

Generations of the King family leave their mark on Clarksburg

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The streets of Clarksburg with the numerous references to King, as in Kings Valley and Kingstead roads, reflect the prominence of the King family in Clarksburg's history.

"Kings owned land from Bethesda Church Road [in Damascus] through all the valley out Clarksburg and past Clarksburg," said Thomas Woodfield of Clarksburg. "That's how it got its name King's Valley and the Kings roads."

The early British settlers landed in St. Mary's County, Woodfield said. As the tobacco crop depleted the land, they moved farther inland.

John Duckett King (1778-1858) settled in Clarksburg in the early 1800s and grew tobacco. He had 14 children. Many of his descendants still live in the area.

Gloria King Winter, 51, is John Duckett King's great-great-grandchild. Her grandfather, Elias Vincent King (born 1869) was John Duckett King's youngest grandchild.

"He bought a farm in Clarksburg called Darnkirk," Winter said. "The former owners were slave dealers."



Submitted photo

John Brewer and Lavinia Burns King, past Clarksburg residents, are shown in this photograph from the 1890s.

Her parents and uncles lived on the farm on Frederick Road north of Wims Road during World War II and found slave shackles and metal balls they sold for scrap metal to help the war effort.

Her father, Ora King, was Clarksburg's postmaster until his death in 1968.

Ora King was the first King to graduate from college, Winter said. With the help of his brother, Maury King, and other relatives, he continued to tend the approximately 230-acre family farm while pursuing other professions. He taught school and was a title searcher before becoming postmaster.

The family stopped growing tobacco more than 50 years ago. Winter's mother, Iris Watkins King, grew vegetables on the farm and sold the produce at the Farm Women's Market in Bethesda.

Winter's parents and grandparents sold off much of the farm in pieces to developers, leaving today only the 10 a which Winter and her family live. Although they have professional careers, they also raise Christmas trees.

Working the land

Billy King Watkins, 67, was born in a tenant house on Stringtown Road that was home to the descendants of John Duckett King's son Edward J. King (1821-1899).

In 1935 his parents, Bessie King and Leroy Watkins, built a new house. Bessie King Watkins was John Duckett great-grandchild.

Billy King Watkins' parents grew up on farms that backed up to each other.

"People didn't go very far to find a wife in those days," Watkins said.



Leroy Watkins bought a 70-80 acre farm from Zack Woodfield on one side of Kingsley Road in 1918 and then bought 30 acres on the other side from his father, Watkins said.

"We had hay, wheat and corn -- the basic crops for a dairy farm," Watkins said.

He remembers driving 200 pounds of milk a day to the train in Boyds for shipping to market. He also remembers going out on the creek as a child during the coldest part of winter to cut ice they would use through the middle of the season.

"A lot of people got pneumonia from cutting that ice," Watkins said.

Blocks of ice were packed in straw and set on the ground. The ice, used for iced tea, usually lasted until mid-summer, Watkins said.

"People didn't need a ton of money to live on -- you'd always have something," Watkins said. "Dad raised four kids on 105 acres and we lived good."

Watkins, the youngest child, bought his father's farm in 1978.

The Watkins children sold the original family homestead on Stringtown Road to the Montgomery County Career Firefighters Union about five years ago. The union wants to build a union hall on the property.

Non-farming

family interests

John Glaze, 81, is the great-great-grandchild of John Duckett King's son Charles Miles King (1814-1886). His parents were Bertie Mae King and Basil Russel Glaze. His great-great-uncle, L.G. King, ran King's Distillery and flour mill on Kings Valley Road. The distillery, which ceased operations in 1907, was the only whiskey factory in the county, according to the Montgomery County Park and Planning Commission.

Glaze lives on the 100-acre family farm near Stringtown Road and his older brother, Eral Glaze, lives in the original family home on the farm. Glaze's daughters built homes on the farm.

The family's main crop was tobacco, but they also raised corn, hay, wheat and poultry, he said. Glaze grew tobacco in the early 1980s. Today, tenants grow corn, wheat, alfalfa and soybeans on the farm. Glaze is the musician in the family. "I had my life playing music and teaching," Glaze said. "I started out playing guitar and singing country music. There was a lot of that on the radio."

At the age of 14 he had his own radio program on WFMD, an AM station in Frederick.

Glaze also played with the radio station's dance band, The Golden Slipper Band.

"I met my wife [Connie Brandenburg] at a dance I was playing at the Hyattstown Volunteer Fire Department Hall," he said.

Glaze formed his own band in 1947, The Johnny Glaze Band. Today, his daughter and son-in-law, Cathy and Cliff Warfield, play with him in the band.

Butchering day

Eloise Woodfield, 62, John Glaze's first cousin, is also a descendant of Charles Miles King.

"I remember the thrashing days at Aunt Bertie's," Woodfield said. "You always ate. All those hard working time fun parties."

Butchering day at Bertie Glaze's house was a bigger family gathering and more fun than Thanksgiving or Christmas, she said.

"It was much more fun than when you got to be a grown-up," Woodfield said.

As an adult she realized how hard the women worked frying chickens, cooking turkeys, ham and sausages and baking the biscuits and pies while the men sat at the table and were served. The children played in hay piled behind the

"The men ate first because they'd been working," she said.

Woodfield has a chart that extends almost the width of her living room tracing the King family tree. Her grandparents (Walden and Violena King) and great-grandparents' (John Brewer and Lavinia Burns King) wedding pictures hang on the wall.

John Brewer (1852-1919) married his third wife, Lavinia (1866-1902), in the early 1890s, she said. His first two died during childbirth, she said. Walden (1894-1978) and Violena King married around 1916, she said.

Violena King (1899-1979) was known for the coconut cakes and homemade breads she sold at the Farm Women Market in Bethesda, Woodfield said.

Eloise and her husband, Thomas, live in a house they built with the help of relatives on what remains of John Brewer King's farm on Burnt Hill Road. The county took 20 of the farm's 85 acres for Little Bennett Regional Park some years ago. They raise horses.
