

King Folk eNews

KING PIONEER FAMILY ASSOCIATION

**DUES FOR 2024/25
have been placed on
hold.**

**We have about
\$6500.00 in our bank
account. Our expenses
for 2023/2024/2025 were
fees for The Philomath
City Park, King Folk
ancestry.com account,
and for our website,
kinfolk.co and a
donation to Kings Valley
Cemetery Association.**

**Until we decide on a
project, the board will
not be collecting dues
until farther notice.**



King Pioneer Family Association Reunion

Photo: Philomath City Park, June 22, 2024, by George Davidson

Small Gathering for 2024 Reunion

New Cousins, A new Book, and a News Article

Here are the Highlights of the Meeting

as recorded by Patricia Plunkett Holler

About 25 people attended the reunion held at Philomath City Park. Two new members were welcomed, Walter Price from Lovisa Chambers connection and Roberta Williams who is from the Hopestill connection.

Bradley Fuqua, of the *Philomath News*, interviewed Traci Wiley and some other members for an article he was writing. Please view that at philomathnews.com "Descendents of Kings Valley's Pioneer family, Proud of Their History," Search for Vol. 5, number 129, June 26, 2024

King Pioneer Family Association

This family is made up of the descendants of Nahum and Sarepta King, Oregon Pioneers of 1845.

All information published in King Folk is printed as presented. For that reason the information presented may not be completely accurate. Corrections and updates are published when they become known.

Current Board Members:

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A resident of Kings Valley, Joe Fulton, had copies of his book, Oregon's Little Eden. A History of Kings Valley Through the Newspapers. 1855-1955. The book is available for purchase on Amazon.com.

Traci said that she recently visited Riverside Cemetery in Portland, where Amos King and family members are interred. Some of those stones are sinking into the earth, need repairs and all need cleaning.

Are you wondering what to do with genealogical collections? Traci has a copy of guidelines for donating genealogical materials from Oregon families which she will be happy to share with others.

Her hopes are that she might compile a history book about Kings Valley, similar to Arcadia self-published books. She announced that in 2025 we will be celebrating the 180th anniversary of the King Family arriving in Oregon Territory. She will be polling the members for ideas where we could meet and hold a formal program to commemorate the event. Traci opened up the discussion about how we might proceed.

Mellissa Parkhurst suggested advertising those plans in the upcoming newsletters and on our Face Book Group page, Kings Valley Kin. She suggested we hold an auction at our reunions. Things to be offered could be items such as preserves, hand crafted items, books, or items pertaining to the King family history. Art Seavy reported that there are funds as well as a design ready to have more t-shirts ordered if a company can be found to produce them at a reasonable cost. Perhaps someone could speak to us about individuals joining The Oregon Pioneer Association and what their organizations do. Another member mentioned that perhaps we should look into doing King Family videos and post them on YouTube. Neil Chambers responded to that, saying he makes videos that can be posted on social media. A roll call was taken of who attended representing each child of Nahum and Sarepta King: Lucretia 1; John 0; Hopestill 6; Stephen 0; Isaac 4; Amos 0; Sarah 1; Lovisa 5; Abigail 0; Lydia 0; Solomon 1; Rhoda Ann 2. People gradually dispersed at 1:30pm

Tales of Early Settlers From Oregon Territory

Charlotte Wirfs

Amos Nahum King (1822-1901) was the last of his family to participate in the **process of tanning hides**.

When Amos was born the leather and tanning industry was well on it's way to becoming one of the 4th leading industries in the USA. By 1860, when he was operating the tannery in the West Hills of Portland, the nation had about 7,500 tanneries producing leather goods, Within a decade of his death those numbers had been reduced to about 750. In his sunset years, Amos had retired from his tannery, and was devoting his life to developing the fast-growing City of Portland, Oregon by subdividing or deeding much of his DLC land to develop Kings Heights and Washington Park. Amos King was't the first of his family to engage in tanning. The practice went back to many generations before.

Looking up **Leather & Tanning Industry** on line, encyclopedia.com, I learned that the the tanning industry began in the American colonies as a local industry for personal and neighborhood consumption. It relied on local hides, local barks, and a source of water. As an industry, it developed rapidly in MA, NY, NJ, and PA. As settlement pushed increasingly into the interior of America, pioneers tanned hides as just one of the many tasks to be completed on a farm. As communities grew, a person who focused solely on tanning began to take farm goods as payment in exchange for tanning services. He also might take half of whatever hides were brought to his tannery. America depended on leather goods for shoes, boots, aprons straps, padding, ships riggings, and most forms of transportation. Most tanners worked with cattle hides, but also tanned hides of other animals.

In 1845, the extended family of Nahum King, as well as most of American families, provided their own clothing using tanned hides as well as organic home-woven textiles. These made up the bulk of their clothing needs. From The History of Madison County Ohio, Lewis Ketch, who settled on the Plains in 1814 stated he was a shoemaker by trade and worked with Nahum King in a shoe shop in his tannery. For several centuries knowing how to tan hides was an extremely useful skill for survival in America.

At the age of 18 Amos crossed the plains with his family in 1845. He had already established that farming would not be his single livelihood before moving to Oregon Territory. Before traveling to Oregon Territory Amos began operating a ferry boat across the Missouri River, close to his parents farm. In 1844 floods not only carried his boats away but destroyed his wharves on either side of the river. He had no doubt been using those wharves to store goods waiting to be distributed by boats to other nearby communities. No one had to talk Amos into making the move in 1845. He saw the move as an opportunity to start over in a new location.

When Amos arrived in Oregon Territory he described the universal material for men's clothing as buck skin or deer hide. Growing up on his father's tannery he had a working knowledge of how to tan both domestic animal hides as well as the skins of animals they hunted. But Amos wasn't looking to farm in 1846 when he settled a Donation Land Claim along the Willamette River at present-day Lewisville, a few miles North of Marysville, now Corvallis, OR. He was focused on making a living on what commerce he could set up along the Willamette. First he married Melinda Fuller, daughter of Arnold Fuller, also a fellow traveler to Oregon in 1845. Arnold settled a claim next to Amos's.

Fred Lockley tells us about that in his column, "Impressions and Observations of a Journal Man", April 7

1937. “Long before the locks were built at Oregon City, Amos Nahum King was in the transportation business on the Willamette River, operating boats from Vancouver to Yamhill. Goods were carried around the falls (at Oregon City). The boats were operated by sail or oar and it took two weeks for a trip. If the wind was against them, the bateaux were poled or lined upstream.”

Soon, another business opportunity opened up for Amos. It came at the time that the gold fields of California were enticing men to leave their claims in Oregon Territory in search of gold. In 1849 D H Lownsdale had established a tannery located in the hills of the newly established village of Portland, Oregon Territory. He and others associated with the tannery were among many men who left their claims. We learn from Kenneth Munford’s article, “Back When in Benton County, Part 13, Kings and Fullers Unite”, *Benton Bulletin*, Oct. 8, 1980, Philomath, OR. that “...In Portland Amos worked in a tannery—the only one in the Pacific NW at that time—and eventually owned it. It was on the site of the Portland Civic Stadium. He and Melinda bought squatters’ rights to a 535-acre track of untillable hill land nearby. It encompassed the area west of what is now 18th Avenue from Canyon Road to Lovejoy Street. They eventually received title to it as a donation land claim. They built a fine home on the property and raised 6 children.”

Amos moved his father’s family to Portland in 1849, but they didn’t stay long, returning to settle a donation land claim near present day Wren, OR. Munford continues, “As Portland expanded, Amos and Melinda opened their land for suburban housing. In King’s Heights they named streets for their family. They sold 40 acres—at \$800.00 an acre—to Portland for the first City Park which is the nucleus of present Washington Park.

Amos was always a man of the river, living and working along rivers his entire life. He worked as a scout, a drover, and a hunter as his extended family crossed the plains in 1845, but upon arriving in Oregon Territory he did not take up farming in Kings Valley. Farming would not be his main source of income. He settled along the Willamette River and spent the rest of his life forging a living and a community along the banks of that river.

King Family Reunion 2025

When: Saturday, June 21, 2025 from 10:30AM to 3:00PM

Where: Philomath City Park, 299 S 23rd St., Philomath, OR Shelter 2, on East side of the park.

Bring your own lunch and drinks, lawn chairs. Bottled water and dessert will be provided.

Agenda: 10:30 gather and set up and register to update contact info.

Noon to 1pm, Socialize and lunch 1:15PM to 1:30PM, Group Photo

1:30PM, Program by Char Wirfs and Anne Trussell.

“King Family Reunions, Past and Present”



Patricia Plunkett Holler shared the quilt Ashnah Norton Plunkett made for her grandson, Herman Binger Plunkett, born 1894. Ashnah was said to have made a quilt for each of her many grandchildren. Below are photos from another family member who also brought an heirloom to the reunion to share. Photos by Char Wirfs, King Family Reunion, 2023.

