

## KING FAMILY REUNION

Kings Valley School

Kings Valley, OR

June 27, 1998

President Charlotte Wirfs presided over the meeting. About 25 family members and guests were present.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A new booklet, The Kings of Kings Valley by Audrey Theurer is for sale at the Kings Valley Store, \$8.00.

The store also has note cards with scenes of Kings Valley for sale, \$2.00 each.

Jayne King sent information on a walking tour of the King's Hill historic district of Portland. Copies are available from the Goose Hollow Foothills League, Inc., 817 NW 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Portland OR 97210.

A discussion took place about a query pertaining to the Wash Patterson connection. (See King Folk newsletter #15, June 1998, page 9 column 1.)

NOTE: King Folk #15 is dated June 15, 1996-but it should be dated June 15, 1998.

Carole Putman recently completed a new book, Naughton-Norton Family of Bristol, CT and Canaan NY. The book compiles considerable research done by Carole in recent years.

Charlotte reported that back issues of King Folk are available for \$1.25 each. Please mail requests to Charlotte.

### STORY TIME:

Charlotte then told us a ghost story, which is summarized below.

Frank and Jackie Walker now own the old Cosgrove place in Kings Valley. They had some strange happenings in their home, which is located on a corner of the Isaac King Donation Land Claim. (On Almeda King Zumwalt's portion of the King claim.) The Walkers decided the strange occurrences may have to do with the ghost of Isaac King, who died under mysterious circumstances there.

A TV station brought in some ghost busters during the last year. The Walkers claim they have several ghosts, including the man of the house and three small children who play in the creek. A lady ghost stays outside. They also have some animal ghosts on the farm, and they even have some photos of the ghosts.

Frances Ramsey and Annie King Burgess of Salem gave a video tape of the TV story made on their farm.

Charlotte visited the Walkers, and told us that she saw the "ghost pictures," which have white circled lights in them. Others have little wispy cloud-like forms. The Walkers took the pictures with various cameras, and they did not see the ghostly forms until the film was processed. One looks like a tornado shape.

Charlotte said the video has some incorrect information about Isaac King, and the TV program said some pictures of Chambers family members were Kings, which is not true.

Also, the Walkers are planting a vineyard, and some think the ghosts may be pre-publicity for the winery.

Then, another TV station wanted to interview Charlotte. She agreed, and said it was very scary for her, as they took a long time to do the taping. Charlotte and the TV crew also went to the Walkers and taped them. While at the Walkers, the ghost made an appearance! A dispute took place between the cameraman and others present about whether it was really the ghost, and the tape never aired on TV.

Judy Junton (?), librarian of the Benton County Historical Society Museum, also was interviewed and the TV station aired about ten seconds of that interview. Judy told Charlotte that some think the ghost could possibly be Chester Cosgrove. (Someone who saw it thought they recognized it as Chester.)

Earl Greig said the Cosgroves' daughter Rita is a neighbor of his, and she knows nothing about a ghost.

Daniel Frommherz said he wants to go with Charlotte to visit the Walkers. He said he has a tendency to be able to feel such presences.

Charlotte said the lady at the store said that no one has ever seen ghosts before in Kings Valley.

Earl said his mother, Retha Greig, was raised in Isaac King's house, and no ghosts ever bothered her. However, other visiting children sometimes were uneasy because they had heard about Isaac's death.

#### BUSINESS MEETING:

Daniel reported that yesterday he went to the Benton County offices and obtained maps and other information. He displayed copies of portions of the Benton County land record indexes.

Before 1855, people could live on the land and simply agree with their neighbors about property lines. In 1855 the government made the first official survey. Daniel said, if one stood on the line between Sections 20 and 29, the Mary's River crossed and headed north. If one looked 51 degrees true north, he would see Mr. (Nahum) King's home. He said the Benton County Public Works office has a book saying the DAR members saw two sandstone markers on the uphill side of Nahum's home. The lettering on the stones was already worn off, but the stones were known to mark the graves of Nahum and his wife Sarepta Norton King. The DAR wanted to better mark the graves,

but the Department of Transportation refused to allow this in the 1940's. The graves were too close to the right-of-way of Highway 20. So the DAR put a memorial stone in the Kings Valley Cemetery in memory of Nahum and Sarepta. However, we believe they were buried on their Donation Land Claim. Today, the Hemphills own the property.

Daniel said if traveling west on Highway 20, downhill from Wren, the Mary's River crosses under the highway. A graveled driveway, little used, is on the left, just past Wren. The driveway follows a gentle slope until it rounds a bend, when it becomes fairly steep. It comes around some trees, then heads downhill toward an old barn and some farm equipment. The present owners have added onto the house.

Dorothy Brown says we have permission to go into the area and look for the graves. Mrs. Hemphill has looked for them also, but did not find them. There was an orchard beside the house.

Jim King said he searched with his father years ago (about 1949-50). The area had been logged, and Jim remembered lots of rocks strewn about the area. His dad, Hollis King, saw the graves once before that.

The chain of land ownership for the property went from Charles King to the Mullers to the Hemphills who now own it.

Dorothy wants to have someone go in with a metal detector. She said she will try to find the graves this summer, and invited others to help with the search.

Joan Larsen said Earl Price was always going to take people up to see the graves.

Daniel said Benton County Public Works Department sells copies of the original 1855 survey.

Dorothy said Stephen King is also buried on that land claim. Davis Morgan's family knew where it was, across the fence from the orchard, but now no one knows the location.

#### NEW ATTENDEES:

Tom Hudson, whose wife was Jean Dolores Read, daughter of Chauncey Read. Tom said he is continuing his research for his daughter and grandchildren. Tom lives in California.

Mary Lou Long, a descendant of Hopestill King Norton.

Also another family was here earlier in the day, trying to connect with our Kings. They think they will connect with the Kings through other Kings Valley early families. They will continue to do their research.

Daniel said next year he will bring a computer and scanner, so he can scan pictures into the computer. He said if people will bring their own diskettes, he will make file copies for them.

Dorothy reported that Nellie Stark, a lady in Wren, is working on writing a history of the Wren community.

Charlotte asked everyone to send stories or articles about Kings Valley to her.

#### FAMILY TREASURES:

Pat Bearden brought a woven rug, made by Ashnah Norton Plunkett, Pat's great-grandmother. Ashnah is said to have had a large loom that took up one entire wall of their home in Kings Valley.

Joan Larsen brought three crystal dishes, given by Ashnah Norton Plunkett to family members. Joan explained that Ashnah's sister had several daughters. One was Joan's great-aunt Minnie Price, who was very fond of Ashnah. When the Price girls got married, Ashnah gave each of them a dish. Aunt Minnie and Eethel never married, but Ashnah gave them dishes anyway. It was their dishes that Joan brought to show, and she thinks the third one was her Aunt Edna's. They left the Valley about 1910. All three of the lovely dishes still have their lids.

Joan then displayed a tan ceramic bed pan. She said it came from the Watson-Price farm, and belonged to Aunt Minnie's mother. Whenever someone in the Valley was sick in bed, that kind lady would grab her hat and the bed pan and go loan it to the sick one. It was the only such item in the Valley.

#### MISCELLANEOUS:

Donald VanEtten said he loves to hear these stories-they are what make family history worthwhile.

David & Libia Trask left the gathering, as they have a long drive home to Medford. David reported that his brother, Dean, is getting married in about three weeks.

Note: DAVID-You wanted us to remind you to bring toner for the copier next year!

Earl said he has a weaving that is about the same size as the one Pat brought, but his was made by Hopestill King Norton. Hopestill also made red and white quilts for her offspring. Earl has the one she made for his grandmother, Retha's mother. Hopestill was Ashnah's mother.

C. W. "Bill" King told about his classmate, Pat Chambers, at Corvallis High School on 6<sup>th</sup> Street, across from the railroad station. When Bill told his mother about his friend Pat, she said he might be related to Bill. Bill asked Pat about this possibility, and the question was overheard by another boy, Harlan McIntosh, who piped up with, "Well, I don't know which one to feel sorry for!" As it turned out, the two boys were indeed related.

This year's attendance was smaller than usual.

Charlotte has resumed publication of the King Folk newsletter, after taking some time off.

A discussion took place about the longevity of this King family reunion. Some think it began in 1888, when "Creesh" and Lovisa (King daughters) got together with their families. If so, that was 110 years ago!! We know that the Kings have met every year since the early 1930's. This is a great old family tradition!

Someone asked why no one comes from Amos King's family (the "rich King.") Daniel said Amos was not rich, but he just "fell into some good stuff in Portland."


Daniel noted that Sol King was one of five signers (in 1874) of the first economic development commission. It was just after they had purchased the valley railroad, and each reportedly put in \$500,000.

Charlotte asked each descendant present to fill out an "I'm a King's Kid" paper listing their ancestry, to add to the display posted on the wall. The wall display had a section for each of the 12 King children who have descendants. Pat suggested that we need to also remember Hannah and Dulaney King, daughters who died in Ohio, and James Russel King, all of which died young. Someone else suggested that we also need to honor Saretta King, the eldest daughter who remained in the east.

Charlotte said King Folk dues are still \$10.00 per year.

A short discussion took place about the meaning of the name Sarepta. (Please see note below.)

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 P.M.



Patricia Plunkett Bearden  
Secretary

Note: After the reunion I did some research and learned that Sarepta is a Biblical name of a city. Luke 4:26 refers to "Sarepta, a city of Sidon." It was near Sidon (Zidon.) Sarepta is the Greek word for Zarephath. According to Smith's Bible Dictionary, Sidon/Zidon was "an ancient and wealthy city of Phoenicia, on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, less than twenty English miles to the north of Tyre."

## King Family Reunion at Kings Valley School June 21, 1997



Charlotte Wirfs presided over the meeting. Just before meeting day, she had received notice that the school gym was being treated and also that the water at the school was contaminated. Charlotte solved these problems by bringing several gallons of bottled water for coffee and washing. We weren't allowed to use the gym, but everyone managed to squeeze into the entrance area by the kitchen. The weather was rainy and cold or we could have met outside.

Florence Gross came with an idea. She had copied a number of small sheets so each person could show their descent from Nahum King. We wore these during the day and could easily be identified with our King ancestor. She will take these sheets and type them for reference. Florence brought her booklet of her first 25 years, which can be purchased from her for \$10.00.

Charlotte explained that our dues of \$10.00 is divided into two parts: \$4.00 will go toward tombstone repairs and \$6.00 for printing and mailing *King Folk* newsletter. There is now \$400.00 in the cemetery fund. Dues will not be collected at the meeting. A notice will be printed in the newsletter when due.

The Baby (King) tombstone will be returned to the Locke Cemetery, where it was found. Charlotte has a list of other stones to be repaired. Send information about broken stones to her. Suzanne San Romani said she would work with the Locke Cemetery people to repair and return the stone.

The youngest member of the King clan was recognized: Edward Joseph San Romani, born April 27, 1997. He is the grandson of Carol Nelson and son of Suzanne (Nelson) San Romani.

Audrey Theurer gave a report on the Fort Hoskins Historic Park and handed out brochures. Benton County purchased the land in 1992. Restoration will take a few more years. It is on the National Historic Register. A grant was received to begin work but more funds will be needed to continue the effort. The original hand-dug well is not up to standards and will have to be replaced. Our group will be on her mailing list.

New members were welcomed: Frances King Ramsey, and her niece, Sandra Edwards and grandson Robert M. King. Also attending for the first time are Donald and Naoma Jones and their daughter, Crystal Jones. David Trask introduced his wife, Libia, who was attending for the first time. Other newcomers were Earl Kiger and Carol Hagel, descendants of Sol King through William B. Kiger and Fred Kiger.

Jim King agreed to be vice president, replacing Carole Putman. Charlotte Wirfs will remain president, Pat Bearden as secretary, and David Trask as historian.

Carol Nelson volunteered to help with new ideas for the reunion, cemetery clean up, continuing the King T-shirts, and collecting stories and information of our ancestors. She mentioned that Aunt Dort had called and said hello to all.

Glenva Chotard reported that Wren has started an historical society. Contact Dorothy Brown of Wren for more information.

Earle Greig has pictures to identify which he will show after the meeting. His mother, Retha (Allen) Greig sends her greetings.

It has been a tradition for many years to have the King reunion on the first Sat. following Father's Day at Kings Valley School. It was decided to continue with the tradition.

Florence Gross related a story about her brothers and sisters. Mary and Walt were mischievous pals. They enjoyed experimenting with matches out by the woodpile. They would see who could hold a match the longest before dropping it. One time a sister saw a fire develop in the wood chips. Their story was that the sun was so hot, it started a fire!

Joan Larsen tells of a strange kettle she has. It was found at the old Watson homestead where the Prices lived. It came from the old smokehouse and was a big black cast iron kettle with handles and a large domed lid with a spout at the top. Someone said it was used for clambakes. Then the secret came out. It was a still for making moonshine.

Audrey Theurer announced that the WPA interviews by Mark Phinney will be in the reference library in the Philomath Museum.

About 35 people attended, including three children. Charlotte closed the meeting by encouraging people to come with stories to tell. A developing story is of the Isaac King ghost, reported by a family living on part of his DLC. Perhaps there will be more to tell on that at the next meeting.

Submitted by Carole Putman for Pat Bearden who was absent.