

## Kleberg—Captain King

Ford—131—When Old Cap returned to the Santa Gertrudis (end of 1884 after convention) he was fighting a losing battle with stomach cancer. His black hair and beard had turned iron gray, he had an ashened complexion, and clothes hung on a rail thin frame.

Ford—p. 125—On the ranch King could be domineering one minute or “one of the boys” the next. He loved to play pranks on his Kinenos and often worked side by side with them sometimes building fences or working the forge in the blacksmith shop. There was an intense and reciprocal bond of loyalty between them. When he toured the ranch Richard rode the spring seat of a light buckboard hitched to a matching team. Next to his seat were a demijohn of Rose Bud and a Winchester rifle. His driver was Willie Rawlinson who was brought to the ranch to live when he was an eleven year old orphan.

Lea—p. 343—Captain would write to Etta in St. Louis—“See that none of Papa’s pets wants for anything money will buy.” “Life is short and why be so mean as not enjoy yourselves now.” “It is my wish to see you and all of my pets now or never will want for anything that money will buy as long as Papa has it.” King used the Mechanics Bank of St. Louis.

Rip F—p. 120—He made a striking figure with his wide-brimmed black hat, black string tie, dark broadcloth coat, rumpled pants, and always-scuffed boots. His black beard reached the second button on his shirt. King had a slight limp, most likely caused when his leg was broken by a moving anchor chain on a steamboat.—vs. snake—. In fact his vaqueros referred to the boss as El Cojo, the Lame one. The captain also had a noticeably disfigured left nostril—it seems that when he gifted Etta with a parrot, the bird bit him on the nose and the wound never healed properly. Always a rough and tumble frontiersman, Richard like nothing better than a good bare-knuckle fistfight while snorting his “Rose Bud Whiskey.” Legend has it that he hired a tough Irishman whose main job was to take on the boss when the captain was in the mood. J. Frank Dobie once heard the following story from an old drover named Branch Isbell. One time a man named Kelley was working for him and said Captain King if you were not such a rich man and a captain you wouldn’t cuss me as you do, Damn you. King jerked off his hat and said forget the riches and the captain title and let’s fight. The two fought for half an hour in a slaughterhouse and then shook hands in mutual admiration.

p.121—He spent his adult life commanding others and barking out orders in a brusque manner and Mifflin Kenedy admitted that King was “violently opinionated.” He was also a soft touch for hardluck stories and would drop everything to sprin a Kineno from jail or help a friend and was known to tiptoe in sock feet to bring a lemonade to a ranch visitor’s room.

Cameron County Census taken on June 15, 1860 by Asst. Marshall Bane—Schedule 2—slave Inhabitants—R. King had one slave forty years old, male and black and one slave house.

1870 Duval-Nueces County Census Corpus Christi taken on Aug. 1<sup>st</sup>, 18770 p. 198—Richard King is listed as a stock raiser with real value of 300,000 and personal value of 363,000. He is 45 from Ireland, Henrietta 35 from Mo, Henrietta 14, Ella 12, Richard 10, Alice 8 and Lee 6. Richard list himself born in New York in 1850, in 1960 from Ireland and in 1870 Ireland. His children in last two census list their father as born in Ireland and foreign born.

KPR—506—Captain King never missed a chance to give a “friendless boy a job and a helping had to honorable manhood.” In his ultimate prosperity and disillusionment the ghost of the runaway youth came home to haunt.

In the last days of his Rosebud years King attended and addressed the First National Convention of cattlemen in St. Louis. He proposed the establishment of a six-mile wide “National Cattle Trail” a fenced pasture running from the Mexican to the Canadian borders. The idea seemed a bit grandiose, especially since national railroads were almost in place. There was polite applause.

\*\*check on this!!!KPR—507—The end of 1884 saw King back at the Santa Gertrudis, nursed by Alice, when the end was in view, Henrietta returned from St. Louis. In these last days, Mifflin Kenedy was a frequent visitor with problems of his own. A Kenedy son, James, had died of typhoid while under murder indictment for “shooting of a drunken troublemaker,” Problems Texas style.

On Dec. 17<sup>th</sup> the unloved Richard King II presented a grandson to the Captain named Richard III born on the Aqua Dulce Farm. A month later the Captain was convinced to go to the Menger Hotel to be cared for by Dr. Ferdinand Herff. The Olan and the lawyers gathered in San Antonio. King advised his lawyers to keep on buying land. King’s children, except Nettie Atwood were there. Henrietta was there, Mifflin who had just buried his wife Petra was there and young lawyer Robert Kleberg were there. On March 14, 1885 Richard King signed his will that he had just made at Henrietta’s insistance. He died at dusk on april 2<sup>nd</sup>. He was 61 years old, a runaway for 50 years.

King simply left everything to his wife with Mifflin Kenedy and Perry Doddridge as executors Doddridge had been an early employee of M. Kenedy and Co. and had established the first bank in Corpus Christi and had served as mayor of that time.

Nine days after King’s death Robert Kleberg’s Corpus Christi law office filed application to probate the will. Three appraisers all current or former employees of Richard King. The accepted appraisal was about one million dollars, half in real estate and half in livestock and other personal property. This was the same property that had been offered for sale by Captain King at 61/2 million dollars.

KPR—506—The Rosebud Years—Capt. King lived only two years after the death of his beloved son Lee and those years were a blur. The family believed he was trying to kill the pain of a stomach cancer with his demijohn of Rosebud bourbon.

CC-p.100—“Much blame is attached to the large ranch owners who have fenced up the country to the exclusion of the small stockman and the farmer.”

KRP-503—In a typical cattle drive 5000 head would leave the ranch consigned to a cattle boss. King would be kept aware of their progress and as they neared their destination—Chicago, St. Louis or Kansas City –he would travel there to negotiate the final bargain. In its peak he could net \$50,000.

BCH-Rider—Captain King always had three or four barrels of whiskey at headquarters and a cup ready for his friends

BCH—p. 1 (86)--Richard King was born in New York City, New York on July 10, 1824. A child of poor Irish parents he was reared in Orange County, New York until age 9 when he was indentured to a jeweler in Manhattan. He broke his apprenticeship in 1835 at age 11 and stowed away on the Desdemona sailing for Mobile, Ala. He was taken as a “cabin cub” and schooled in the art of navigation by Captains Hugh Monroe and Joe Holland. Between 1835-1841 he spent on the water with the exception of eight months of formal schooling with the Holland’s family in Connecticut. He rose to a pilot by 16 and in 1842 he lied about his age and enlisted under Captain Henry penny for service in the Seminole War in Florida where he met Mifflin Kenedy.

(89) Quotes letter from Mifflin Kenedy to Robert J. Kleberg written in 1892—“for many years, Captain King and myself tried to Americanize that portion of the country (the borderlands of Cameron county), but we failed; it is very little more American in feeling today than it was in October 1948 when the amricans evacuated Matamoros and crossed over to this side.”

(89) description of Captain King from For Life and Love: He has the ablest advisers, and has gathered around him from the Nueces to the rio Grande some remarkable adventurers. He grew up in the hard school of adversity. Steel gray eyes, a slow deliberate speech, a mouth as stern as Caesar, a smile as intry as the gleam of the blue pole-star on the lonely Artic seas. Old King never hurries, but his eagle eye, retentive, brain and lynx-like ear never mis any activity. He can spot a moving form on the desert and tell you what it is, further than you can see it with glass. Utterly ignorant of books, he is a walking map of Texas. Hardly a corner of its 275,000 square miles he does not know. Rude, nd wholly wrapped up in his business schemes Captain King is devoted only to the modest woman who has given him the children of his heart.—Savage 33, 227

DG—p. 16—land purchases: King made over 60 purchases of land in his lifetime so by time of his death in 1885 he owned over a half-million acres and was the richest man in Texas.

DG—p. 67—King set up an Anglo hacienda system with an el patron based on respect and loyalty.

DG—p. 77 King thirty years old in picture if wedding picture, dark hair, dark eyes, solid and compact.

DG—p. 113—King's commitment to the South—All my property has been made in the South by the seat of my brow and I intend by the same means to protect and enjoy it therein.

DG—p. 186—Captain King and especially the family traveled to St. Louis a lot and stayed at the Southern Hotel.

DG—p. 188—King's drinking—Said when he came out on gallery with one pants leg in his boot and one out it was time to clear out because he was drunk. Also example here of the excursion to Laredo.

DG-p. 192—"his history is almost a history of this frontier"

RHK—p. 11—June 14, 1884—Texas live Stock Journal reported that Capt. King had shipped 24,000 head of cattle, 10,000 of which were fours and upwards and the balance ones twos and threes. From what we could learn there have been considerable losses on account of careless handling at Wichita Falls and beyond. The June 23, 1883 Cuero Bulletin tells how King protected some of his profits. Six thousand head stampeded upon nearing the Nueces on the drive from king's Rio Grande pastures and it is said nearly half of them lost...The immense herds broke wildly for the river as soon as they realized they were nearing it, and many of them being very weak went down under the feet of the others. So far as we are able to learn the loss will come upon Mr. Stevens as we are told that in his arrangement with Capt. King the risk of the drive rested upon Mr. Stevens.

RHK—p. 12—Nettie the eldest married a Yankee, Colonel Atwood. She was disinherited by her father but later reinstated by her mother. Richard was given La Puerta when he married. Ella's land was bought up by Bob Kleberg. Lee died and Alice Gertrudis after schooling in St. Louis stayed with her parents.