

KING FAMILY REUNION  
Kings Valley School  
Kings Valley, OR  
June 24, 2000

About 45 people were present for the annual meeting. President Charlotte Price Wirfs presided.

A number of first time attendees introduced themselves.

Lots of improvements have been made at the cemetery during this year.

Writer Linda Crew, of Corvallis, was present. She is not a family member, but is interested in writing books on the Oregon Trail and the King family. She published *Fire on the Wind* in 1997 and *Children of the River* in 1989.

Charlotte asked for help with publication of "King Folk," the King family newsletter. She said it will now be published only twice a year, but with more pages in each issue. (This will also mean higher postage costs.) Several people will help. Earle Greig will take the newsletter to the printer and fold and mail them. Mimi Stang has the mailing list now, and Anne Trusell is helping with collecting the money. We will not have a bank account, and family members are asked to make their checks payable to Anne Trusell. Also, we need to notify Mimi, Anne or Charlotte of any address changes. Mimi is keeping the database current.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Charlotte will continue for another year as our president. She asked for others to begin considering taking over some of the offices.

Our vice president is James King, who had already left the gathering before this meeting. He is agreeable to serving for another year.

Secretary is Patricia Plunkett Bearden, who will continue in that position.

David Trask is our historian. (We need to keep sending any family obituaries to David.) People also may contact him for copies and information.

We need a treasurer, so Charlotte designated Anne Trusell to serve in this capacity.

LOCATION OF FUTURE REUNIONS: We have been meeting here for the past ten or twelve years, but there is a possibility that the Kings Valley School may close. We may be able to use the church across the road, but there is no water there and the facilities are not as nice as here in the school gym. We have use of the gym and facilities for only \$10.

Mimi said the Camp Adair clubhouse is available—for \$600 per day! (It is now run by a catering company, and Benton County Parks owns the building.)

The Benton County Historical Society building in Philomath or the church next door are other possibilities, as is the new fire hall nearby. Someone also suggested the Marys River Grange building.

FAMILY HISTORY—No one has had any experience setting up family web sites, but this is something to think about for the future. Sometimes students need projects and may be willing to help.

Daniel Frommherz was not able to attend this reunion, but he submitted a well-written article which was distributed to all in attendance. Daniel is trying to straighten out our information on some of the very early generations of Kings in America.

The death date for Sarepta Norton King is in question, and exact dates are hard to pin down. So, we will rely on her obituary to settle this question.

A discussion took place about the whereabouts of the original King family Bible, which was in the Horner collection. Audrey Theurer will find out if it is still there.

No one knows where the Isaac and Amos King family Bibles are now, but some family members have photocopies of the information they contain. Charlotte asked that someone please send her a copy.

Carole Norton Putman noted that the Norton family Bible shows Hopestill King Norton's death date written in later, and she thinks it is off by one year.

Charlotte noted that she publishes things in the newsletter as they are submitted, and then if someone later sends in a correction, she publishes that.

Earle Greig reported that the cemetery project needs volunteers.

Audrey Theurer noted that part of our King Family Association dues go into a cemetery fund, which is what initiated the cemetery updating project. The new cemetery gate looks like it is locked, but the padlock is not fastened. She said those who helped on the project have done a "phenomenal job." She added, "This group is so supportive, I'm never going to get over the shock of it!"

Earle noted that all labor is volunteer. So far, the group has only spent money in the fund on needed supplies that were not donated. Someone even donated a tractor!

Charlotte recently moved to Aurora, OR. She said that whole town is on the National Register of Historic Places, but the only cemetery maintenance done there is when a neighbor lets his goats into the cemetery!

STORIES—Charlotte said her father-in-law has been working on Wirfs genealogy for years, going back to Massachusetts during the era when the Kings were there. They finally found a common ancestor there for both Charlotte and her husband, Walt.

Malie Sellers said she found she is related to Katherine, daughter of William King(e). There were three known Hallock-King marriages.

Charlotte's grandparents were second cousins through the King family.

Question: Does anyone know where and when Luther King died? He was in an old soldier's home in Roseburg in 1910. He claimed he was a soldier at Ft. Hoskins, but there is no record of that service.

Don Van Etten noted that those in attendance should take advantage of today and shake the hand of C. R. "Bill" King. Bill graduated in 1931 from OSU, and he is the only one in the room who actually knew Solomon King. This is an opportunity to shake hands with a man who shook hands with a man who came on the Oregon Trail!

Tom Hudson noted that on October 21, 1866 an unresolved murder took place. The body, an unknown man, showed marks of violence and was partly burned. It was found by McGee and one of the Kings. "Another unresolved King mystery."

Al Fromherz noted that his Grandad Abe King was "full of the Old Nick," as was his mother. Abe died before Al was 8 years old. Al said that Abe tried to teach all the kids to lead. And, he added, "We didn't disappoint him."

Joan Larson told about her Aunt Minnie Price, who also went to OSU. She worked her way through Columbia University and became the first extension agent in Massachusetts.

Joan displayed a basket from Price Creek. The Siletz Indians were allowed to travel through between reservations, and they would stop along Price Creek. They used the basket to gather eels. The Indians considered the eels to be a delicacy and also winter food. The Indian women spent the time there catching and drying the eels. They were fatty and nutritious, choice Indian food. She said they actually camped on Aunt Minnie's parents' property. They were friendly and harmless. The Indian women were amazed to see white women with so many living children around them. Once in awhile the Indian women would sneak into the orchard and snatch the apples that were lying on the ground. Fallen apples had yellowjackets on them, so they would grab one, shake off the bees, grab another and shake it off, and so on. One Indian woman took a liking to Minnie's red skirt, so she traded the skirt for the Indian basket displayed today. One Christmas morning, Minnie gave Joan the Indian basket instead of a check.

The Confederated Tribe of Grand Ronde came to a meeting once. The women brought baskets, formed a circle and told stories about their baskets. They kept them within touching distance always, because of their value. They had already lost the art of making them in the old traditional ways.

Joe Fromherz, age 81, spoke about George Newberry, Sol King's son by an

Indian woman. George had a chauffeur-driven car. He also gave a car to the Fromherz family. Joe also read two poems, including "Life begins at 80."

Carol Nelson said she has some old property deeds from Sol King. She found them in the basement of the Benton County Court House, among other documents they were discarding.

Carol also noted that there is a tribute to Dorothy King Young in a native plant publication.

Art Larson said that Aunt Minnie Price graduated at age 24 from OSU in 1912. She was born in 1888. When she was 96, he and Joan would visit her in a nursing home, and she always said she liked Art's warm hands on her cold feet. Once three ladies who were deans of home economics in three states—Massachusetts, Minnesota and Ohio, all visited Minnie. They were attending a convention in the Northwest. All three got their start in home extension under Aunt Minnie in Ohio.

Ellen Craven said she and her husband traveled along the Oregon Trail route from Independence, MO. On the wall in a museum there they found a quote from the letter that Anna Maria King wrote from Oregon to relatives still in Ohio. That letter was published in eastern newspapers.

Earle added that Anna's letter was found in Sol King's pocket when he died.

These King family reunions have now been taking place for nearly 150 consecutive years. For many years they took place at Avery Park in Corvallis, before moving here to the Kings Valley school gym about a dozen years ago. The King, Chambers and Fromherz families kept it going, but descendants from all family lines attend. Our definition of "The King Family" refers to the family established by Nahum and Sarepta Norton King. It also includes all the interrelated families.

A recent newsletter from the Benton County Historical Society had an update on the Horner collection. The bed pictured in the newsletter was Hopestill King Norton's bed.

Carole Putman's book "The Nortons of Bristol, CT and Descendants" is available. It was published in 1998.

Back issues of "King Folk" newsletters are also available for \$1 each from Charlotte. (19 issues).

The meeting adjourned at 3:08 P.M.

Patricia Plunkett Bearden,

Secretary