertucci-Ruiz
Paulette & Steve Bodeman
Lisa Ciasullo
Hector Flores
Christinea Galligan
Lisa Giola

James & Deborah Griffin
Claire Krulikowski
Cathe Ledford & Randall Walker
Shannon Levin
Judy Pierce
Ron & Lynn Robak
Steve Thorpe

Renewals:

Ruth Ansara
Darby & Heather Ayers-Flood
Cici Brown
Judie Bunch
Don Burke
John Cooper
Ray & Donna Eddington
John Enders
Joel Goldman
David & Alice Hodson
Victoria King

Chris Livingston
Rebecca Long & Cindy Marotta
Barbara & Dick MacMillen
James W. Maize, Jr.
Willow McCloud
Mike & Julie Ono
Annmarie Slavenski
Bon & Terri Stewart
Freddie & Christina Taulani
Ruby & Emmalisa Whalley

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Joan C. Barnhart
Claire Barr-Wilson
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Jim Bradley & Patricia Remencuis
Karen Carr
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Marla Cates & Jan Ritter
Joan Dean
Gladys Fortmiller
Margay Garrity
Lunette Gleason-Fleming
Bud & MaryLouise Gleim
Dale Greenley
Greg Hartley
Sue Hawkins
Joe Hunkins

Kathy Jerman
Carrie (Hartley) Jones
George Kramer
Jeff LaLande
Jack Latvala
Marilyn Lee
Matt & Antoinette Lichtenstein
Edwin McManus & Family
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Consuela Montoya
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Ryan Pedersen
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John Wahl
Claire Barr-Wilson

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Victoria King
Chris Livingston
Barbara & Dick MacMillen

James W. Maize, Jr.
Ed Olson
Annmarie Slavenski
Larry Smith
Ruby & Emmalisa Whalley
Brooke Wilson

This summer, two of our Tuesday Evening at the Museum programs will celebrate the arrival of a very important wagon train to the Talent area 170 years ago in 1853. The article by the late Bob Casebeer on pages 6 & 7 of this issue provide some context on the importance of "The Preacher Train." The serialized story of Alice Rockfellow contained in the March, June and September 2023 issues of this publication provide a first-hand account of one member of that wagon train. Please see the announcements for the TEAM Meetings on page 12 for additional information.

THS Member Memorial- Remembering Our Friend - Myke Gelhaus

I bonded with Myke Gelhaus almost immediately when I met her and got a chance to know her. Her sense of humor gelled with mine and I admired her outlook on life. She brought an amazing amount of newspaper experience to the creation of each issue of "The Historacle" from her first issue in December of 2019 through our most recent issue in March of 2023. She is missed.

--remarks from Ron Medinger, THS Board Member

Myke loved Chinese food so we enjoyed occasionally going to different restaurants. Not knowing it was going to be her last birthday celebration, we went to a new restaurant that had fantastic shrimp, her favorite. We liked shopping at Goodwill and St Vincent's together. She always found great deals. She was an avid reader and loved sharing unusual facts or stories with me about the history of Southern Oregon. Myke was a good friend and neighbor and I miss popping in to see her to chat and pet her cat.

--remarks from Patti Duke, a dear friend at the apartment complex



Myke and her mom Janice in 1949



**The Grunke siblings:
Marilyn Myke Joan
Beth
Bob and Ken**

What Cancer Cannot Do

Cancer is so limited...
It cannot cripple Love
It cannot shatter Hope
It cannot corrode Faith
It cannot destroy Peace
It cannot kill Friendship-
It cannot suppress Memories
It cannot silence Courage
It cannot invade the Soul
It cannot steal Eternal Life
It cannot conquer the Spirit

- author unknown

This message was sent from Lois Bousquet, a THS member, right after Myke passed away from liver cancer.

Myke was a very important piece of our team, she never missed a deadline and was a team player that would always answer the phone if you called, with a pleasant happy and warm welcome. I remember the first time I met Myke and...Myke. The two were like giggling girls proud of the party trick but it was an odd coincidental real deal, they were both indeed Myke, and both surprised of one another. I would call them the Myke and Mykes like the candy Myke and Ike's. I learned so much more of her amazing skills after she had passed, she was obviously not self-absorbed or cocky because she would have had just cause with her seamstress skills. I miss her and will continue to feel this absence for a long time but I feel like we were given a huge gift from the universe for a short time with Myke on our team.

--remarks from WillowMcCloud, THS Board President

I'd also like to give a brief tribute to Myke's sister, Joan, who lives in Brookings and whose husband just passed away around Christmastime last year. Joan, I'm sure is not through grieving the loss of her husband, and yet, she came and took care of everything for Myke during the months of March and April this year for Myke's passing too. She has not yet been able to plan the memorial for her husband, Robin, but did take care of Myke's hospitalization, medical care, business

affairs, practical affairs and all her personal effects during Myke's sudden and rapid decline. She connected with many of Myke's good friends while here in Talent, and we got to know an extension of Myke through her. We helped her as much as we could. Some of us got to meet Myke's other sister, Marilyn, Myke's niece, Katie, and two of Myke's children, Amy and Matthew, aka "Guy". We saw the family resemblances not only in the physical sense but in the integrity and intelligence as well. We got to know Joan best, because she was always here taking care of things. We wish you peace and blessings, Joan.



Little Myke

Family photos in this article courtesy of Ken Grunke and Beth Grunke, Myke's brother and sister.



**Five Generations
1983 in Hudson, Wisconsin
Janice (mom)—Myke
Amy (daughter)—Lillis (grandmother)—
Crystal (granddaughter)**

Documenting the Almeda Fire

By Willow McCloud

In the beginning it seemed like a daunting and never-ending endeavor. The Almeda Fire took out so much gusto, steam, and energy out of most of the Rogue Valley residents, both those that were affected directly and indirectly. It was an event that some saw as a possibility while others would have never bet a dime on it. It was around November 2020 that our board started talking about the necessity of documenting the fire and creating a historical profile for future generations to be able to reference it too.

The interviews started, book ideas started floating around, donations started to come in of artifacts that came out of the fire. At the same time grants had to be written for a way to fund the book and display.

Once we started to get the grants coming in, we started to move forward full steam ahead with a deadline of March



2023. Grants were essential in making the following possible. New display cabinets and portable folding walls, lights, matting supplies for photos for the display including exacto knives, foam core, Velcro, cardstock, photo paper, ink, ink, ink, ink, more ink, and photo glue were needed for the display portion of the exhibit. We also needed the community's help to make the display a well-rounded community voice, a platform of sorts, with the donations of art, poetry, photos, and artifacts. The utmost care and respect were put into the display as these were people's lives, homes, businesses, etc. This was a horrific day so we all really put a lot of conscious thought into making it a platform to close a chapter, grieve, remember and show this grace with dignity, set an example for other towns in the future of a healing way to document.

For the book side of the documentation, that was much the same process as money usually makes things possible, but fortunately we were able to do much of the work on the book before the money was needed. At this point it was translators, we needed the entirety of the book to be in both Spanish and English. The money ran out fast as it does when you hire anyone to do a task, luckily, we were able to find some volunteer translators that really helped us in tremendous ways.

The book came together so beautifully. We ended up pushing our deadline back slightly so we could really be thorough and not rushed, we set the day for Saturday

April 29, 2023
Opening day

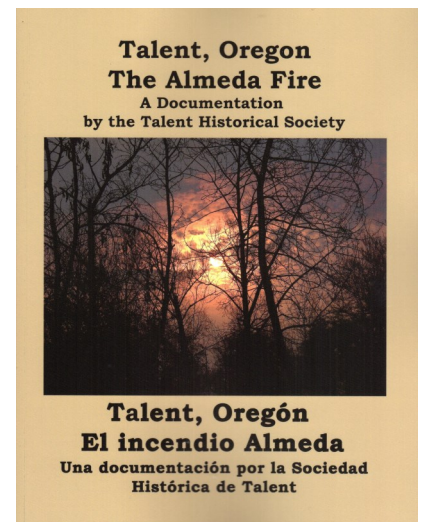
Our museum opened at 10:00 am. We had two food trucks that came to help as well as the fabulous Bustles and Bows, a historical costume group that dress in period costumes. We adorned the entire museum and picture wall with flowers from Bee Sweet Blooms, it was beautiful.

Almost immediately the steady flow of visitors came to view the exhibit and see and or purchase the book. It was a wide mix of community from all over the Rogue Valley, from those that lost everything that day in September to those that came close or watched from afar. Tears were not absent, our board members all made sure to be open and ready for anyone needing a Kleenex or needing to share their story or feelings. We estimate that we had around 200 visitors that day and since the opening day we have had visitors coming in just to see the exhibit on the two days we are open, Wednesdays and Sundays 12:00 to 4:00 p.m.

The response has been so great. The outpouring of thanks for taking on this endeavor was overwhelming and has given us all a great sense of accomplishment for our town, our people.

If you would like to see the exhibit you still have time, our big display will be up through the anniversary of the fire in September 2023 At that point it will be downsized for new exhibits coming in. We will also be travelling with this exhibit, dates and places to be announced at a later.

Our book, "Talent, Oregon—The Almeda Fire—A Documentation by the Talent Historical Society", is available for \$25.00 in the museum or at our online store



Talent Poker Tour #50



Thanks to everyone who came out to our tournament on April 22nd, and congratulations to our winner Chris Livingston. Our next tournament is scheduled for Saturday, July 29th. The tournament is open to THS members only, with a membership level of Family or above and pre-registration is required.

The No-Limit Texas Hold'em tournament will feature a buy-in of \$50.00 with all entry money paid back out as cash prizes. Refreshments and snacks will be available for a modest cost. This is a no alcohol/no smoking event.

Contact info@talenthistory.org or call the museum at 541.512.8838 for additional information.



A Tribute to Our Volunteers

by Debra Moon

Where would the Talent Historical Society be without volunteers? Well, the answer is simple: It would not exist. Every person on the THS Board is a volunteer. All Board Members wear different hats to fill a variety of roles. All accounting for the organization is done by our Treasurer, Ron Medinger, who is a volunteer. All notetaking, minutes, creation of forms and agendas, and general paperwork is done by our Secretary, Tessa DeLine, who is a volunteer. The exhibits in our museum are mostly handled by our President, Willow McCloud, who is a volunteer. She also represents the organization at meetings with the city and other agencies. Grant Writer and Grant Administrator, Debra Moon, writes, implements, tracks, and reports on all grant funds, as a volunteer. Emmalisa Whalley is our Webmaster, also as a volunteer. Myke Reeser volunteers as staff in order to keep the museum open. She also does many drawings for us in our newsletter and some books we've produced. Ron Medinger and Debra Moon help to keep the museum open as well. Alicia Corbiskey, our newest Board Member, volunteers to help other Board Members with staffing, exhibits, and events. All Board Members pitch in to put on TEAM meetings, to do sales at our gift shop, to clean, rearrange, make brochures and information to share with the public, and many other duties that come up that are needed to keep us going. I am proud to be a member of such a hard-working, generous, volunteer team.

Even though the above list of roles seems exhausting (and it often is), it is just a part of what volunteers do for the historical society. We have many volunteers who are not Board Members. Dave Hodson, a THS member, attends meetings for us and helps out with tomato plant sales every year. Lunette Fleming, another THS member, schedules, plans and advertises for our TEAM meetings each month. She is sometimes seen cleaning the museum, baking

refreshments, making coffee, and/or setting up refreshment tables. Margaret Duggar, a THS member, volunteered to take Ron Medinger's place as staff during his vacation. She went through a month or two of training to do this. Myke Gelhaus, who recently passed away, former THS member and editor of our beautiful newsletter, *The Historacle*, volunteered in our library, as the editor of the newsletter, and sometimes helped staff the museum. David Oman, a former Board Member, helped at events. He created the Almeda Fire blog for a stipend, but now maintains it voluntarily. David, Ron, and Debra proofread the newsletter each time it is going to come out. David, Ron and Myke Gelhaus helped edit and format the stories in our book documenting the Almeda Fire. Debra, Ron, and Emmalisa give field trip tours to Elementary and Middle School students in Talent. Talent Maker City has contributed volunteer time to us making things that we need on more occasions than one.

The Almeda Fire blog, book, and exhibit drew many community members to us to volunteer. Diana Roome, local journalist, volunteered to interview business owners and do write-ups of the interviews for the book. Actually 21 adults and 25 young students voluntarily wrote their stories for the book, *Talent, Oregon The Almeda Fire: A Documentation by the Talent Historical Society*. Even larger numbers of adults and youth wrote stories for the blog and donated photographs. Artists and poets contributed to the blog, book and the exhibit too. Willow coordinated and created the exhibit with the donated items donating many hours of precious time. She, Debra, and Emmalisa all pitched in to make labels in both languages for the exhibit too.

Most amazing to me, were the volunteer translators. You see, every part of the book we produced is in both Spanish and English. It is a 300-page book, so translating was no small job. Jocksana Corona and Aida Taracena sought us out to offer their services as volunteer translators. They worked very hard at this during times when they were pressed for time because both are employed and have families. They were very dedicated. Aleyda Mark, a bilingual teacher at the Middle School, was



Myke Reeser, Lunette Fleming, Alicia Corbiskey, Willow McCloud, Emmalisa Whalley, Tessa DeLine & Ron Medinger

paid to translate a great deal of the book too, but she did it at a very discounted wage and did some extra translating as well. At the Grand Opening event in April, these lovely women said to me, "Well, what do you need us to do next?" I was very touched by their generosity.

During this two-and-one-half-year-long project of documenting the Almeda Fire, I put over 400 volunteer hours into the book and the blog and the exhibit. And coincidentally, I am the Volunteer Coordinator, so I see everyone that volunteers and am often brought to tears witnessing their unselfishness. At the Grand Opening event, several new people approached me and offered to volunteer in the future. I am looking forward to meeting these wonderful people and working with them.

I am certain that I missed giving credit to all people who have helped and all tasks they do—just know that we are a completely volunteer organization.

Our main message to volunteers is:
**THANK YOU VERY MUCH!! WE
 COULD NOT DO IT WITHOUT ALL
 YOUR HELP. WE WOULDN'T EXIST
 WITHOUT YOU!!**

Your help and talents would be much appreciated if you are able to volunteer. Volunteering for the Talent Historical Society is a worthy cause. We preserve and share local history, we help build community, and we have fun doing it together. If you are interested in volunteering, we can surely use your skills. Areas of need include staffing the museum to keep it open, maintenance, staffing booths at events, giving downtown tours of historic buildings, archiving donated items, data entry for our library computer, writing for the newsletter, editing the newsletter, and more. Training is available for these duties. Please contact the museum at 541-512-8838 if you would be interested in joining our volunteer team.



Volunteers at our Almeda Fire Display Grand Opening Event

The Preacher Train by Robert Livingston Casebeer

In 2013, when Bob wrote this he was the President of the Board of Directors of the Talent Historical Society, he is related to at least seven families who crossed the plains to Oregon prior to 1854.

While reading Yvonne Reynold's book about the history of Talent, I suddenly realized that many of the old pioneer families, those folk whose donation land claims dot the Wagner Creek valley, had all been on the same wagon train that my own great grandfather Martin Burt and his family joined to come to Oregon from Wisconsin in 1853. They, and many of the old settlers of Talent, had come west with what has become known as the "Preacher Train" because so many preachers came to Southern Oregon on that same wagon train. However, my Burt pioneers settled east of Roseburg, passing through the Bear Creek Valley in late August of 1853.

There were five preachers on that wagon train. Three were members of the Royal family: the father William Royal, his two sons—Thomas Fletcher Royal and J. H. B. Royal—all Methodists. Stephen Phelps Taylor, also a Methodist who became the first minister in Phoenix, Oregon. The fifth minister was a Baptist—the Rev. John Stearns, who at 76 years of age, joined his sons and daughters for the move to Oregon in 1853. Incidentally, it was thought that no one over the age of 45 should attempt the trip to Oregon over the plains because they would most likely die on the way west. However, John Stearns lived until 1870 and died at the age of 92 and is buried in the Stearns cemetery up Wagner Creek...a cemetery named after his son David Stearns.

As the train came west across the plains, the preachers refused to travel on Sunday. This is what Dr. Osman Royal, one of William Royal's sons said about that decision:

"The company with which [my father] started did not think of staying in camp on Sunday, and when he announced his intentions of not traveling on that day, he was laughed at; and told that when he got in the Indian country, he would get over that. However, he remained true to his God and to his convictions of right and wrong, and rested himself and teams on the Lord's day, and usually on the following Tuesday, he would overtake his company. When they arrived in the country where there was danger from the Indians, he was besought not to be so reckless as to stay behind, but he told them no. At places there were notices of "Look out for the Indians!" They also saw many traces of these murderous savages, but nothing daunted this man who persevered in his resolve not to travel on Sunday, and the result proved the correctness of his course, as he arrived first in Oregon, with his teams in better condition than the others."

Incidentally, my great grandfather Martin Burt was subsequently asked to testify to accusations that had been placed with the Methodist church officials back East about this situation, and wrote supporting the action taken by the Rev. William Royal. The fact that those of the "Preacher Train" who

followed Rev. Royal's lead, arrived in the Talent area on August 31, 1853, while those who sought to hurry and travel on Sunday straggled in ten to fifteen days later.

I have been trying to determine exactly who was on the "Preacher Train." So far I have discovered that the wagon master was William Hurst Rockfellow, from Muscatine County, Iowa. Incidentally, my own great grandfather Samuel Casebeer was from Cedar County, Iowa, which lies just north of Muscatine County. He came out to Oregon in 1851, however.

In 1849 William Rockfellow, in company with his brothers, Albert. G. Rockfellow and George Rockfellow, left any family members with their father and went to California to find gold. William returned to Iowa and in the spring of 1853 brought his family across the plains to Wagner Creek where his two brothers had settled. A. G. Rockfellow took a land claim where the huge new Shakespeare costume and set building is being erected here in Talent, and his brother George took a claim right across from his brother on the east side of what today is Talent Avenue, then the Applegate Trail. The yellow house that stands at the corner of Rapp Road and Talent Avenue, was not built by A. G. Rockfellow, but it is built on what was his land claim. Incidentally, A. G. Rockfellow is the man who laid out the pioneer toll road over the Siskiyou pass to the Klamath River and Yreka.

I have identified about forty individuals who were on the so-called "Preacher Train":



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Ashland, OR 97520
541-482-9504
George Kramer
www.kramer.com
george@preserveoregon.com



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The Rockfellow family; William Hurst Rockfellow, wife Harriet ` Angeline Hendrix, daughter Alice Rockfellow,--they had more children but only Alice was on the Preacher Train.

The Royal family: William, wife Barbara, sons Thomas Fletcher Royal, J. H. B. Royal, and one daughter. George Ebey, who was Barbara Royal's nephew, and another nephew William M. Sells.

Thomas Fletcher Royal had a wife Mary Ann, and started west with two children; however just after crossing Fandango Pass south of Lakeview, Oregon, Mary Ann who had walked nine miles down the mountains to Goose Lake, while pregnant, had a baby boy which they named Miller after captain of a group of soldiers apparently from Yreka who hearing of the group came out to escort the Preacher Train members through Modoc Indian territory. By the way Miller G. Royal, as a grown man became a principal of what became the Southern Oregon Normal School in Ashland, now Southern Oregon University.

The Taylor families: There were two Taylor families, one of whom I have found much more data about than the other. The one best recorded is the family of the Rev. Stephen Phelps Taylor, the Methodist minister who settled at Phoenix, at that time usually whimsically called Gassburg. Hobart Taylor, the son of the Rev. Taylor in 1861 became one of the soldiers at Camp Baker, and is the author of the only diary known to have been written about service at that fort, which had been built to allow the Union soldiers there to keep an watchful eye on secessionist Jacksonville.

The Beeson family: John Beeson, his wife Ann Welborn, and his son Welborn

Beeson. Their hired men: Henry Church, Alex Sanford and the Loughlin brothers William and Judson.

Three other men were also with the wagon train: a man named John Owens, a Swede named Laurence Johnstone, and a Frenchman named Batis.

Welborn Beeson mentions the following people in his diary of the trip west with the Preacher Train: Ferdinand Styker, a Dutchman; Jim Logan, Liman Gilliland, Albert Willis, David Forte, James Story, Tom Whiple, Will Ross, Austin Rice and Charlie Wood. However, it was not until May 25, 1853, that the Beesons joined the William Rockfellow-led wagon train on the Platte River. Others mentioned by Welborn Beeson in his diary are James Riley, a Mr. and Mrs. Willits, an old Mr. Long, James Mills, and Mr. Frick. Charles Hepp was with the Beeson group in June 1853, before he was killed by a man named Gregory. Others named by Welborn are James Morehead and Peter Mahon.

The Oatman family who settled in Phoenix were members on the Rockfellow-led wagon train.

The Scott family of three men, a wife and five children joined the train on the Humboldt River in what is now Nevada in July 1853.


The Robison family: The Robisons arrived on 30 August 1853 here in the Wagner Creek valley. The Robisons included Samuel McMillin Robison, his wife Hannah Elizabeth, his daughter Joanna Robison [the wife of Matthew Warren Morrison], John Francis Robison and his wife Susan Milligan and their two sons Joseph T., and Robert Boyd Robison.

The Burt family from whom I am descended included the patriarch Martin Burt, born in Westmoreland, New Hampshire, orphaned at eight, although his mother remarried. Lived in Marlboro, Vermont until 1810. In 1815 at age 32, he visited Batavia, New York where he met and married his cousin Abigail Temple O'Flyng. The couple raised ten children to adulthood, two others dying as infants. In 1816, Martin decided to seek a new home on the Western praries beyond the Mississippi River. He settled in Missouri in 1818 but found he could not live there with safety to himself and family due to his life-long principles of liberty for the downtrodden. [He could not stand slavery.] He moved his family to Greenfield, Green County, Illinois, then in 1839 to a place near Whitewater, Wisconsin. The Burts lived in Wisconsin until 1852, moving back to Greenfield that winter, leaving for what turned out to be Douglas County, Oregon in 1853 as one of members of William Rockfellow's "Preacher Train." The Burt family included Martin Burt, wife Abigail O'Flyng, daughters Lavina, Amanda, my great grandmother Ellen, Amarantha, Abigail, Minerva, and Sophrenia; and the sons Omar, Aaron, and Cyrus.

As near as I can count, if all this data is correct, and so far I think it is, a total of 81 people came to or through Jackson County via the William Hurst Rockfellow-led "Preacher Train." Immediately after they arrived on August 30, 1853, another wagon train of sixty wagons entered the Bear Creek Valley coming to Oregon on the Applegate Trail and moving through Talent and its fort.

Incidentally, the Robisons up Wagner Creek built their own personal palisade fort for their eight family members.

The "Preacher Train" travelers were basically the basis of the early population of both Phoenix and Talent, then known as the Eden Precinct.



Rick Chester, Pharmacist
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The Story of my Life by Alice Rockfellow Meacham Foster Ough

Originally posted by mollyflan on ancestry.com, 23 Dec 2013

Continued From the March Issue

Minder and myself were the ones who were allowed to help her (Mrs. Beeson) get the dinner on her table and it was our delight to do our best. She let me go to her milk room and bring everything. She would have it all ready just to bring in; cake, pie, cottage cheese, and many other things. We would want to help wait table, but no, it was our dinner and we must eat first.

I think Wilber (Welborn Beeson) and a friend who crossed the plains at the time they did and always lived with them; and helped them with the farm work, I think he always helped Wilbur at the table. She seldom would let us wash dishes, but we would help put things away. Then the rest of them wanted us to go and play. When they put up a new barn we had a big frolic. They put up two big swings and Wilbur had some big boys about his own age and they would swing us and the time came all too soon for us to go home. I always got the first ripe raspberries. Wilbur said he hid them so they would not be seen and that delighted me. He would say, "Come Allie, I have something to show you", and he would say, "Now stand there and shut your eyes", and he would tell me when to open, after he had a leaf in my hand, "Now Allie!", he would say, and there were the most luscious big raspberries, the very first, and I would be just as delighted as he expected. Then he would go and divide them with his mother. Those days were long ago.

Mother and son are both gone to their Savior a long time ago.

Father sold out his interests to his brothers. There were too many for one business. Father was naturally a roamer, but mother wanted to settle down. He was dissatisfied, so we move on into California. Yreka was where he was headed. Mining had always been a fascination for him, and he stayed with it nearly all of his life. He would start in some business, but eventually would get back to prospecting. There were many paying mines at the time about Yreka, and many placers. But he went beyond this camp. We crossed

some mountains to a camp called Hungry Creek. There he went to mining for a while, then sold out and bought a band of cows and sold milk. He would deliver his milk on the back of a mule, would carry two cans on each side of the saddle.

When he returned from his trips we would find the loveliest little balls of butter in the cans. The constant shaking churned all the cream. We got the butter, the customers got the milk. He kept at this work for quite a while, and in the meantime we had built a house and mother was keeping

bedroom and chucked us children under the bed but she jumped on top. She was teased about this for a long time, but the cow came no further than into the kitchen and dining room door, but we were badly frightened. Dropping the curtains checked the cow. We kept a few boarders and mother's table was always good, as she was a very fine cook.

I recall a hydraulic mine just by us. There must have been about ten acres of ground that was being worked every day and it was very interesting to me. When our work was finished I would go down to an old oak



"Mining had always been a fascination for him and he stayed with it nearly his whole life."

a boarding house. Our house had never been finished, no doors, and the front of the kitchen had not been boarded up yet, although we were occupying the house with curtains for doors. This was impressed on my mind by an incident that came nearly being serious. We were working in the kitchen on this morning and someone hollered, "Look out for the cow". The butchers were driving a wild cow, and she was chasing everyone. She got a look at us in the kitchen and ran for us. Mother had presence of mind enough to run for the

tree that overlooked the work. I would climb up high and sit there for hours and watch them work. My parents decided not to spend another winter there, as times were growing dull., but they had made money during the time they were there so father got a place for us to winter in at Coles' near the foot of the Siskiyou's. The next act was a means to get us out of there. There had never been a wagon across those mountains. Everything was brought by pack train and there was also a train called Express Train which carried express and mail. That was the only means we had of getting out. Father, knowing the

express man, sent me out ahead with him on horseback to stay with a friend in Yreka. I spent a few weeks there and then the rest came on riding mules. Then we rode the stage for thirty miles. They ran the Concord Coaches. When loaded they were like riding in a rocking chair, but when not loaded you had to hold tight with hands and feet. Father owned a fine pair of big horses, he sold these to Coles where we were going. They owned the hotel. and when we got there they soon came to the understanding whereby we were to do the work for the place, mother doing the cooking and housework, father helping where he was needed as chore boy, and I also was mother's helper. We spent a very happy winter. When spring came, father and mother wanted their own business. They had never worked for wages, having always worked for themselves and there was too little money and too much restraint in this, so father began looking around for something else. There was a good station just twenty four miles above Coles' and he was wanting to sell. An old bachelor owned it and wanted to sell out as he could not run it alone. So father bought this place and we lived there a number of years.

When father informed Coles of his intentions, they were very much shocked and tried to compel us to stay, and said we agreed to stay longer. They never did forgive father. They would not let him hire the team he sold them to move his family. Their horses were not working so father walked up to our new home and tried to get a team there but they only had one saddle horse, so we started on that, mother riding, and carrying her baby, a little girl several years of age, but the riding was so bad she had to walk part of the time. Then father would ride and carry the child. Finally mother rode on in, and father and I walked as long as I could stand it, and then I lay down and wanted to go to sleep. About that time somebody brought the horse and we rode in.

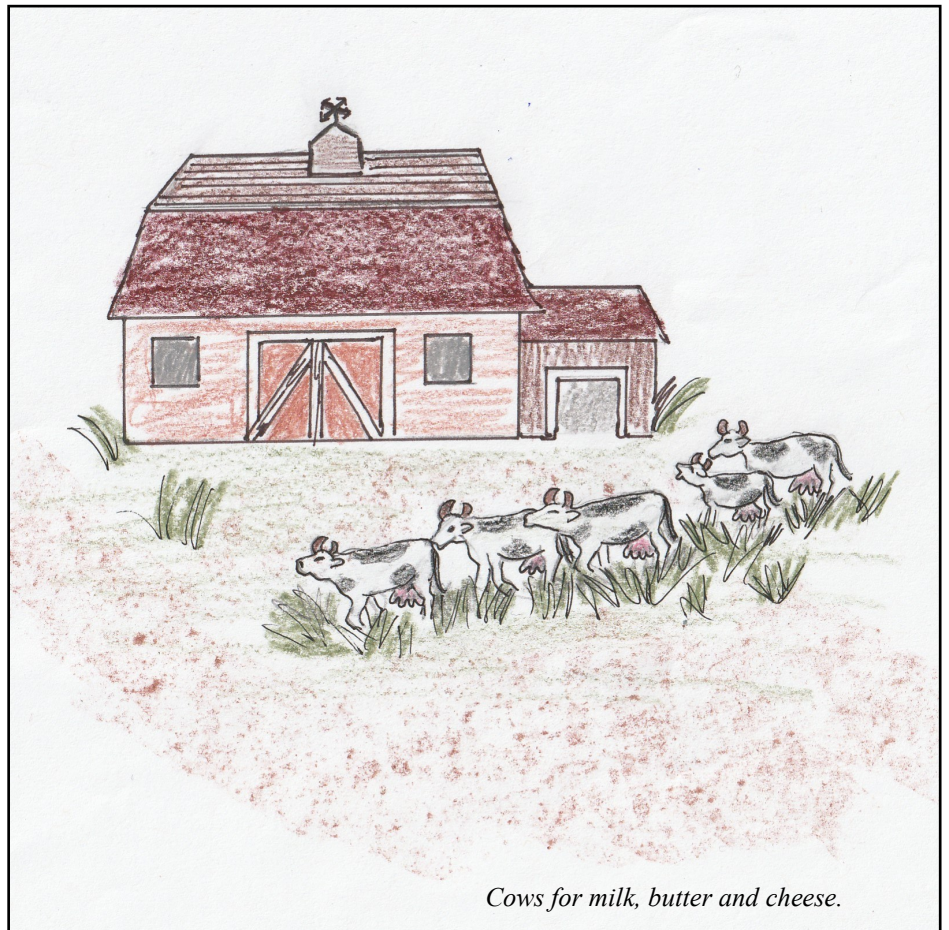
That was our home for a good many years. We built up a big trade, we built a new house and barn, and had lots of cows and chickens and made butter and cheese for market and had a fine garden. We had a big grain field. The woods were full of wild animals, at that time, and the bears would kill our pigs. They came and hid in a big growth of willows about half a mile from us. I remember one day a teamster

came in quite excited and said he saw a bear cross the road, just about half mile ahead of him and go into the brush, so every man that could get a gun started and tried to surround the brush, but Mr. Bruin was too smart for them. While the men were creeping up on him, as they supposed, a horseman came along and said he saw the bear just outside the field climbing a hill. So that ended the bear hunt that time, but it was not the last one. We had a lot of travelers at that time. The first year or two people travelled on horseback, the mail train carried passengers, and both men and women travelled that way. Finally the stage line was started and our place was the station. Then our work was so much, we hired help. I remember washing dishes when I had to stand on a box. I waited table before my hands were hardly big enough to hold the cups. Mother had the name of setting such a fine table. This was in '58 and the stage was always supposed to stop at the best place. We were just halfway between Yreka and Jacksonville and travelers between these places made their plans to stay overnight

as they knew they would get a good farm meal. We had everything to do with. Mother could have a chicken dinner in such a short time, and then we raised all sorts of vegetables. People came out to fish. There was a trout stream with plenty of little speckled trout.

The years passed by and times were not so flush, so father started a branch business, there was a mining camp about thirty miles from our place, just across a range of mountains. He butchered beef and sold two days a week in addition to our home work. One occurrence is particularly worth relating. Two of Yreka's leading citizens came out to our place to fight a duel. There were ten or twelve men in the crowd. They sent us word several days previous to this so we had everything ready for them so they would have plenty to eat for several days. They came about ten in the morning. The seconds were trying to patch up the quarrel, but at noon they had not made much advance toward it. They ate a hearty dinner, the principles also. They also said dinner was fine. Then they made their preparations; went out to the ground they had selected, but came back to the hotel good friends. The trouble had all

Continued on Page 10



Cows for milk, butter and cheese.

The Story of my Life by Alice Rockfellow

Continued from Page 9

been explained away and everybody was happy. The papers after that said if anyone had a grievance to settle, "Go to Rocka-fellows and get a good dinner", and that would settle the quarrels.

This was a good country for wild plums and they were fine. My sister and an old man and myself were out about two miles from home picking fruit. We were on a side hill looking across the ravine to the hills on the other side. The old man said he saw a bear, I also saw some kind of an animal looking down at us. He was badly frightened because he had us children with him. He put us in a tree and was ready to climb also if the creature came our way, but after awhile he turned around and went an opposite way. We scampered home with a double quick step. There was also a fine natural soda fountain two miles from our place. It is now called Coles Springs, as later they bought the place.

One summer we ate our Fourth of July dinner under the trees. In the surrounding country, and especially this place, which was a lovely little dell, the pine trees smelled so good and the moss and flowers made a regular dream place. We drank soda water until we hardly had room for air, but we just had to eat mother's good dinner. We had two boards nailed up with a long white table cloth, the table decked with wild flowers and ferns. New potatoes and green peas, fried chicken, and all kept hot. That is one of the brightest spots in my memory.


Our house was halfway between Yreka and Jacksonville and it was eighty miles from each place. We gave dances in the winter when the sleighing was good and people would come from far and near so we would have all we could take care of. Our tables were filled many times and our dining room was not very large. They would dance all night and sometimes go before breakfast. Our dance room was a big upstairs chamber which had not been divided off into bedrooms. We called it the coral, because when we had so much travelers we would make up so many beds and so many slept there. When they gave dances, these beds would all have to be moved out, so it made us lots of extra work but this would give room for about ten couples

to dance. Not much like dances nowadays. At that time, I was very fond of dancing and a good dancer also, so there was no trouble about partners. I would not more than finish one dance before I would hear, "Come Allie", perhaps someone at the other end of the hall. I would start and probably we would meet halfway. I think they liked to dance with me because I enjoyed it so much, I was only a little fat girl, but I could get around as lightly as any of the girls and even at that age I was quite vain to think I had a partner all of the time and sometimes the grown girls were wall flowers. Human nature! This was all in the pioneer days and this was the only pleasures. Our place was now a night station for the stage. They carry a good many passengers. The summer previous we had run a big dairy. We made such lovely butter and cheese for market. Our milk house had a bare floor. They kept this damp; there were racks made for the milk pans. I remember taking a slice of bread and laying it down on a pan of cream and oh, wasn't it good. Father was churning in a great big box churn. It hung on a frame by the corner. He took the lid off and went to the wall to get some cold water to wash down the butter. I didn't know the lid was off so I thought I would surprise him and bring the butter while he was gone. Of course the first turn, out came a big batch of cream. Oh, but I was scared, father just came in then and the looked at me and says, "Well Allie, what have you done?" He understood in a moment and did not punish me. He said I was so frightened I was sufficiently punished.

About this time there was quite a little excitement about the Salmon River mines and father was naturally a rover. He could not be content to settle down. He'd just recovered from typhoid fever, came near dying, and it left him in a collapsed condition, and so thought that if he would go out to these mines he would get his health again. And so he did. People were passing every day heading for this location. He went with the rest, much against mother's wishes. He tried very hard but did not succeed in making anything. He came back to Walla Walla and liked it there. He wrote to mother to dispose of their property as soon

as possible and meet him there. But this took several months, as you cannot hurry a sale. Finally we started overland in covered wagon and a big pair of strong black horses, and mother had a driver, a friend who also wanted to go into that country. Of course he helped make our camps and other things as we needed them. The most I remember about it was the good times picking flowers and fruit on the roadside. There is so much to tell about this trip, there is not space for it. We traveled by easy stages, and the middle of the day when it was hot we would camp at the first water, and then travel in the evening when it was cool. We would camp close to a farm when we could, so we could get feed for the horse and also produce for ourselves. We traveled slowly until we reached Portland and then we took a boat up the Columbia as far as The Dalles, rested there a few days and then drove on slowly. This was a hot drive over the sagebrush plains. As long as we were on the Columbia it was hot sand, but finally the road led back several miles towards the Blue Mountains and the country abounded in sage brush nearly as high as your head, and lots of bunch grass. The horses fattened on it. Now we traveled by night until quite late, arose early in the morning and traveled until ten and then we stopped to get breakfast and rested until the crook of the evening.

To Be Continued in the September Issue



The Talent Historical Society is a qualified Oregon Nonprofit participant of the Oregon Cultural Trust, and we encourage your support of this innovative, uniquely Oregon organization

For more information, please go to:
culturaltrust.org.

The Talent Historical Society Membership Application

The Talent Historical Society was founded in 1994 as a non-profit organization dedicated to collecting, preserving and interpreting the history of the Talent area in Southern Oregon. By becoming a member of the Society, you provide valuable support of the Society's ongoing work.

To become a member, please select a membership level, complete the form below, and return the completed form along with your membership payment. All memberships, regardless of level, are greatly appreciated.

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The Talent Historical Society Board Meeting is held monthly on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Museum Building at 105 North Market St. in Talent. The meetings are also still being held on Zoom. If you wish to participate on Zoom, please contact debramoon7@gmail.com and she will email you an invitation to join.



Talent Historical Society
P.O Box 582
Talent, OR 97540

T.E.A.M. Meetings Tuesday Evening at the Museum

Tuesday Evening at the Museum continues with a wide variety of topics to entertain and inform us while we meet together every 4th Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. All meetings are free for THS members and the general public to enjoy.

June 27 – Anne Billeter, director of the Rogue Valley Genealogical Society will share the history of The Postage Stamp Quilt.

This quilt, with 2,392 hand sewn squares, by early Talent resident Mary Ann McKinnis (b. 1861 d. 1946) will be displayed along with a another “surprise” quilt.

July 25 – A celebration of the 170th anniversary of the arrival of The Preacher Train in the Rogue Valley. This wagon train brought several notable families to the area that would become Talent, such as the Beesons, the Rockfellows, the Oatmans and the Taylors. At the time of publication of this newsletter, we are trying to add some live music to this event. Stay tuned! We will update this information on our Facebook page and by email to our members.

August 22 - As a continuation of our celebration of the 170th anniversary of the Preacher Train arriving, we will hear excerpts from the Robison Family Diary presented by Mike & Judy Hall, descendants of the Robison family. The Robison family also traveled with The Preacher Train.



The Postage Stamp Quilt