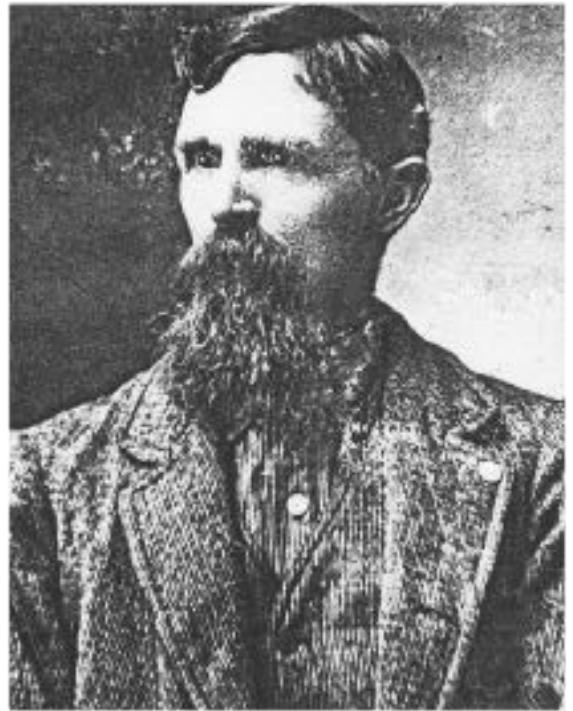


Kings Valley Tour #2, Stephen King DLC

Compiled by Earle Greig and Charlotte Wirfs
June 2018

For many years Stephen King's DLC in the Wren/Harris area of Benton County Oregon has been posted with "no trespassing" signs by different owners. There is no road into the place where he is buried. In June of 2017 the subject of putting a marker on Stephen King's grave was introduced at the annual King Family Reunion. And so the search for the grave started.

Charlotte Wirfs presented a program on Stephen King at the King Family Reunion held in Philomath, Benton County, Oregon Saturday, June 23, 2018. In addition, Earle Greig wrote the account of the search for the grave of Stephen King and presented it as this hand-out at the same reunion.



Anna Maria King wife of Stephen (1822-1905)

About 200 years ago, Stephen King (photo above) was born July 13, 1818 in Madison County, Ohio. He grew up on his father's farm in Canaan and Darby Townships of Madison County Ohio. In 1841 he moved with his parents and extended family to Carroll County, Missouri. They farmed and ran businesses at a point in the Missouri River called "The Big Bend". Here he married Anna Maria Allen (Photo at left) on Christmas Day, 1843.

After the river flooded much of their farm and holdings in 1844 Stephen's father, Nahum Amos King, moved his extended family to Polk County, Oregon Country where many of them settled in the Kings Valley and Wren area. At that time there was no Benton County. Polk County extended all the way to the California line. Benton county was formed in 1849 and it also extended to the California border.

Another reason for the move from Missouri is that consumption, or tuberculosis, plagued the King family and they were seeking a climate better suited for them. Stephen had been ill before leaving MO and during much of the journey across the plains, but became very ill, with a fever, near Fort Boise. Anna Maria reported of his illness and that he almost died in a letter she sent to her mother, Anna Bangs Allen, from Luckiamute Valley, Oregon Country in 1846. She said he rallied after arriving in Oregon Country and was now better and was recovering well. Stephen only lived 4 years after the letter was written. He did not completely recover and died in the fall of 1852. Anna Maria thought that he probably died of consumption, but malaria and typhoid fever were other illness that many Oregon pioneers contracted. It also caused many sustained illnesses and deaths for those traveling the trail.

During the years that Stephen lived in Polk/Benton Counties, Oregon Country/Territory, he did manage to stay healthy enough to function and establish himself as an active part of the community. Oregon Territory was established Aug. 14, 1848 and Oregon became a State in Feb.14, 1859, seven years after Stephen died.

His only child, Charles Allen King (pictured right with Ethel) was born Feb. 2, 1848. Charles was age four when Stephen died. Charles grew up and lived his entire life near Harris, Benton County, Oregon. Charles first married Martha Susan Robinett Dec.12, 1869 and had three children. He divorced and married Margret E Barnes



and had a daughter named Ethel

Stephen served in the Cayuse Indian war with his friend, Oscar F Clark. Stephen's younger brother, Solomon, gave a deposition for Oscar's widow, Mary Ann Allen Clark, who was applying for widow's pension years later, that he had seen Oscar and Stephen ride off together and return together three months later.

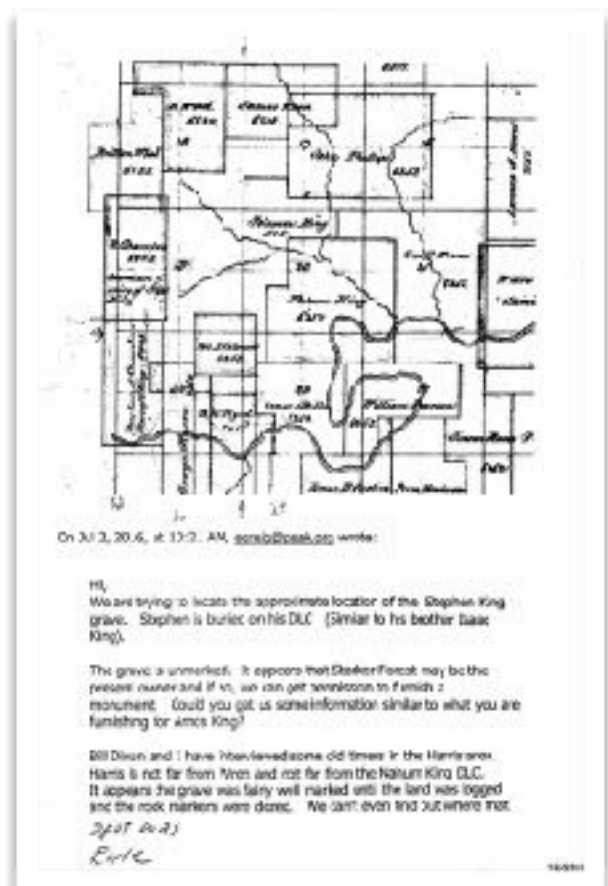
Stephen helped his brother-in-law, Rowland Chambers, build a grist mill in Kings Valley along the Luckiamute River. Stephen died before the mill was completed in 1853.

Stephen filed for an Oregon Donation Land Claim in stating that he arrived in Oregon in 1845 and had been living on the claim since November 1, 1851. He built a cabin, planted an orchard, and started farming on his land. Mary's river ran through his farm and Stephen and his family had a view of Mary's Peak. He is reported to be buried in the orchard.

He served on the first Benton County grand and petite jury with his father and many of his neighbors in the winter of 1852.

Pat Brown who married a descendant of Stephen King, Dorothy Turner, knew where Stephen was buried as well as the location of where Stephen's parents, Nahum and Serepta Norton King, were buried. Pat told Earle Greig that he would show him those graves, but Pat died in 1999 before he could show Earle.

In June of 2017, at the King Family Reunion the family hoped to place a stone on Stephen's grave in 2017/18 and Earle decided to make it a goal to locate the grave. Here is the story of Earle's journey to complete that goal. First, he wrote a letter. (See photo at right). Then he wrote an article about what happened...



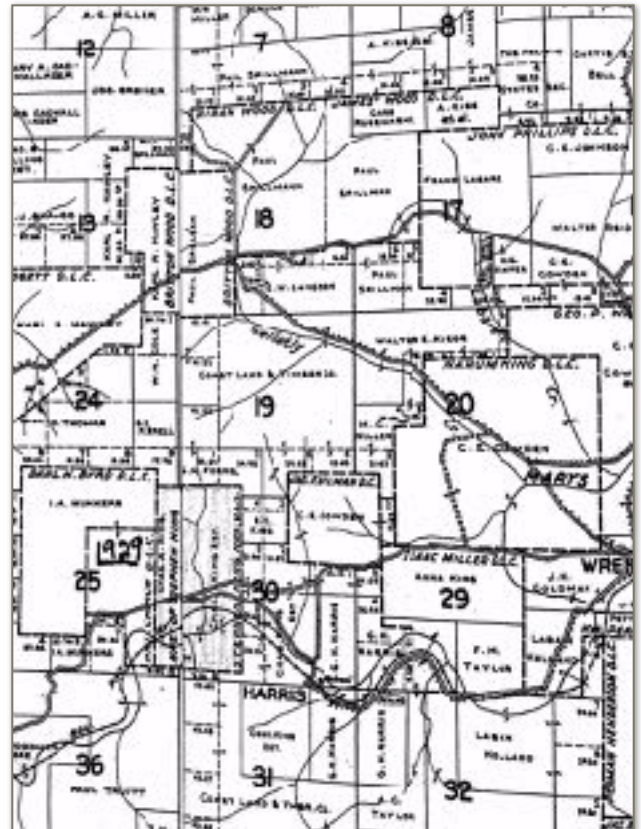
Finding Stephen's Final Resting Place

Earle L. Greig
June 17, 2018

In 1999 I was talking with Dorothy Turner Brown, a member of the King Family and a direct descendant of Stephen King. Nellie Stark, one of the contributors to the book, Memories of Wren, Oregon, had told me that Dorothy's husband, Pat Brown, knew where Nahum and Sarepta King were buried. Dorothy told me that her husband also knew where her ancestor, Stephen King, was buried. I located Pat Brown and he told me that Stephen was buried near his orchard and that his grave had been marked with rocks. Unfortunately, the area had been logged and the cat skinner did not know the rocks marked the grave and he scattered the rocks by crossing the grave several times. Pat agreed to take me to the site and also agreed to show me the site of Nahum and Sarepta's grave. However, it was late in the year and he suggested we wait until the good weather the following spring. Sadly, Pat died in November, shortly after our conversation.

Some years later, I was again reading my copy of Memories of Wren, and twice came across references of Stephen King being buried near his orchard. This was a direct quote of what Pat told me. I suggested to my friend, Bill Dixon, that we might search for Stephen's orchard. We barked up a lot of wrong trees in the beginning.

Stephen King had one child, Charles Allen King, and we assumed that the Charles King farm near Harris is where Stephen was buried. (see map at right). We found orchards, but we were not even on Stephen's DLC. His claim was on the other side of the road. About this time, Bill and I met Wren resident, Karen Kennedy, who compiled Memories of Wren. She advised us to go to the Benton County offices and talk with Joe Mardis, Benton County surveyor. We struck gold.



Joe had the original field notes taken by the surveyors about 1856, four years after Stephen King died. The note stated that the surveyors had set up on one boundary line of Stephen's claim and they could see his house. They wrote down the angle to the house. Next they traveled down the boundary line and noted the exact distance. From that point they could again see the house and they set up and took another shot. Joe then gave us directions on how to get to that location. Problem: private property, gate closed, "No trespassing". What to do?



Bill had the answer. (See photo of Bill Dixon on Stephen King's DLC at left.) Bill would contact his friend, Marc, who was a forester for Starker Forest. Marc was intrigued by the information. He had a key to the gate and one weekend, he hiked in. He found the orchard. Fir trees and shade had killed most of the fruit trees, but a couple of apple trees and one pear tree still had a few blossoms. Marc had a metal probe and went

probing around some scattered clumps of moss. He finally found a large concentration of moss-covered rocks about five or six inches in diameter. Within a short distance was a small deck of rotting logs, not enough for a load but certainly the cat skinner had crossed the grave numerous times while building the deck. Marc then went into a nearby clearing and took photos of daffodils, which he concluded to be the cabin location.

In my mind, I am confident that Marc had located the orchard and grave of Stephen King. If a surveyor followed the field notes, I firmly believe that he could also locate the cabin location, which probably was near the daffodils, near the orchard and near the pile of rocks.

In the fall of 2017 Marc took some of us to see the site. In addition to Marc were Bill Dixon, myself, Anne & Rick Trussell, and Karen Kennedy, compiler of Memories of Wren. I think we all felt that this was indeed the



grave of Stephen King as well as his orchard and cabin site. (See group photo at left).

Sometime in the spring of 2018, Marc advised Bill that shortly after our visit the site was completely logged. Apparently the logger had learned about the grave site and did not disturb it. In fact they left a few trees surrounding the grave. Also Bill learned that the property is up for sale.

(Photo below) is Earle Greig, fall of 2017



Bibliography

Memories of Wren, Oregon, by The Wren Historical Society, Wren, Oregon; November, 1998. by Nellie Stark, Karen Kenndey, Pat Brown, Elmer Taylor, Dean Sartain, Jim Hoyt.

History of Benton County Oregon, by David D. Fagan, Portland, Oregon; A G Walling, printer, lithographer, etc; 1885.

Portrait and Biographical Record of the Willamette Valley, Oregon; Chapman Publishing Company; Chicago, 1903.

History of the Pacific NW, Oregon and Washington, Vol. II; compiled and published by North Pacific History Co; Portland, Oregon; 1899.

Early Indian Wars of Oregon, Part II, Muster Rolls, by Francis Victor Fuller; originally published 1894 by C F Baker; Oregon State Printers; compiled and indexed by Julia Kidd, 1894.

Pacific NW Indian Wars, by Ray H Glassley; "The Cayuse Wars of 1848"; Binfords & Mort Publishers; Portland, OR; 1953.

Oregon Covered Bridges, an Oregon Documentary in Pictures, compiled by Bert & Mary Webber; photos by John Snook & others; Webb Research Group, 1999.

Two Years in Oregon, by Wallis Nash; Published by D Appleton & Co.; 1892.

"Impressions and Observation of a Journal Man", by Fred Lockley; The Oregon Daily Journal; Portland, Oregon; Interview with Orelia Chambers Randall; April 4, 1929.

King Family Obituary Collection, compiled by David Trask, King Family Historian, Stephen King Binder; Medford, Oregon.

Family Research Records, compiled by Earle Greig, Corvallis, Oregon.

Pittmon Map of Benton County, Oregon; Oregon Blueprint Company; Portland, OR.

Metsker's Maps of Benton County, Oregon, Tacoma, Washington.

Benton County Land Survey Maps; Corvallis, Oregon.

www.ancestry.com; King Folk Tree, compiled by King Family of Oregon.