

KING FAMILY REUNION
Kings Valley School Gym
Kings Valley, OR
June 23, 2001

About 53 people attended the potluck lunch, and about 45 people were present for the annual meeting. President Charlotte Wirfs presided. Charlotte offered compliments to all the cooks for their contributions to a wonderful feast.

Charlotte announced that the Kings Valley School is no longer a part of the Philomath School District and will no longer operate as a public school. However, it will continue to operate as a community charter school next year, and we are welcome to hold our annual reunions here in the future. This was good news!

VETERANS MEMORIAL REQUEST

Charlotte introduced Les Whittle, a proponent of the Benton County Veteran's Memorial at Corvallis. The memorial is on NW Kings Boulevard, near Fred Meyer, and it honors 115 veterans from Benton County who were killed in action, plus 6 more veterans still missing in action.

Whittle said the veterans' groups would like to rename a portion of Kings Boulevard to "Veterans Memorial Boulevard," as a tribute to all veterans. However, they do not wish to interfere with the King Family history, so they propose to leave the Kings Boulevard name from Grant Street northward. He said because of publicity surrounding this request, it might be a good time to republish some of the King Family history in the Gazette-Times while they are working on both memorials.

Charlotte drew a map on the chalkboard to illustrate the intent of the project. Whittle said he wanted the family to know what was happening, and to ask for our support on the effort to rename the street.

Charlotte then opened the meeting for questions. Someone asked what would happen if the family did not give its blessing, and Whittle said then a heavy decision would need to be weighed, and stressed that he does not want to see any hostility develop.

Someone suggested renaming Lincoln Street instead, which runs alongside the memorial. Whittle said the City vetoed that idea, since Corvallis streets in that area are named for presidents.

Charlotte suggested that individual family members could contact Whittle if they have strong feelings regarding the request. She said she doesn't feel that we need to make a decision today as a group, especially since we now have a mailing list of 200 names.

Whittle said there is no date scheduled for him to return to the City Council. He said interested persons may contact him as follows: Les Whittle, (541) 752-3222 or e-mail, lesvetsmem@aol.com . He then left the meeting.

CEMETERY

Charlotte announced that the Kings Valley Cemetery Association has been revitalized, thanks in part to our support. She introduced Audrey Theurer, of their board. Audrey said she thinks we are “wonderful, because we support them morally and financially.”

Charlotte said she gave the cemetery board a copy of our map of the cemetery, and noted that they are still looking for unmarked graves. They want any information on that which we can provide to them.

Audrey said that few pioneer graves in the cemetery are marked with veterans flags on Memorial Day, so if we have any family members who served and are entitled to this recognition, we need to let her know.

Charlotte said that lots of documents could be used to identify unmarked graves. She cited the situation of previously unmarked graves of Andrew Jackson and Almeda (Van Bibber/King) Zumwalt, where a letter from a family member established their specific location.

Audrey also asked for photocopies of any death certificates we may have for people buried at Kings Valley.

Family Association dues are \$6 per year, with the option to add \$4 more to be used for cemetery supplies, repairs and maintenance.

Earle Greig reported that 151 stones have been straightened up and realigned during the past two years. He added that the cemetery gate is always unlocked, but a lock hangs there so it looks like it is locked.

Maxine Bell was wearing clothing she wore on the 1993 reenactment of a wagon train across part of the old Meek Cutoff. She explained about the functionality of each piece of authentic pioneer clothing during a delightful and informative presentation.

BEAZELL MEMORIAL FOREST

A new park is being developed at the old James Plunkett farm at the south end of Kings Valley. The Beazell Memorial Forest was named for the most recent owner of the land. He died and bequeathed 160 acres to Benton County for park purposes. The new park site is open to the public for the first time at 1:00 P.M. today, during the time of our meeting. The new park will be open to the public in about two years and will include hiking trails, picnic areas, etc.

Jane Teets brought in some lapel pins that said "I'm a King's Kid," for sale for \$1.00 each. She said they sold out rapidly, but she will bring more next year.

CHALLENGE: WHERE ARE JOHN & SUSAN KING BURIED?

Charlotte issued a challenge to the family for the next year: To locate the grave site for John and Susan King and their two children who drowned in the Columbia River as the family made its way down river on a raft in 1845.

Daniel Frommherz said that Solomon King was able to closely pinpoint the location. Bertha King interviewed Sol, who was 8 years old when the family arrived in Carroll County, MO. He said the black people there teased him about his bright red hair. He also said that the raft caught in an eddy on the first day out from The Dalles. It spun the 40-foot raft around and knocked several people off, including John, Susan and two of their children. Sol said they buried all the bodies at The Dalles in one grave.

(Another story said that the raft went over Willamette Falls and the bodies were never found.)

The 40-foot raft was also carrying several wagons with wheels removed, lashed down to the deck. Meanwhile, they herded the oxen down the south bank of the Columbia River.

Charlotte again challenged us to try to find information on this incident and the location of the grave, if possible.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Current officers are president, Charlotte Wirfs; vice president, James King; Secretary, Pat Bearden; and Historian, David Trask. Also, Anne Trusell has acted as treasurer during the last year.

Charlotte noted that David also collects copies of all family obituaries, and asked us to send them to him. David also requested copies of family group sheets, as he wishes to begin setting up a central repository for them.

Charlotte announced that she is stepping down as president, and Jim King also wants a break. David, Anne and Pat will continue in their positions.

Carole Putman nominated Mimi Stang as president, and Mimi accepted but noted that her grandson's grandfather is the King family member, not herself. She said she "will hold it together" while Charlotte takes a break.

David Trask nominated Earle Greig as vice president.
Unanimous votes were cast for Mimi and Earle by a round of applause.

THANK YOU TO CHARLOTTE AND JAMES FOR ALL THEIR WORK ON
BEHALF OF THE FAMILY IN RECENT YEARS!

Charlotte noted that Betty Brummett was wearing a t-shirt from about 1992, jade green which was at the time designated as the color to represent Hopestill King's line. She explained that each King child with descendants was assigned a color about ten years ago, and we had t-shirts, sweatshirts and caps made up with the King coat of arms. Several people here today liked the idea, so Charlotte suggested that perhaps we could look into doing it again. Pat Bearden volunteered to work with Charlotte on this.

Charlotte noted that Bill Dixon had displayed, earlier in the day, a quilt top hand-pieced by Ashnah Norton Plunkett. It is in pristine condition, and was probably one of the last ones that Ashnah made, around 1930. However, Charlotte said some of the fabrics were much older than that.

Charlotte introduced several people who were here for the first time, and warmly welcomed each.

LAST ISSUE OF "KING FOLK"

Charlotte distributed the last issue of the "King Folk" newsletter that she plans to compile and edit, issue #21. She said perhaps it can be continued in a different format, such as online, on a web site, or perhaps someone else will do another version of the newsletter.

KING FAMILY WEB SITE

Jackie Farris is working on setting up a King Family web site. Jackie said she wants to get Kingfamily.com as our domain name, if possible. She asked people to e-mail her at jackiefarris@proaxis.com with anything they would like to post on the new web site, saying she was very open to suggestions. She said the site will not be flashy, but plain and basic and full of information. Cynthia Bell cautioned about violating anyone's privacy, and it was agreed that posted information must be generic in nature. It should be open in the next week or two.

Jackie said she's "not a writer," so she welcomes suggestions for any improvement in wording on the web site.

Charlotte also said we must not forget the non-computer users, so perhaps we might

do a shorter, bi-annual newsletter, using material off the web site.

Charlotte has complete sets of all 21 issues of “King Folk” for sale for \$20.

Daniel Frommherz also offered to make family information available at his web site, mckenziemarket@continet.com.

Daniel brought a door prize, a not-quite-finished tabletop fountain, so the youngest family member present, Ryan Trask, 2, drew the winning ticket which was claimed by Jackie Farris.

The oldest member present was Francis Rexford, age 83. Frances asked how many veterans were present today, and about a dozen hands raised.

OPEN FORUM

Audrey Theurer talked about the new Benton County Museum, now being built in the old Copeland Building on Second Street in Corvallis. She explained that it will house the Horner collection, which for years was on display at Gill Coliseum.

The Benton County Historical Society started the museum in Philomath and then they later took possession of the Horner collection. They are currently inventorying the Horner collection and cataloging it.

She noted that the Corvallis and Philomath museums will remain separate. For researching and use of the library, Philomath is the place to go.

Someone mentioned the King Bible that was loaned to the Horner Museum by Bertha King. In 1963, the museum notified the family that the Bible was missing, and it never was found. (It was suspected stolen.) Since no one knows the real extent of the Horner collection, we have hope that it might turn up yet.

VETERAN'S MEMORIAL ISSUE

Charlotte then asked how the family group wanted to be involved in the veterans memorial issue, and the possibility of a change in the name of a portion of Kings Boulevard.

Daniel said that in 1880 Sol and Annie King's farm was located where Gill Coliseum is. King Road, as it was then called, ran from that farm to his 1200 acres across town where he summer pastured his herds. The change to Kings Boulevard came about in the 1950's.

Earle Greig said he is against the name change. Pat Bearden suggested we do a show of hands for who wants the change, doesn't want it or doesn't care, so we have some feeling for the prevailing opinion. After a short discussion, 28 hands were raised in opposition to the proposed street name change, while no hands were raised in favor of the proposal. Four people indicated they have no opinion.

So, we apparently do care. Ellen Chambers, who works for the City of Corvallis, suggested that the family send a letter to the City and also have several family members testify when the time comes.

Bill Dixon said he went (as a courtesy) with Les Whittle to two City Council meetings. While the Council didn't make a vote, Bill said that he didn't think they were for the change.

Consensus was that the letter should reference this meeting and the fact that the original King Road ran from pasture to pasture, and stating that we would like the existing King Boulevard to remain with that name. (Someone noted that there are many other ways to memorialize veterans.)

Charlotte, Earle, Ellen and Mimi will work on the letter from the family. Individuals may also write their own letters to the City. Charlotte and Mimi will co-sign the letter, as past and present presidents.

"Uncle Joe" ____? ____ told some short anecdotes and then sang a number of verses from "Sweet Betsy from Pike."

Bill Dixon then gave us a report on the public meeting at the new Beazell Memorial Forest park, which he had just attended and then returned here. He said the old Plunkett place was rented for 40 years, and the renters did some real damage to the home. However, the old barn is in very good shape. The county will try to fix the home and keep it as part of the park. He said about 20 people attended that meeting.

Bill grew up there, living with his grandparents Henry and Ada Plunkett. He said nothing looks the same, especially the house that was "kind of a mess." Eventually they plan 5 to 6 miles of hiking trails. They need to check all the environmental requirements, so actual park construction likely will not begin until spring of 2002.

There being no more business, the annual King Family Association meeting adjourned at 3:55 P.M.

Patricia Plunkett Bearden
Secretary