

June, 2006



Gerking Family Executive Committee
Florence and Larry Bowe, Troutdale, OR
Trish (Bowe) and Gil Doeblner, Sutherlin, OR
Kelly (Gerking) Gable, College Place, WA
LaVerne and Helen Gerking, Milton-Freewater, OR
Lynden and Nancy Gerking, Walla Walla, WA
Dian and Dan Hebert, Kingston, WA
Beth (Perry) Johnston, Newport, OR
Paul Lewis, Eugene, OR

Questions? Email or phone:
Acting Secretary-Treasurer Beth Perry Johnston
Email bpjohnston@charter.net
Phone (541) 265-7875



Do you have family updates or other information to share? Just send it along with the reunion registration form. If you aren't able to attend the reunion, just drop a note in the mail.

If you have email and haven't let us know about it yet, please take a minute to do that now. Just send an email to bpjohnston@charter.net.

Dear Gerking Family Members:

For our 47th Annual Gerking Family Reunion we'll be returning to the roots of many of us. The extended families of Laverne & Helen Gerking and Lynden & Nancy Gerking have invited us to join them on Saturday and Sunday, August 12-13, 2006 at Lynden and Nancy's home in Walla Walla, Washington. It's time to renew acquaintances with the older members of our family and to meet the younger members, so please plan to attend. If you've never attended a Gerking Reunion, this is a wonderful chance to learn more about your heritage!

Here are plans for the weekend. Note: we will need your RSVP by August 1 if you plan to attend.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 12, 2006

7:00 pm **Dessert at Lynden and Nancy's Home** —

Dinner is on your own, but come do come for dessert and spend an evening of fun renewing old acquaintances and making new ones. There might even be some singing around the campfire type activities.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 13, 2006

11:00 a.m. Begin gathering at Lynden's and Nancy's Home

11:30 a.m. **Lunch** — Lunch is being generously hosted by the extended Gerking families in Eastern Washington and Oregon. You don't need to bring a thing unless you have special dietary needs, in which case you should bring what you require with you.

This promises to be a family-friendly reunion with activities for children (did someone mention water balloons?) as well as adults, and prizes for various things. Following lunch Lynden will emcee the family business meeting, part of which will include planning for our 50th reunion in 2009.

!! WHITE ELEPHANT SALE !!

We're very much looking forward to the 50th reunion. Few family reunion groups make it that far, so we're hoping to do some very special things then. With that in mind, beginning with this year's reunion we will be holding White Elephant Sales during this and subsequent reunions to raise money toward that goal. Bring your best White Elephants with you to contribute to this effort and, of course, a little extra cash for when you find that something special. Nancy Gerking will be in charge of the White Elephant table.

2005 Reunion Minutes Attached — See pages 4-6.

***We need you to register if you plan to attend the reunion
so our Gerking hosts can plan for the food.***

The registration form is on page 7, and we will do another mailing with complete details, including directions to Lynden's and Nancy's home, to those who respond.

Lodging

Walla Walla

The Walla Walla Chamber of Commerce is a good place to start looking for accommodations. You can call them toll-free at 1-877-998-4748 for information or to request a free Destination Walla Walla Travel Kit. The Chamber also has a very good web site with much information at <http://www.wwchamber.com/>. You can also make inquiries by email at info@wwvchamber.com. Here are some lodgings we know of:

Best Western Suites Inn
7 E Oak St, Walla Walla WA
(509) 525-4700 (phone) – (509) 525-2457 (fax)

Holiday Inn Express
1433 W Pine St, Walla Walla WA
(509) 525-6200 (phone) – (509) 525-6210 (fax)

Howard Johnson Express Inn (small pets allowed)
325 E. Main St, Walla Walla WA
(509) 529-4360 (phone) – (509) 529-7463 (fax)

Super 8 Motel
2315 Eastgate St., Walla Walla WA
(509) 525-8800 (phone) – (509) 525-8832 (fax)

La Quinta Inn
520 N. 2nd Ave, Walla Walla WA
(509) 525-2522 (phone) – (509) 522-2565 (fax)

Travelodge of Walla Walla
421 E. Main Street Walla Walla WA 99362
Telephone 1 509 529-4940

Marcus Whitman Hotel & Conference Center
6 West Rose St, Walla Walla WA
(509) 525-2200 (phone) – (509) 529-9282 (fax)

Travelodge East Main Street
421 E. Main Street Walla Walla WA 99362
Telephone 1 509 529-4940

Campgrounds

The Walla Walla area has numerous campgrounds, but it would probably be best to check with the Chamber of Commerce as some of them in forested areas have been subject to forest fires in recent summers and may not currently be open. The Chamber also has the best listing of RV parks.

Pendleton

The Pendleton Chamber of Commerce has a list of lodgings. You can contact the Pendleton Chamber by calling 1-800-547-8911 or find them on the internet at <http://www.pendletonchamber.com>. The Pendleton area has a number of RV parks, including one at the Wild Horse Gaming Resort and Hotel (I-84, Exit 216) East of Pendleton. A toll-free number to call is 1-800-654-Wild(9453).

Recap & Registration Form

- Remember to get the Registration form back to me no later than Tuesday, August 1.
- Remember to bring your best white elephants for the White Elephant table.
- Remember to bring family histories, photos, and other family information to share with others at the history table.
- If you enjoy cards or board games, feel free to bring them along. I'm bringing my cribbage board, hoping to find someone who's as lousy a player as I am!

**Okay, okay! You've convinced me to come.
When we get there, what else is there to do?**

If you're planning to stay in the area for a while, here are a few ideas for other places you might want to visit. *Note:* The internet version of this invitation contains links to related web pages. If didn't receive this via email, that means we don't have an email address for you. If you have email and would like to see the web version with clickable links, just drop an email to me at bpjohnston@charter.net and I'll email you back information on how to access the links. Underlined text below indicates a web link.

Walla Walla, Washington

The Walla Walla area is home to the old Fort Walla Walla Museum, the Whitman Mission National Historic Site, and many other interesting attractions. Click here for the Walla Walla Valley Chamber of Commerce attractions page, which lists even more places to see and things to do.

The Walla Walla area has become winery country, and there are many vineyards and wineries to visit should you want to do so.

Pendleton, Oregon

Sheriff Til Taylor Memorial - Tilman D. Taylor was the son of David and Sarah Ann (Gerking) Taylor. It is said that he "made it a point never to shoot a man" and had, in fact, recently rescued the man who fatally shot him during a jailbreak. He served as Pendleton Roundup president from 1912 until his death. The web site "Wanted, Dead or Alive" gives a stirring account of the Til Taylor saga. See a newspaper article about Til Taylor here and a picture of the statue honoring him here.

Baker City, Oregon

The National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center is open daily from 9a - 6p and is wonderful for those of all ages.

Family Research in the Area

A few miles west of Athena, where we held our 2003 reunion, and not far from Walla Walla, is **Gerking Flat**, where Jonathan Rice and Nancy (Myers) Gerking, along with some of their 13 children, settled in the 1868-1871 time frame.

The number of places to do genealogical research in this area is overwhelming — it is very fertile territory for searching out your family history. If you plan to stay around for a

while and do research, the county courthouses, city halls, and libraries all are sources of great information. The small City of Weston Library has more historical and genealogical information packed into its building than can be imagined. The Gerking family also had a presence in Weston, so the library there is a very good place to search.

There are numerous area cemeteries that serve as the final resting place for Gerking and associated family members. A list of Umatilla County cemeteries and their locations is found here and a similar list for Union County here.

The historic **Blue Mountain (formerly Kees) Cemetery**, about halfway between Athena and Weston, OR, is where Jonathan Rice Gerking and his wife are buried, along with other members of the Gerking Family. Blue Mountain (Kees) Cemetery usually has access restrictions, but our honorary cousin Bob Gilliland of Weston is making arrangements for us to be able to visit the cemetery freely during our time in Walla Walla. Details will be available at the reunion.

Many Gerkings and related families are buried in the **Athena Cemetery**. Athena City Hall has information.

Don't forget — we need to know as soon as possible how many people to plan for, so fill out the registration form on page 7 as soon as you can. August 1 is the deadline. You may also send email with all the needed information or phone me — my snail mail, email, and phone information are on the registration form.

See you in Walla Walla!

Beck

MINUTES OF THE 46th ANNUAL GERKING FAMILY REUNION
August 14, 2005 — Francis Xavier's Restaurant, Portland, Oregon

Originally scheduled to be held at Ft. Vancouver, Washington, the meeting site had to be changed at the last minute. Thanks to Florence and Larry Bowe's great help, the 46th Annual Gerking Reunion was held August 14 in a meeting room at Francis Xavier's Restaurant in northeast Portland, Oregon. As both Florence and Larry are having health problems, we were all very happy they could attend and take part in the reunion. Following are those in attendance:

<u>Names</u>	<u>Residence</u>	<u>Descent from</u>
Lawrence G. and Florence (Chappelle) Bowe	Troutdale, OR	<u>Jonathan Rice Gerking Child</u> Angeline (Gerking) Junkin
Gil and Patricia (Bowe) Doebler	Sutherlin, OR	Angeline (Gerking) Junkin
Kelly (Gerking Gabel	College Place, WA	Solomon Meyer Gerking
Laverne and Helen Gerking	Milton-Freewater, OR	Solomon Meyer Gerking
Lynden and Nancy Gerking	Walla Walla, WA	Solomon Meyer Gerking
Beth (Perry) Johnston	Newport, OR	Samuel Isaiah Gerking
Paul Lewis	Eugene, OR	Samuel Isaiah Gerking
Dan and Diane (Beck) Hebert	Kingston, WA	John E. L. Gerking

As people gathered for lunch, we got acquainted/reacquainted with family members and looked through material Florence Bowe and Janelle Jackson had produced through their work on the line of Jonathan Rice Gerking's wife, Nancy Ann Myers. Others had brought pictures and items to share, including "Descendants of David M. Taylor," provided to Florence Bowe by Sarah Olsen; a picture of David Taylor's warehouse showing horse teams, sacks of grain, and many family members, which was donated to the Gerking archives by Nancy and Lynden Gerking; a copy of *Effie May Gerking Tolle* written by Paul Lewis; pictures scanned by Beth Johnston from an album that had belonged to Darrell Leabo; and copies of the last *Newsletter* and Minutes from the 2004 Reunion.

All enjoyed a wonderful lunch, following which a business meeting was held. The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss the future of the annual Gerking reunions, and that discussion was held first. The basic topics were (1) Future Reunions — Should They Continue? If So, What Shape Should They Take? and (2) Looking Ahead to our 50th reunion in 2009.

Should There Be Future Reunions?

Except for the early years of the reunions when attendance ranged from over 100 to 200+, attendance at reunions has varied over the years from small to quite large. Recently it has become difficult to find a location acceptable to all, few younger family members have shown an interest in attending reunions just to meet their cousins, and many older members are reluctant to drive too far away from home. In addition, there has been no outreach to the various Gerking lines to draw them to the reunions. Beth will do a zip code breakdown to see where family members we know of live.

The group felt that focusing on drawing younger members must have a high priority if the reunions are to continue and agreed to work hard to attract new, younger members by holding reunions either at places that have family attractions or in areas where family attractions are nearby. Other ideas included being sure there's something for younger members to do at the reunion — a good playground, entertainment geared to a younger age group, etc. The idea should be for the kids to have fun and be comfortable around their family members rather than for them to pay strict attention to lessons in family history until they're ready to do so. It was also suggested that selecting a different date might help, and that the reunions should have themes.

Lynden and Laverne Gerking recounted how amazed they had been to discover first cousins they'd not known about living in such close proximity and how much that had meant to them.

Lynden said he really would like to see the reunions continue, and the group agreed.

47th Annual Gerking Family Reunion — August 12-13, 2006, Walla Walla, WA

After consulting among themselves, the families of Lynden and Nancy Gerking and Laverne and Helen Gerking offered to host the 2006 reunion in Walla Walla. They will get together after returning home and decide on the place, theme, and other details. It was envisioned that the Walla Walla families will provide all the food so travelers will not have to worry about keeping food cold. RSVPs will be required in order to make proper meal and space arrangements. The group gratefully accepted their generous offer.

In order to support the reunion, the group agreed to broaden the mailing list (in the past it had technically been reduced to those paying the family fee or had shown an active interest in the family), and to “put more words” in front of everyone through post cards, reminders, emails, and the newsletter. Beth noted that the family savings account contains \$1,346.41, which will draw down fast with postage and copying costs, and it was suggested fundraisers be instituted, while at the same time conserving as much of the treasury as possible. It was suggested that we have everyone bring their favorite recipes to Walla Walla and produce a family cookbook to sell. Another suggestion was to have a white elephant auction.

Looking Ahead to our 50th reunion in 2009

It was agreed the 50th anniversary of the reunion’s founding should be very special, and the fundraisers noted above, plus the additional mailings, would be a good start to getting funding for it. The group felt Cascade Locks had been a good meeting site that drew family from both sides of the Cascades and would be a good place for the 50th anniversary reunion. Beth will check out availability and cost and report back.

Correspondence:

Prior to the meeting messages expressing regret at not being able to attend had been received from Bev Rowland, Betty Gerking Roach, Ruby Wells Ifversen, Julia Gerking Hammond, Richard and Frances Bowers, Lori Roberts, Ardis Gerking Heien (from Iowa!).

Other correspondence received included news of family passages and will be presented in the Newsletter.

Minutes of 2004 Meeting:

Minutes of the 2004 family meeting were distributed and their highlights commented on by Beth.

Financial Report as of July 31, 2005:

The July 31 balance in the savings account was \$1,346.41. Income during the year of 8/1/04-7/31/05 was \$242.57, and expenses totaled \$138.20 for newsletter printing and postage.

Beth reported that the pages in the original reunion guest register were used up at last year’s reunion, and she was authorized to buy a new guest register for future reunions.

It was moved by Lynden, seconded by Larry, and passed by the group that the 2004 Minutes and the 2004-2005 Financial report be approved.

Old Business: Updates on Projects in Process

- DNA Research Update — The suggestion to use DNA methods to determine whether or not relationships exist between this family group and the “North Carolina” Gerkin group, as well as our German cousin Karl Gerking had been brought up at the 2004 reunion, and Dan Hebert had volunteered to spearhead this project.. He had brought several handouts for the group including “Genetics & Genealogy - An Introduction with Y-DNA Case Study Examples;” “DNA

Presentation,” giving details of the work being done by the Sorenson Molecular Genealogy Foundation; and “Frequently Asked Questions (FAQS),” from the World Families Network. He explained that costs vary depending on the type of tests ordered and the company performing them. He will get more information on costs and report back to the family next year.

- Getting “The Book” on a web site — We heard from Dan Hebert on the progress of computerizing the information in *The Gerking Family in America*, and potential methods for archiving Gerking historical material. Dan Hebert has registered the domain name GerkingFamily.org, and the material might be placed there. It was pointed out that the family currently has a free web site hosted by RootsWeb.com. Dan will pursue costs over the next year and come back to the group with that information.

It was moved by Lynden, seconded by Paul, and passed by the group that Dan pursue information about getting The Gerking Family in America on the web and also about archiving Gerking historical material and come back to the group next year with that information and costs.

New Business and Discussion Topics

- Family Fee — After discussion the group agreed the family fee of \$10.00 per year should be dropped and other methods of raising money pursued.
- When people request reproduction of family pictures, should we charge actual expenses or a flat fee? No decision was reached.
- Where to store Gerking historical material — With Janelle Jackson’s resignation as historian, the family records, pictures, documents, etc. given to her by Florence need a new home. Beth has some room at her house and is willing to store the historian’s material there. Lynden suggested that if it becomes necessary the group might want to look at renting storage space.

It was moved by Lynden, seconded by Paul, and passed by the group that the Historian material currently in Janelle’s custody be transferred to Beth’s house.

Any Other Business

Florence had brought along a ceramic covered wagon cookie jar, which she had stickered with the words "Gerking Reunion" and "1862" (the year the family arrived in Oregon). She made a gift of the cookie jar to the reunion group for use in collecting reunion donations, and the gift was gratefully accepted.

Election of Officers

Following discussion, the assembled group decided that rather than electing officers, it would constitute itself an executive committee to guide the reunion group through the coming year. Beth agreed to continue the duties of secretary-treasurer and newsletter editor during this period.

Respectfully submitted,
/s/ Beth Johnston
Acting Secretary

**47th Annual Gerking Reunion — Walla Walla, Washington
August 12-13, 2005**

Our Hosts: The Extended Families of Lynden & Nancy Gerking and Laverne & Helen Gerking

**REGISTRATION FORM
Must be received by Tuesday, August 1, 2006**

Names (for nametag purposes include all those from your family who will be attending): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Saturday, August 12, 7:00 p.m.

I/we will attend the Gerking dessert gathering.

Number of people in my party for dinner: _____

Sunday August 13, 11:00 a.m., lunch starting at 12:30 p.m.

I/we will attend the family lunch and meeting.

Number of people in my party for lunch: _____

Your Comments or Suggestions:

FORM MUST BE RECEIVED BY August 1, 2006

Please mail the registration form to
Beth Johnston, Acting Secretary-Treasurer
2749 NE Iler Street
Newport, OR 97365

Phone (541) 265-7875 — Email bpjohnston@charter.net

*Gerking Family Reunion
c/o Beth Johnston
2749 N.E. Iler Street
Newport, OR 97365*

Address Service Requested