From the Klamath Echoes

AS WRITTEN TO ME BY MRS. PAUL ROBERTSON.. May 4, 1968—Recorded by Devere Helfrich

My Dad, Alfred Melhase, was born in Potsdam, Germany, June 7th 1858, one of a family of seven, 4 boys and 3 girls. As a small boy he and his brother Richard acted as music racks for the Kaiser’s band. An older brother, Fred was a drummer boy. Dad’s father, after serving his time in the German army, was a gardener in the Palace gardens. After his health began to fail, and the doctor advised a change of climate, the family decided to come to America. Here, Grandad thought his sons would have a better chance, and he didn’t want them to serve in the army as he had had to do. When Dad was 10 years old the family sailed from Hamburg, Germany, in a small steamship. The weather was very stormy and the ocean so rough everyone had to stay below decks. They landed in New York harbor in the summer of 1868. After a short stay there, they moved to Hannibal, Missouri where they lived until 1875, when they moved to Ferndale, Humboldt County, California. They stayed there for 3 years then moved back to Hannibal. The place Grandfather had homesteaded is now a part of the City Park in Hannibal.

In 1881, Dad married Dora Brummer in Hannibal and lived there until 1889, when he and mother with my oldest brother John and sister Nellie came to Klamath Falls. Dad bought 160 acres in the Spring Lake district, and after farming there for two years, they moved to Fort Klamath. This was in 1891. His brothers, Fred, Richard and Gus moved there some time before. The first few years the going was quite rough. He raised a few cattle and horses. In 1896 he bought 720 acres of land and added to it until he had a good sized ranch of about 1500 acres. This he stocked with sheep and was one of the most substantial sheep raisers in the valley. He was also President of the Fort Klamath Irrigation District.

One year we had a very hard winter, I believe it was 1903 or 1904. The snow was deep and frozen but in February a Chinook wind started blowing and the sheep bogged down in the soft snow, became water logged and wouldn’t budge under their own power. Before they could all be rescued, 2700 of them developed pneumonia and either died in the snow, or after they were under shelter. I think Dad sold the rest of them the next
summer to a man in Jacksonville, along with our three legged sheep dog, Ring. That same year Dad bought cattle in Summer Lake Valley and brought them to the Fort.

Mom raised some wonderful vegetables in the old sheep corrals. One year, she raised one cabbage that weighed 50 lbs. and 2 that weighed 25 lbs. each. She sent them to the County Fair and the Judges cut them to pieces to make sure they were not weighted with something to make them weigh heavier.

As a whole, our life at Fort Klamath was a happy one, for we kids at least. There were six of us, John, Delia, Emma, Bill, Dan and myself (Edna). My youngest brother Fred, was born just two weeks before we came to Klamath Falls.

We kids were never really sick, just slight colds in the winter and a dose of quinine and a hot toddy soon fixed that. One day when I was four years old, I followed Emma and Bill into the hay-loft, hunting eggs. The hay was thin over the cow shed, and I fell through to the frozen ground and broke my arm. The nearest doctor was at the Klamath Agency. The snow was deep and frozen hard enough to hold up the sleigh and horses, so we cut across the fields to the Agency. If Dad drive fast I cried and said it hurt my arm. If he drove slow, it was the same thing. Believe me that broken arm furnished me with a lot of good excuses for the things I didn't want to do, or have done for me, such as having my hair combed. Mom soon fixed that, she cut my hair so short it didn't need combing.

We had an old sheep-herder we called Gus, and each year when he brought the sheep in off the range he usually came through Fort Klamath and brought we kids a sack of hard candy. This one time he didn't give us any candy and we thought he had just forgotten to give it to us, so Bill and I went on a candy hunt, going through all of Gus' pack boxes. All we could find was a jar full of what we thought was cocoanut, so we both took a big bite. It was so bitter, we spit and spit until we ran out of spit, then we went to the well, and washed our mouths. The bitterness was worse than quinine, and it took a lot of washing to get rid of it. I told Mom that we thought Gus had forgotten us, as we couldn't find any candy. She investigated to see what we had been into, because we had orders not to go into the old house where Gus stayed when he was back from the range. Our cocoanut turned out to be strychnine that Gus used to poison coyotes. Another time we got into trouble was caused by a skunk. Dad had promised Bill he could have a 22 rifle, if he could trap enough skunks to pay for it. One day we discovered a skunk in the chicken house, and the race was on. We chased him to the edge of the timber, where he went under an old log cabin and Bill and I under after him. We got the skunk and that wasn't all we got. When we got home, Mom stripped us in the back yard, put our clothes into the big iron pot she used to make soap in, and boiled them. Then she applied her hand where it did the most good.

The most memorable events of the year were the Fourth of July Celebration and picnic, our annual trip to Huckleberry Mountain and Christmas. In the winter we had to shovel snow off the sheep shed and this made a wonderful coasting place. Sometimes Mom and Dad would join us. Dad showed us how they coasted in Germany, in a dish pan. The outcome left a lot to be desired. Dad made most of our sleds, the only store one we had, was the one Uncle Fred gave to my little brother, Dan. It had a picture of a large bird on the seat and Dan called it his Swamp Angel.

In the summer we spent a lot of time in the timber, picking wild strawberries, apaws, and hunting bird nests, but we didn't destroy them. We did a lot of fishing in Seven Mile Creek with a twine string and a hook fastened to a willow pole. We caught a lot of fish too, using a piece of red flannel for bait.

Our schools in those days were a far cry from the elaborate schools of today, but I
think we learned our Three R's just as well as the kids do today. My oldest brother, John, had to go to school in Fort Klamath. The first school in our part of the valley was located in a corner of Uncle Fred's place about three miles east of Seven Mile Creek, on a north-south lane, in an old log cabin. A lady by the name of Mrs. McDonow, I think was the first teacher there. That was about 1898. Soon after a new school house was built about one-half mile north of the old log cabin. Other teachers I remember teaching there were Restora French, Tella Dixon, Ada Ditsworth and Thora Smith, who rode a white horse she called Nipper. Each noon she would let one of the pupils ride him down to the slough for water, just for fun.

Before my youngest brother Fred was born, my Mother was quite ill, and when Fred was two weeks old, Dad sold the ranch and moved to Klamath Falls, where he bought ten acres on Sixth Street between what is now Arthur and Avalon Streets. Our home was the only building at that time, between the railroad track and the old Altamont House. In 1923, Dad sold this place and bought two acres of the old George Nurse place on Conger Avenue from Gus Krause. He and Mom lived there until his death in November 1933. After Mom's death in 1934, the place was sold to W.D. Miller.

March 1989.... Data from Barbara Soule' Long.... Written by Ann Long McGill (Edna was my grandmother's cousin—Eva Elizabeth Melhase Soule')

Edna Melhase Robertson spent her adult years in Klamath Falls. For many years she and her husband, Paul, resided at the old stone "home" place on Link River.

Later, they moved to a home at the corner of Alameda and Esplanade where Edna lived until her death in 1988 (at the age of 90).

Family was always important to Edna. Her nephew, Ron, was orphaned as a teen and came to live with the Robertsons. Edna also was especially close to her sister, Emma Melhase Dunham.

For some years, Edna and Paul owned and operated a laundry at Spring and Esplanade. (Most recently the site of Medo Bel Creamery). After an accident caused Edna to lose full use of her hand, the couple sold the laundry and Paul joined the Klamath Falls Police Dept.

Through the years, the couple was very active in the American Legion and Auxiliary, with Paul serving at the state level. In addition to those activities, Edna was a long time active member of the Klamath County Historical Society.

During one period, the Robertsons owned a summer home at Lake of the Woods where they enjoyed fishing and berrying.

Edna loved nature and flowers and was an active gardener through her last years, trimming and nurturing her roses for the whole neighborhood to enjoy.

MUSEUM CALENDAR

APRIL: LOGGING AND LUMBERING on display through April 30th.

MAY: Preparation and Cleaning of the Baldwin Museum and Fort Klamath Museum.

JUNE 1: BALDWIN MUSEUM OPENS FOR SEASON.
FORT KLAMATH MUSEUM OPENS FOR SEASON.
TROLLEY BEGINS ITS SEASONAL SCHEDULE.

JUNE 3: 4th Annual BALDWIN OPEN HOUSE Sponsored by the Friends of the Museum....10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

JUNE: A Display of a Prominent Pioneer Family, THE APPLEGATES featured at the Klamath County Museum. Also Available, "SKOOKUM" a book written by Shannon Applegate about this well-known family which was published in 1988. Display shown June, July & August.

JUNE 9: Lecture and Dinner at OIT featuring Shannon and Susan Applegate. Reading from "SKOOKUM" and discussion of the influence of the Applegates on the Klamath Country. Meet the author. Co-sponsored by the Shaw Historical Library.

JULY 17-31: Historical Arts Festival. Baldwin Hotel Museum, times and dates to be announced. The Festival will include music, readings in costume, poetry, and drama. A must on your summer schedule. Theodore Swan, Coordinator.

AUGUST: An Old-Fashioned Picnic in the Park sponsored by the Friends of the Museum. Bring your own picnic to Veteran's Park or purchase one from a vendor. DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED!

AUGUST 25, 26, 27: 3rd Annual Quilt Show featuring antique quilts and new, sponsored by the Pelican Piecemakers of the Country Crafters Quilt Club at the Baldwin Hotel Museum.

SEPTEMBER: THE FRUITS OF THE HARVEST, Preserving, Canning & Drying. An exhibit of equipment, photographs of food preservation prior to supermarkets. Victorian Decorations Workshop! How to make decorations and gifts for the home and for gift giving. DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED. A Make It and Take It Workshop.

OCTOBER: Victorian Decorations continued.

NOVEMBER: Victorian Decorations & Wreath Making, continued.

FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM WHITE ELEPHANT SALE. Date to be announced!

DECEMBER 7: Annual Baldwin Open House following the Snowflake Parade. Baldwin is dressed and decorated for a Victorian Christmas. Refreshments and a hot drink to warm you up.

DECEMBER 9 & 10: ANTIQUE TOY SHOW. Baldwin Hotel Museum. Toys displayed are from private collections. Saturday and Sunday Afternoon.
DESMER TREQ
Come with us a trip to take
thru Klamath Marsh and Christmas Lake.
See the marvels of years gone by
of endless space and azure sky.
A hole that's round and very deep
circled about by cliffs so steep—
A crack in the rock, like splitting a rail
created by a twitch of the devil's tail.
Caves that were made by ancient men
beside a sea that served them, then—
Dust and sand and old square nails
water holes beside the trails.
Roads were made by pioneers
Homes maintained by sweat and tears.
We zig and zag with jeep and bus
the sights to see with little fuss.
Enjoy a camp-fire, stories and song
with our silvered tongue wagon-master—
Reubon Long.
With lots of loot we'll all go home
with rocks and limbs and tired bones.

SWEET 16 AND ALREADY A
PIONEER WIFE OF KLAMATH
COUNTY --1868

It isn't often that an early settler of any area leaves much more record of their experiences than a few letters or brief stories of some of the more dramatic moments of their lives. But it so happens that one of our earliest women settlers took time in the later years of her life to write down many, many of her memories and her account is to be found in Klamath Echoes #13. Her name is Ellen Hiatt Fulkerson and Devere Helfrich felt very fortunate to have been able to publish such a manuscript. It had come into the possession of Mr. Philpotts of Bonanza, an old-timer there and he had graciously allowed the copying and editing for use in the Echoes.

The account fills many pages in the publication so only a summary can be given here but hopefully after reading the summary you will enjoy, if you have not already, the complete story as she told it.

We will pick up the story of young Ellen as a teen-ager working for the owners of the Barron ranch near Ashland. It was here she met and married a young man named John Fulkerson who also worked for the Barrons. The following spring events took a turn that brought them over the Greensprings Mountains to become one of the early settlers of the Keno Plevna area.
John, in company with a Mr. Isaac Harris, was to take a few of the Barron cattle over to the Klamath area for grazing purposes. John's young bride persuaded him that she should accompany him on this summer-long outing which turned into a permanent situation.

So John bought a lively little pinto and lovely side-saddle for her use and on April 1, 1886, they started on their adventure. Ellen had really no experience of camp life and trailing cattle but her first lessons were not long in coming.

The first night was spent camping by Jenny Creek and she had her first experience of sleeping on ground that was coated with "cobble stones and boulders." Some lessons in camp cookery came next. A frying pan full of camp "Flap Jacks" fell into the ashes and she was about to discard the results but a look from the men convinced her a little dirt was to be expected in her food from there on.

Her third lesson came at daybreak the next morning when the process of getting across the rain-swollen creek was undertaken. She was placed on one of the pack mules and got safely across but was wet and miserable from the experience. After all this was only the first of April and mountain streams can be mighty cold about that time. Besides her pretty little side-saddle was perhaps ruined and the little pony nearly lost in the torrent.

On their third night out, they reached the road house run by Mr. & Mrs. O. T. Brown. They enjoyed the good food and hospitality offered by Mrs. Brown who is now recognized as the first white woman settler in Klamath County. She enjoyed the visit too as she had not seen another white woman for three or more months.

When they arrived at the open meadow-lands that lay on the slopes to Klamath River where the river waters back-up to form what she called a "lake", the matter of selecting a permanent camp site was soon settled. The men began to set up a brush arbor type of shelter with fir boughs and poles. That would be home for many weeks. The supplies would be still in saddle bags thrown in a corner and their only furnishings would be three stools and a crude table which John would be able to construct in his spare time.

They kept a calf tied near the shelter so they could steal some of the cow's milk for their coffee and cream for the berries they would find come summer.

In late May, the three made a trip to Ashland to bring in more cattle and this time Mr. Harris decided to bring his wife and children back with them. John and Ellen graciously moved out of the brush house so that Mrs. Harris and the children could enjoy a bit of privacy and protection it offered. They took up residence under a large juniper tree nearby. It was there she had her first experience with rattlesnakes. Lizards had been common and often crawled over them as they lay on their blankets but the night she woke up to find a rattlesnake crawling over her bed was just too much. To ease her mind, John built her a bedstead of juniper posts and rope netting so that could be up off the ground and able to go on with the camping out way of living.

However, with winter coming on, no juniper tree was going to be adequate shelter so John began squaring up some timber for a twelve by fourteen foot cabin. She mentions a neighbor, Dennis Crowley (Crawley) helping John and remembers the day when rain was threatening and still no roof. Crawley said, "Faith and begorra, John, let's get to work and put on some roof so's to git tha' lady outen tha' rain." That Dennis Crawley would later have his name become part of the Modoc war story because of his cabin being used by the military at the war's outbreak at Captain Jack's camp on Lost River.

The winter, on December 7th a son was born to John and Ellen. His name was George Edward and according to the research done by Helfrich, he would be the first
white child born in the area to later become Klamath County.

A boy was born at the Fort Klamath area in that same December but on the 28th. Ellen Fulkerson did not realize it then of course, but she would also give birth in August of 1870 to the first white Girl born in the county. Daughter Sadie Mae was also born in that Plevna area. Vinnie Shadler, who was once named as the first white girl born in the county arrived in Fort Klamath March 2, 1872 and Alice Applegate Pell was not born until the 28th of that month in 1872. (For further detail on these births, see page 12 of Echoes #13)

Ellen never made complaint of any circumstances excepting the rattlesnakes until the spring of 1869 when John made a trip back to Ashland without her, intending to be gone only for a week but actually it was three weeks. She confessed that in her words, “they were the longest three weeks of my whole life. There I was all alone with my three months old baby and a dog.” She recalled sitting there all alone watching the place on the hill side where the trail from Ashland came out into the open. She says, “I would sit in the doorway with my baby on my lap and the dog at my feet, just watching for my husband. When it would get too dark to see if he did come, I would go have a little cry and putting the baby to bed would go to bed myself, fearful of what the reason was for his failure to come home.”

But come home he finally did and in the spring of 1870, they built a new and a larger home back farther from the water. This was elegance indeed with two doors instead of one and a window too. And greatest of all was the addition of a cobblestone fireplace and lean-to kitchen on the south side. Helfrich has noted that the cabin down nearer the swamp area they had left may have been the first home of Robert Emmitt, noted citizen of the area who came in the early seventies.

Another whole story in itself is the portion of her book that deals with their experiences after they moved out to Langell Valley in the fall of 1872. They became settlers there just soon enough to share the panic of the settlers at the outbreak of the Modoc War. Their cabin situated where later the Brattain home sat, was prepared for the worst by a room dug into the hillside behind the cabin and accessible by a trench dug out from beneath the house.

Her recollections of her Langell Valley years have been of great interest to those tracing the history of that area.

Next time you have occasion to drive out to Keno and approach the section of highway between the Pioneer Grocery and the point of Juniper Ridge, look out over that peaceful field there and try to picture a rude brush hut or maybe a big tree with a camp site beneath and remember the pluck of a certain young pioneer woman.

~Janis Kafton~

If I look more frazzled than usual, it is only because it is BUDGET TIME and the budget spreadsheet is on a floppy disc!! Data Processing has been kept busy answering their telephone and fielding questions and at one point I even managed to wipe out the whole program. Now that the budget has been completed, I must admit that I learned a great deal. The budget hearings will be the next process. This might be a good time for you to let your budget members and commissioners hear of your concerns and express to them what programs you feel are important and are needed in the County. For my part, your continued support, whether by word, deed, or contributions, is appreciated. It is your encouragement that helps to lighten the load.
All your gifts to the Museum Foundation Endowment Fund will help us reach the intended goal of becoming a self-supporting operation. Paul Fitzhugh has been making frequent trips to invest in securities which are drawing maximum interest at a minimum of risk. To date the account shows $17,500 on hand. The by-laws of the Foundation stipulate that "...until such time as the corpus of the endowment fund exceeds $200,000, no part of the income from the fund shall be used for the recurring expenses of maintenance and operation of the museum." All the interest being earned is reinvested until the $200,000 level. At no time will any of the principal be expended, thus making the fund perpetual and the museum self-sustaining, having no need for general fund subsidy. Pass the word to those who may not be aware of this goal and help us reach it as soon as we can.

Pat McMillan

The First County Teacher's Institute took place in 1890

90 Years of Klamath County Schools (pg 6) adds details of typical institute.

"One necessary item of teacher's personal equipment was a horse and saddle. When the teacher's Institute was called, from remote outposts would come the teachers, many on horseback, to Linkville or later, Klamath Falls. Each would be required to take part in some way as the problems of the schools were discussed under the wise and kind supervision of the County School Superintendent."

THE FIRST WHITE MARRIAGE
IN KLAMATH COUNTY

The first wedding to be performed in Klamath County took place in the old George Nurse Hotel in Linkville at 6 A.M. the morning of July 16, 1871. The groom was young Simpson Wilson, one of the earliest settlers of Langell Valley, and the bride was 15 year old Nancy Ellen Hall.

Just prior to their 50th wedding anniversary in 1921, Simpson wrote a letter to a friend, quoted here in part. "---I was happy on the 16th of July 1871 because the 15 year old girl whom I wooed on the banks of Lost River, and I were made man and wife in a little box house at the end of a pole bridge that spanned Link River. ---He made me treat the whole town and it cost me $2.50. They hoisted the American Flag in our honor. I must say it was the only time the American Flag was ever hoisted in the breeze for me."

Recollections of the wedding were related by Mrs. Mary Richardson of Central Point years later (a daughter of the Wilson's).

"---Mother's wedding dress was blue worsted material. They had no honeymoon but drove all day by wagon and team from Linkville to their home in Langell Valley, eating lunch at the Lower Gap (Olene) on Lost River."

To this union were born eight children. Two in Jackson County, one in Lake County and five in Klamath County but all in Langell Valley! This was because of the changing County Boundaries.

(From the Klamath Echoes #4..pages 31-32) Janis Kafton
RECOLLECTIONS OF Elda Fletcher—She recalls her first train trip in 1910. They wanted to go to Roseburg but had to first go down to Weed, then over the Siskiyou to Medford, then on to Roseburg.

Evening Herald...June 26, 1915...... Mrs. C.K. Brandenburg, who has been declared the Apple Queen of the Klamath Basin, will send her apples to the Klamath Exhibit at the San Francisco Exposition. They have won three first place prizes already....
----200 Klamath folks are at the exposition.

Evening Herald.....Oct. 18, 1915...... Winema, most picturesque of Klamath Indian women, will be an attraction at the exposition after all. She left today for the San Francisco Exposition. She is now 72 years of age.

January 1921...The first County Nurse was Lydia Fricke (Mrs. Mark Howard)
(K. Co. Firsts...Rachel Applegate Goode)

WHAT'S GOING ON AT THE MUSEUM?
The display of old chain saws, the pictures of the old mills and the miniature lay-out of the old Algoma Mill can still be seen for a short time. If you have not been in the Museum this month you are missing an interesting exhibit.

Bob Lewis must be commended for his dedication to detail in the construction of his miniature Algoma Mill.

The Rock and Arrowhead Club have a new display on rocks. As you gaze on them your imagination tells you that you are seeing something else "A Meal Fit For A King!"

Another exhibit honors four local women during NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH who made significant contributions to the History of the Klamath area: Winema, Rachel Applegate Goode, Claudia Lorenz and Maude Baldwin.

Around 100 people a day took advantage of Spring Vacation to go through the Museum. Were you one of them??

The Evening Herald......July 23, 1910

The town of Malin is showing good growth and the growing of Sugar Beets will soon be an important industry in the area.

The Evening Herald.....June 14, 1915

FORD PICNIC ANNOUNCED...."Owners of Ford Cars from all parts of Klamath County are to enjoy a picnic on June 20th at Spin'k's Camp on Spring Creek, according to an invitation being sent out by George Biehn, the local Ford Agent.
The Evening Herald.....January 29, 1916

One way to boost Klamath Falls is to number your houses. This will some day result in our getting free mail delivery.

The Evening Herald.....January 31, 1916

The new Spring Lake-Laki telephone line is in working order, and will soon be completed to Klamath Falls.

Klamath Country History Book ...pg. 179

The year of 1921 was when the cement flume which crosses highway #39, south of the Henley School was constructed.

Klamath Daily News.....July 13, 1921

"Earnest Hamaker, is the proud owner of a new "Dixie Flyer". There are only two other autos of that make in town."

!!DUES!!

Have you paid your Annual Dues to the KLAMATH HISTORICAL SOCIETY yet???

The Dues are $3.00 per person. Your dues help to defray the expense of the Newsletter mailed out quarterly.

The Society meets the 4th Thursday of the months..... September through May.... at the Museum Meeting Room on Spring Street.

The April meeting will be held at 7:30 P.M. Hope to see you there!