



John King spent most of his 87 years in this house

— Margery Cairns photo

Link with Valley's past dies

DEEP RIVER (Special) — One of the Ottawa Valley's colorful links with the past died last week.

John King, whose 500-acre farm had been in the family for three generations, was 87.

King spent most of his life in the square-timbered farmhouse built by his grandfather. He used to cut his crops with a scythe, use a horse-drawn wooden plow and collect his firewood with a horse-drawn sleigh.

The beautiful group of barns and farmhouse, virtually unchanged since the 19th century, is on Hwy. 17 just outside of town. It was purchased in 1968 by Atomic Energy

of Canada Ltd. and King moved to a new home built for him on the property.

Atomic Energy has maintained and preserved the old buildings. The picturesque site attracts many artists and photographers.

A spokesman said that so far no decision has been taken as to the use that will be made of the property. Local residents speculate it might be used as a museum, though at the time of purchase AECL described it as an investment in case the town needed to expand.



Union Star milk wagon, 1914

by Harry Hinchley

In 1914, milk for Union Star Cheese Factory came in by team and wagon. Each shipper had one or more 250 pound factory cans for his milk. They were taken to the factory and brought back the same day. If the patron wished, he could get whey returned in the same cans.

In the cheese industry, the day began early. The milk-hauler had to be on the road by 6.00 in the morning and the farmer had to be up and have his cows milked before that. He had to have his milk in the cans ready to be picked up when the wagon came.

At the factory, the cheese maker had to have steam up and be ready for the milk as soon as it came in. He was always in a rush to get it emptied and heating in the vats in good time. He had a long day ahead and he wanted an early start. Cheese used to be made into 90 pound cheeses.

These were shipped out by freight and the patrons had to take turns hauling the cheese to the station on shipping day. Much of the cheese used to go to Montreal and then on to England where Canadian cheddar was always in good demand.

Today, this is changed. Much of the cheese now made at Union Star factory is now sold at retail direct to consumers. Over the years a good over-the-counter trade has developed and now people come from far and near to pick up their requirements at the factory.

Perhaps, this is the reason Union Star has been able to stay in business when most of the other cheese factories in Eastern Ontario have had to close. It was established in 1893 so is one of Renfrew County's oldest businesses. Furthermore, it is now not only the oldest but also the only cheese factory still operating in the whole Upper Ottawa Valley.