

KING FOLK

Newsletter No. 11

June 1, 1995

Back When in Benton County Part 2

Nahum and Serepta Norton King



Nahum, the patriarch of the King family who first settled Kings Valley in northwest Benton County, was born in New Salem, Mass., in 1783. His parents, Amos and Hopestill (Haskins) King, whose ancestors had come to Massachusetts colony before 1638, moved as far west as Albany, NY., when Nahum was a boy.

Grown to manhood, Nahum married the local belle, Serepta Norton, daughter of James and Dulany (or DeLaney) Norton. Nahum was 24; Serepta was midway between her 15th and 16th birthdays when they married in May 1807.

The family Bible shows that their first child, Saretta, arrived in March 1808 and a second daughter, Lucretia, in July 1809. Both girls later became wives and mothers. Lucretia and her family came to Oregon eight years after the rest of the family.

In all, Serepta and Nahum had 16 children. Three of them died while still children. Eleven, most of them born in Ohio, continued the westward trek with their parents.

In Ohio, they lived in Madison County for more than 20 years. Nahum served briefly in the army in the War of 1812. High water in flood periods may have been the factor in their decision to move on to Missouri. They settled in Carroll County on the Big Bend of the Missouri in the central part of the state about 1841.

The flood of 1844 destroyed their farm, and the spring of 1845 finds them getting ready to move on to Oregon, where they hoped to find well-drained, free land where floods would never bother them again.

Other families, including the Arnold Fullers who had lived near them in Ohio, joined them near St. Joseph with covered wagons, oxen, horses, cattle, and food and equipment for the long trip across the plains and mountains. By this time two sons and two daughters had married and the King clan included seven grandchildren. There were ten members in the Fuller family.

The Kings' son-in-law, Rowland Chambers, protested that he could not afford to take his wife, Sarah, and their two children to Oregon. Father Nahum insisted, however, and provided funds for the purpose of equipment and supplies. He wanted to keep the family together.

Kenneth Munford



Next week: Preparing for the Oregon Trail.



WHAT'S NEW?

We have completed the relocation process and are settled in our new home in Albany, Oregon. I missed hearing from you, so here's my new address and phone number:

Charlotte Wirfs
3180 Fir Oaks Ct. S.W.
Albany, OR. 97321
(503) 926-5908

The move went smoothly. It just took time to complete the process. Thank you for your patience.

The King reunion will be held at the Kings Valley School gym and kitchen area, which is located in the rear of the school, Sat. June 24. Lyneé Beebe-Carpenter and her family will once again set up the area, organize the kitchen, and clean up. They will be at the school ready to receive pot luck food items at 9:30 a.m.

A cemetery clean-up has been organized by Suzanne San Romari from 10:00 to 12:15 at the Kings Valley Cemetery. You may want to stop at the school to drop off food and for a cup of coffee before going to the cemetery. Suzanne has contacted the Kings Valley Cemetery Association and we'll be working with their directions. This work project is optional and for those choosing not to participate, the school will be open at 9:30 a.m. and coffee will be provided so you can visit and share ideas and information.

A video recorder and copy machine may be available for use.

Lunch will be served at 12:30 when the cemetery crew returns to the school. Following lunch there will be a short business meeting. Activities will be available for those who are not interested in the meeting. After the meeting, you'll be free to go on visiting, return to the cemetery, or participate in some games. By 4:00 p.m. we'll all go our different directions.

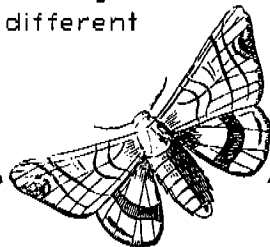
Things to bring will be pot-luck lunch items. There are refrigerators available. Please bring your own table service and drinks (coffee provided). Those of you going to the cemetery should bring soft bristle scrub brushes, rags, buckets, spray bottles, and protection from the sun. Also be forewarned that poison oak will probably be present. Others bring information to share, questions, and your selves.

My thanks to Lyneé and Suzanne for helping to organize the reunion this year.

This issue of King Folk has the second part of Fred Lockley's interview of Amos King. Carole Putman sent Notes Collected by Rena Norton concerning Amos King. Part 2 of Back When in Benton County, by Kenneth Munford is included. Nadine Long also sent the words to a song written by Bill Van Atta, The Grave of Sarah Chambers. Sarah's grave marks a 150th anniversary this year. Perhaps that is why Suzanne San Romari nominated Sarah's grave site to the National Register of Historic Places. She'll be able to tell us the outcome of that at the reunion.

QUERY

Peter King of 5037 Arroyo Lindo, San Diego, CA. 92117, (619)274-7492, telephoned me wondering if his King ancestor connected with the Nahum King line. His ancestor is David Armstrong King who married Mary Hinkle. Together they came to Oregon from Lee Co., Iowa on an 1853 wagon train. They settled first in Waldo Hills (Sublimity) area near Salem, OR. and later relocated to the Corvallis, Benton Co., vicinity. The connection with Nahum's family may be an earlier connection.



Interview with N. A. King

By Fred Lockley

Reprinted from "Impressions and Observations of the Journal Man", The Journal, Portland, OR., June 4 & 5, 1928.

Part two

Amos N. King, pioneer resident of Portland, bought a hillside claim from Apperson and Balance in the spring of 1849. They had bought the claim, with the tannery, from D.H. Lownsdale. They wanted to go to the California gold mines. Later Balance came back from the gold mines and worked in the tannery for Mr. King to get a grubstake so he could go to the newly discovered gold mines of Jacksonville. Recently I visited Nahum Amos King, the son of Amos Nahum King, who was born in a log cabin on this hillside claim on Feb. 17, 1855. He told me of his own boyhood days and also of his father's early-day experiences. His father, Amos N. King, came with his parents and brothers and sisters across the plains to Oregon in 1845 and was with the party that took the so-called Meek's Cutoff, wandering around in the desert of Eastern and Central Oregon for weeks before they finally made their way back to The Dalles.

Mr. King's father took up a claim in the spring of 1846 on the Willamette river near Corvallis. He had plenty of land but was short on money. He decided to go into the freighting business on the Willamette river. He had heard a good deal about how dangerous the Clackamas rapids were. He had run a ferry on the Missouri river and also had done a good deal of boating as a young man, so he decided to have a look at the Clackamas rapids and see if he could negotiate them. He stopped at Oregon City and started down the river, keeping close watch for the Clackamas rapids. Presently he met a man in a boat and asked him how far down the river it was to the Clackamas rapids. The man said, "You have already come through them." Mr. King decided that if



he could come through the rapids and not even know it, they couldn't be very bad.



He went on down the river to Vancouver and announced that he was going to run a boat for freight and passengers between Vancouver and Oregon City. The first trip he made no money. On the second trip, however, he made \$2.00. The other boats were on the river, but after a short time both suspended operations and Mr. King had the business to himself. Later he put on a boat above the falls and carried freight and passengers from Vancouver to Yamhill. He guaranteed to make the trip in two weeks, and often made it in less time. They usually either poled up the Clackamas rapids or lined up. He hired two men to help him, and they carried all the freight on their backs around the falls.

Lownsdale had sold out his tannery, so when Mr. King bought out Lownsdale's successors he owned and operated the only tannery in the Northwest. The high wages paid in California and the flood of gold dust put in circulation by returning miners made wages high. Mr. King had to pay \$10.00 a day for labor. He got high prices for his tanned leather. He got a dollar for an inch strip the length of the hide, to be used as a bridle rein. Because of the shortage of hides he tanned more deer hides than cow hides. While buckskin was good for moccasins, unless it had been smoked it would shrink, so people were glad to pay any price to get tanned leather. However, there was a demand for all the buckskin he could tan, as it was used for making breeches and jackets. Hats also were very scarce. Mr. King lost his hat in the river one day, so he went to Vancouver and the only hats they had on hand were high silk hats, so he bought one and thereafter ran his boats dressed in a buckskin shirt, buckskin breeches and a high silk hat.

When N. A. King learned that I knew his uncle, Sol King, in Corvallis, while attending the O.A.C. in 1889 and '90, he said: "My uncle Solomon was born in Ohio, Feb. 26, 1833. He crossed the plains with my father and his other brothers and sisters and his parents in 1845. There were 64 wagons in the train in which my father and Uncle Sol and the others came across the plains. They elected Colonel W.G. T'Vault captain of the wagon train. On the South Platte they divided the train. After that, James McNeary was captain of the train my folks were in. My uncle John, with his wife and three children, died, and one of my aunts died, on the plains.

Interview with N. A. King, Part two, p.3

"My uncle Sol took up a place near my grandfather's in King's Valley, but sold out and came to Portland. After a year or two he went back to Benton county and took up a place near Corvallis. This place joined the property now owned by the Oregon Agricultural College. In 1872 my uncle Sol started a livery stable in Corvallis. He conducted a livery business till 1883, when his livery stable was burned. My uncle owned 1200 acres joining the city of Corvallis on the west. He was elected sheriff of Benton county in 1876 and served for a good many years. He was one of the strongest men I ever saw. In his prime I don't believe he ever met a man that could handle him. My oldest sister, Mary Ann, died when she was a baby. The next child, who was a boy, also died in infancy. My sister Nautilla married E. J. Jeffrey in 1867. My next sister, Lucy Ann, married William White, who was a stockman in Lane county. I was the next child, being born here in Portland in 1855. My brother Edward lives at Oak Grove. The first school I attended was on Morrison street, near where the postoffice was later built. Professor Frambes was my teacher. Later I went to school to Miss Way. The next school I attended was on Third and Stark streets. I went to school for a while when I was a little chap to the Catholic school. When I was 20 I went to the business college of which De France and White were the proprietors.

"I was married on July 19, 1876. I was 21 years old at the time. Rev. Plummer, as Episcopal minister, performed the marriage ceremony. My sister, Mrs. Jeffrey, is about the only one who is still living who attended our marriage. The next morning my wife and I started together for Lake county. We drove down to Eugene and crossed the mountains by the old military wagon road. We settled in the Chewaucan valley, south of Silver Lake. I had arranged to buy 7000 acres of land from the state at \$1.00 an acre, but someone else beat me to it, so I only got 1000 acres, but later I picked up a lot more land. The 1000 acres I bought was about the finest hay land you ever saw. It was covered with wild blue joint grass, which was No. 1 green and also made No. 1 hay when dried. Our nearest neighbor was 35 miles away. We got our mail twice a year.



NOTES COLLECTED BY RENA NORTON

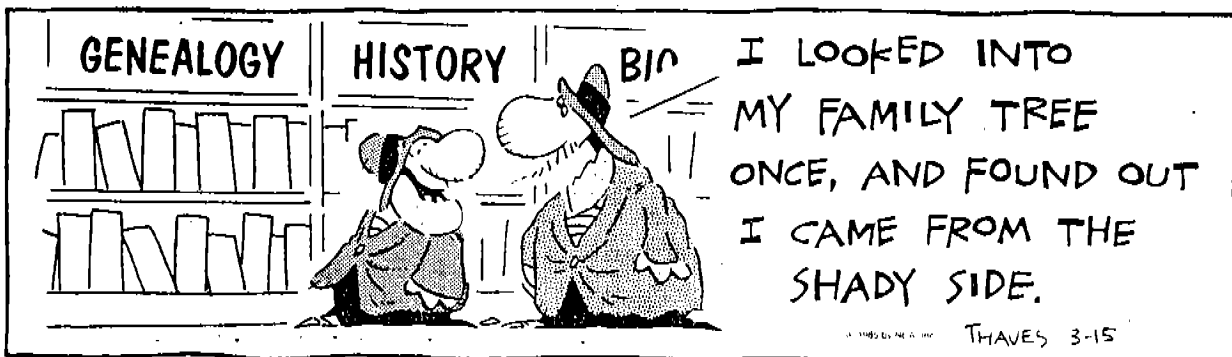
Rena Norton collected some notes about Amos ^{King} ~~Norton~~ in the early days of Portland, Oregon.

Charles H. Korell, a man who knew Amos King, told her the following story: Aim King wore moccasins--some neighbors were going east--Aim said they must bring him some boots. They were East a year but brought Aim's boots back with them. Aim was chopping brush once and cut his leg. He said he didn't give a whoop about his leg but he did about his boots.

Also Korell said Aim had a water system when Korell first came to Portland and that he took water from King. Also said the Kings at one time ran the street railway--horse cars.

Miss Sarah Jane Rands of Lincoln, Nebraska, knew the Amos N. Kings of Portland when she was a small child of about 7 years old. Her father fought Indians, and was wounded by an arrow and later died. Amos King aided her mother in disposing of her property in Portland before they left for New York on the ship, OrriFlamme. Miss Rands also related that her mother used to help Mrs. King to plan dresses for the girls, Lucy and Tillie King. Once when they were all going down town to purchase something for sewing. Mrs. King asked Lucy to return to the house and get more money. Miss Rands (as a child) went back with Lucy. They went upstairs and Lucy opened an old chest and dipped out a handful of twenty-dollar gold pieces. She doesn't know whether the chest was full of gold or whether just a small quantity was on top. Miss Rands also tells that there were heaps and barrels of apples in the cellar of the King home in those days.

Typed April 1995
Carole Putman
Notes probably collected in the 1940's



FRANK AND ERNEST

THAVES 3-15



We Called Her Sally

Memories of Sarah King Chambers

By Charlotte Wirfs

For the last 150 years, she was known to many Oregonians as "the woman in the grave." It is the grave of Sarah King Chambers, which to those who have seen it, evokes a sense of mystery. It lies in the Oregon wilderness near the waters of Beulah Lake in Malheur County, within sight of Castle Rock, sometimes called Fremont's Peak. It is said to be a "lonely grave, marked 'Mrs. S. Chambers Sept. 3rd 1845,' surrounded by wild, unspoiled beauty."

To historians there are several unique qualities about Sarah's grave. It marks the road of Meeks Cutoff, supposedly a short-cut to the Willamette Valley that would be a quicker and easier road than the usual route of the Oregon Trail. It is also a rarity in that very few graves of Oregon pioneers were ever marked, as family feared vandalism by Indians. The stone was so carefully selected, carved, and placed by human hands. Finally, it is unusual for it still remains in good condition after 150 years.

Who was this woman? How did she get there? Why did her life end as it did? Luckily we know the answers to these questions, mostly due to written records and oral history passed on by those who were with her the day she died, or those who passed the gravesite over the years.

Sarah King Chambers was known to her family as "Sally". She was the daughter of Nahum and Sarepta (Norton) King, born July 25, 1823 in Madison Co., Ohio. It was there at age 18, that she married Rowland Chambers Aug. 17, 1841. Soon afterwards the King clan began their westward move, as her two children, Margaret and James Chambers were born in Carroll Co., MO. These youngsters were still in infancy and toddler stages when the family left Mo. in the spring of 1845. Sarah was not quite 22 when she started her fatal journey over the Oregon Trail.

The earliest report of her death reached civilization when Sarah's sister-in-law, Anna Maria Allen King, wrote "home" in the spring of 1846. Anna Maria told of the six-month trek, describing good weather and easy traveling until

they arrived at Fort Boise on the Snake River. Sickness had overcome the wagon train at Fort Laramie when whooping cough and measles went through their camp. Anna Maria's letter indicates that a "slow, lingering fever prevailed" after leaving the "old road" and taking the a new trail recommended by Stephen Meek that was hoped to take them over the Cascades Mts. and directly into the Willamette Valley in 20 days. This new route was abandoned when the travelers began to run out of provisions and conditions became intolerable for humans, animals, and equipment. The King clan had enough provisions to see them through, but "sickness and death attended" them the rest of the way.

Donna Wojcik Montgomery describes Sarah's death in her book The Brazen Overlanders of 1845. The King family was camped along the north fork of the Malheur River just south of Castle Rock. They had already traveled 100 miles since leaving the old route at the Snake river. On the evening of Sept. 2nd or 3rd Sarah "lay in her wagon hovering between life and death". She had contracted "camp fever" a while back and although everything was done to ease her suffering, she died and was "laid to rest beneath the sagebrush."

Lambert Florin writes of her headstone in a magazine article, "The Grave of The Woman", published Aug. 1980 in True West. He tells of a bereaved husband, Rowland Chambers, who stayed behind to mark his wife's grave when the King party moved on the morning following Sarah's death. A saddle horse was left behind so that he could catch up with them upon completing his task. He went down to the river and chose a flat, light-colored stone that was harder and older than the black lava that was also present. It most likely took him a day to smooth the stone and inscribe Sarah's name and the date, but he did rejoin the family and traveled with them to the Willamette Valley as they found their way to The Dalles and down the Columbia River to the Tualatin Plains, where they spent the winter of 1846. Less than six

Continued on next page

We Called Her Salley, continued

months after Sarah's death, Rowland Chambers married again. The wedding took place in Washington Co. of Oregon Territory Feb. 22, 1846. The bride was Sarah's sister, Lovisa King. Together they raised a large family, including Sarah's two children, on their Donation Land Claim in Kings Valley where they settled in the spring of 1846. They are buried there in Kings Valley Pioneer Cemetery.

L. K. Bullock, a resident of Vale, OR., was age 83 when Florin wrote his article. Bullock stated he liked to go fishing at Beulah Lake and he had heard about a lone grave in the area. He searched for the grave for many years. When he finally located it, the marker was laying flat on the ground, which he felt was an easy target

for vandalism or theft. He secured the stone, standing it upright, sometime in the late 1960's by building a base of cement for it. He said he put the date on the left-hand edge of the base.

The latest written record is from L. E. Tiller, who co-authored a book with Keith Clark, Terrible Trail, The Meek Cut Off: 1845. Mr. Tiller wrote a letter, dated July 26, 1992 to the King descendants stating that the Northwest Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Ass'n. had placed a pole fence around Sarah's grave along with "an informational plaque explaining who Sarah was and how she came to be there".

In the future all who pass by Sarah's lonely grave will know her story. It also serves as a memorial to the 30,000 or more who perished along the Oregon Trail.



Song No. 10: The Grave of Sarah Chambers

By Bill Van Atta and Dan Coleman

From: The Songs and Music of the Oregon Trail

"Go West, Vol 1"

1992 Prairie Dog Music

Sarah King Chambers was the first of many to die along what is known as "The Terrible Trail of Meek". Stephen Meek, convinced an entire wagon party to take a short-cut across Oregon's great desert to avoid the treacherous slopes of the Blue Mountains. Visiting her grave one September's eve, I could not leave without capturing with my pen this tribute to the often forgotten courage and virtue of the pioneer women who made the settlement of the West a reality for the men who toiled.

All alone out here on the prairie,
Overlooking the Oregon trail
Lies the grave of Sarah Chambers
A testimony to the pioneer's will.
Standing here upon this timeless sage hill
One can hear the beast of burden groan,
Hear the clanks of their chains.
And the creaks and the strains
Of the oak and the ox as they rolled on.

Sarah, why did you come here?
Tell me why did you leave home?
Was it love for your man that made you bold?

Did your love for the
Lord
Lead you to this land
Or was it faith in shinging gold?

September 3, 1845, and your name on a rock
Upon this hill is all that's left of a woman's life
so vibrant
All that's left of Sarah's life to tell.
Still I wonder someday will she be there
When her story is finally told.
Is it faith in her God that lies beneath the sod
Or is it faith in shining gold?

Sarah, why did you come here?
Tell me why did you leave home?
Was it love for your man that made me bold?
Did your love for the
Lord
Lead you to this land
Or was it faith in shining gold?
Tell me why, Sarah, Tell me why
Tell me why, Sarah, what made you bold?
Is it faith in your God that lied beneath this sod



WILEY NORTON

Among the keen, progressive, and substantial agriculturists of Polk County, conspicuous for their ability and worth, is Wiley Norton, whose father, Lucius C. Norton, and maternal grandfather, Nahum King, were Oregon pioneers. An important factor in promoting the industrial interests of this section of the state, he is actively and prosperously engaged in his free and independent calling near Lewisville, his home farm being one and one-half miles from the village. A native of Missouri, he was born at Big Bend, Carroll County, March 27, 1844, and was but a year old when he was brought to Oregon.

Born in Illinois, December 26, 1818, Lucius C. Norton subsequently settled in Carroll County, Mo., where on October 7, 1839, he married Hopestill King, who was born February 7, 1816. Her father, Nahum King, an early settler of Missouri, was born in New York state. In 1845 Mr. Norton and Nahum King, with their families, crossed the dreary plains, coming to Oregon with ox-teams. Losing the trail at Meeks' cutoff, they were nine months on the way, and endured terrible hardships and privations, their provisions giving out just as they reached The Dalles. After spending the first winter on the Tualatin plains, in Washington county, they proceeded to Benton county, where both men took up donation claims of six hundred and forty acres each. The town thus founded, was afterwards named Kings Valley in honor of Mr. King, who became one of the leading men of the place. He was a tanner by trade, but engaged in general farming from the time he came to Benton County until his death, in 1853. Mr. Norton's farm adjoined that of his father-in-law, and he was there successfully engaged in agricultural pursuits during the remainder of his active career, dying at Kings Valley, May 6, 1859. His wife survived him many years, dying November 16, 1893, at Norton's Station, Lincoln County, Ore. Four boys and four girls were born of their union, six of whom are now living, namely: Isaac, a resident of Benton county; Wiley, the subject of this brief sketch; Ashnah, wife of James Plunkett, of Kings Valley, Sereptah; wife of Willard L. Price, of Kings Valley; Nahum, residing at Blodgett, Benton County; and Lucius C., of Lincoln County.

After completing his studies in the district school, Wiley Norton assisted his brothers for a while in the care of the home farm, after their father's death. On coming of age he married, and began housekeeping on a homestead farm of one hundred and sixty acres in Blodgett's valley. He continued there as one of the most successful farmers of the vicinity until 1900, when he assumed possession of his present farm, near Lewisville, Polk County, it being a part of the donation claim which Mrs. Norton's father took up from the government. He has nine-three acres of land, the greater part of which is in a high state of cultivation, twelve acres being especially devoted to the cultivation of hops.

On May 18, 1865, on the farm which he now owns and occupies, Mr. Norton married Nancy A. Zumwalt, who was born on Tualatin plains, Washington county, Ore., May 25, 1847. Her father, the late Isaac Zumwalt, was born in St. Charles County, Mo., May 20, 1815. Coming to Oregon as a pioneer in 1846, he took up a donation claim near Lewisville, in Polk County, and was here engaged in mixed husbandry until his death, March 21, 1891. He married Sarah Crow, who was born in Missouri, June 13, 1815, and died on the home farm in Polk County, June 8, 1885. Twelve children, seven boys and five girls, were born into their household, Mrs. Norton being the sixth child in succession of birth. Mr. and Mrs. Norton have six children living, namely: Arthur, residing in eastern Oregon; Warren, of Benton County; Serena, a stenographer, in Idaho; and James Emmett, at home. Mr. Norton is a strong Republican in politics, and has served as road supervisor, and school director and clerk.

From:

Portrait and Biographical **RECORD** of the Willamette Valley, Oregon
Containing Original Sketches of many well known Citizens of the Past and Present
Published by Chapman Publishing Company, Chicago, 1903

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