

OLDEST PIONEER LAID TO REST

Mrs. Mary Ann King, a pioneer of the Colville Valley, who died at the Catholic Home for the Aged at Wendle, Idaho, October 28, 1925, was buried Wednesday, November 4, 1925, at Chewelah by the side of her husband, Peter King, who died in 1887. Mrs. Peter King was born in 1821 prior to the establishment of Fort Colville and had lived in Colville Valley eighty-four years.

Mrs. King was the daughter of Patrick and Mary Finley, natives of Canada, and Washington, in those early days of the fur trade when this whole region was vaguely known as the "Oregon Country" or the "Columbia District" of the Hudson's Bay Company's territories.

Her grandfather was Jacob Finlay, associate of the intrepid explorer, David Thompson, whom Jacco doubtless preceded in exploring the headwaters of the Columbia River and its Kootenai branch. His family name is perpetuated in Finlay's River, a northern branch of the Peace River, and his own name in Jacco Creek, Missoula County, Montana, and in Finley (Finlay) Creek, a northern tributary of the Kootenai River near Columbia Lake in British Columbia. John Work's Journal for the year 1828, published in the Washington Historical Quarterly, records the death of Jacco Finlay at Spokane House in that year.

Jacco Finlay had a large family, all of whom were probably born East of the Mountains in the vicinity of Fort Edmonton: Patrick, Eustance, Paul, Jim, Misquotham, Margaret and Rose. Mrs. King, the deceased, was a younger daughter of the oldest son, Patrick Finlay. Her father settled among the Indians in the Colville Valley and married a native woman there in 1820 and Mary Ann Finlay was born, according to family record, in 1821, being thus 104 years old at the time of her death. Patrick Finlay had a large family of sons and daughters, who like others of the numerous Finlay family were noted for their comely looks and their fine physique; many of the family possessed light blue eyes. The men of the family were characteristically competent and trustworthy, and the daughters fine wives and mothers.

Mary Ann Finlay was married at the age of nineteen. Her husband, Peter King, born in Quebec in 1820, came to the Hud-

son's Bay Post in the '40s and was a blacksmith with the company for several years, settling in 1851 on land three miles northwest of the present town of Chewelah, which land he secured from his wife's father.

Mr. and Mrs. King were the parents of eleven children. Four daughters are living: Mrs. Sophia Regenry, Grand Forks, B. C.; Mrs. Mary L. Conrady, wife of C. F. Conrady, former resident of Colville, now living at Priest River, Idaho; Mrs. Julia M. McLeod, wife of Frank McLeod, living in Montana; Mrs. Louise Roberts, wife of Randolph Roberts, living in Stevens County. The address of another, Martina, is unknown.¹

Peter King was a Frenchman, a man of small stature, a very good mechanic, a carpenter and a blacksmith. The old Peter King estate, lying about three miles north of Chewelah, was one of the earliest settled places in the State of Washington. He had one of the largest hewed log houses with a double fireplace, with beautiful moulding adorning it, all hand-made. All his furniture was also hand-made. This log house with its unusually large front room was the scene of many a social dance, as those young ladies, his daughters, always drew a large crowd. His other farm buildings were likewise all hewed logs well put up, and as he was a blacksmith, and had the only private blacksmith outfit in the country at that time, he made his own door hinges and hardware. He had all hewed timber for gates and iron hinges, while the rest of the country had only bars. The whole place showed the efforts of an old time skilled craftsman.

Peter King had all a Frenchman's gayety and love of show and used to ride in a top buggy up and down this Colville Valley seventy-five years ago. No doubt he must have been a gay sport in his day, and enjoyed his courting just as much as anyone at the present time in his high powered car. He engaged in farming and stock raising on the old farm until his death in 1887.

After the death of her husband Mrs. King continued to reside on the old home place near Chewelah until old age forced her to leave the farm. This place was sold in 1918 to Fred Stern of Davenport, Washington. On the farm at the time was a cabin which had stood there for nearly a century.

Mrs. King had managed her place the best she knew how, but always lived within her income. At times it looked like a "widow's place", but she kept it clear of any encumbrance. Hers

¹ See hereon, *History of Northwest Washington*, page 394.

was one of the very few farms in the valley on which there never was a mortgage recorded. She was an excellent example of that best of Indian character and Indian blood in this country that never had any charity. She had provided for herself, even her funeral expenses, and lived to be one hundred and four years old. Some of the mixed blood in the early days were indolent, but the King family, especially the girls (they are old women now) were known as hard working and thrifty. Mrs. King in her day was one of the very best of women to tan a deer hide, make moccasins, gloves and when it came to fancy bead work she was second to none.

After the railroad was built into the Colville Valley nearly all the Indian settlers were crowded out and lost their lands and were forced to go onto the reservations, but Mrs. King stayed. Her self pride tempted her to stay with the whites; and her native shrewdness was sufficient to protect her property from the covetous and scheming white men who would have possessed her lands. Often she remarked "Me not seel, no place, no home." She was a true devoted Christian, a strong adherent to the Catholic church. Over forty years she was a widow. Though she had many a chance to get married again, she remained a widow. She had always kept herself clear of any trouble or scandal, and her character was beyond any reproach. She was of mixed blood, far above the average, and very few like her inherited the good traits of both her ancestors. She was slow in choosing friends, but once she established friendship with any one, she was as true as steel. She was free from care or worry. On the other hand she possessed a great self pride, and also an economic thrift, that many a person would envy. She never had any opportunity for education, but her native wit and intelligence lifted her above the average of her contemporaries.

With the passing of Mrs. Mary Ann King, the present generation says only: "another old timer gone", but to the old pioneers she is of deeper interest, as she recalls the days when everyone knew everyone else throughout the entire valley, and when all were, so to say, one great family. Very few people were permitted to see as much change take place in a country as she did, from the time when the aborigines held full sway over this entire domain, till this country developed and progressed to its present state. She lived longer on the same place than any other person did in this county, and maybe in this entire northwest. Some

years ago when already far beyond the allotted age of man, Mrs. King retired to spend her last days in the Catholic Home for the Aged at Wendle, Idaho. The funeral rites were conducted at the Catholic church in Chewelah, and her remains now rest beside those of her husband. In age she was, at the time of her death, Washington's oldest daughter.

WILLIAM S. LEWIS.