



BILL GLADDING / TAVISTOCK GAZETTE

John Allen King looks over family trees, genealogy papers and old photographs in the front room of his home in Hickson.

In 2010, John Allen King completed a 150-page booklet on his life, family and community to be handed down to the direct members of his family.

It had been 100 years since the King family's first reunion at Kinghurst Farm in East Zorra and plans were in the works for a long overdue get together. As it turned out, on June 16, 2012, about 135 descendants of James King, who came to Canada in 1837 at the age of 15, gathered to reunite family ties. Relatives came from the four corners of the continent, dispersed over the last millennium from the Yukon to Florida, and Nova Scotia to British Columbia.

And it was a tearful reunion for at least one cousin. A 90-year-old woman, whose family left this part of the country before she was born, had always heard about her ancestral roots in Ontario. Standing in front of the home where her parents and grandparents stood to have their picture taken in 1910 was an overwhelming experience.

That reunion and Mr. King's book of recollections and family research have laid the groundwork for future generations of the family. This September, John, and his wife Agnes, will be married 60 years, and they now look back on their lives with gratitude and hope for the future. Along with their five children and ten grandchildren, they have been blessed to see the arrival of two great granddaughters into their lives.

"The growing years of our children and grandchildren included a lot of triumphs and joys, mixed in perhaps with a few heartaches. But Agnes and I are extremely proud of all the members of our family," John said at the end of his book.

Entitled, "To My Own Drummer," his personal history touches on his life on the farm and in service to the church and community. This is followed by reflections on the past, a 'curriculum vitae' as well as ancestral histories complete with family trees.

John Allen King was

born October 10, 1927, at Woodstock General Hospital, the eldest son of Gordon King and Jean Turnbull. His younger brother, Mac, was born in 1929. John attended the original, two-room Hickson Public School (S.S. No. #6) and later Woodstock Collegiate Institute.

The farm had been handed down three generations, so John felt the

A baseball player in Hickson in his younger days, John became involved in football, soccer, basketball and wrestling at Guelph. His early involvement in the church choir also set the stage for his participation in the College Philharmonic Choir and as head of the stage crew for musical productions. It was there in 1949, following the

**"Things that I got into were a little bit different than the people around me."**

- John Allen King, Hickson

responsibility to stay with farming. Because he had to be 18 years of age to enrol in Agricultural College at Guelph, he stayed home a year to work after graduating high school before being accepted to Guelph. During his first semester, he received a letter from his father suggesting that if he quit and came home to work on the farm, it would be okay. But John persevered. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Agriculture on June 10, 1950.

performance of Stratford singer Lois Marshall, that John met Agnes Turnbull for the first time. After five years of courtship, each completing their degrees and following ever-widening career paths, they were married at Bethel Stone United Church near Paris on September 11, 1954.

In 1957, two months prior to the arrival of their first child, Ruth, they purchased the farm from his parents and became full-time dairy and apple producers.

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