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www.harlanfamily.org

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Why is genealogy fun?

My mom just doesn't "get it." As many times as I've tried to explain it to her, she just doesn't understand why I find a bunch of dead people who I've never known to be so interesting.

But for me, genealogy is personalized history.

When I was in school, I studied the early days of the USA before it was a country, including William Penn and the Quaker immigration he led. But that meant something different to me when I found out that I'm directly descended from some of those Quakers.

I learned in school about the 1849 California Gold Rush. But it meant more to me when I learned that Harlans were involved in triggering this incredible event.

I've enjoyed my fair share of California wines, but I was delighted to learn that Harlans have played an important role in the development of Napa Valley as one of the world's leading wine growing regions.

This interest started for me when my Dad showed me an old Bible from my ancestor who was born in Kentucky but ended up in Louisiana. For many of us, our introduction to Harlan genealogy came from a family member sharing their interest and knowledge.

This interest was reinforced when I attended my first Harlan Reunion in 1987 in Philadelphia, where I met people from across the country who

shared my interest in Harlan history – and some of them have become good friends!

If you're getting this newsletter, I hope it's because you too have a connection to our shared heritage and an interest in learning more.

I challenge each of you to share your interest in Harlan genealogy with at least one other family member (preferably younger) and invite them to join us at our next Harlan Family Reunion in June 2027 in Sacramento, California!

Mike Harlan, KY, President, Harlan Family in America

SAVE THE DATE!
Harlan Family National
Reunion
Celebration 340
Sacramento, California
June 24 – 27, 2027

WESTWARD HO!

My favorite Harlan family story is that of my great-great-grandfather George Harlan (#852). He was a successful farmer in Michigan when he sold everything in 1845 and made an adventurous start to what he hoped would be a better life.

Why did he become an immigrant to another country in 1845? We know that in the spring of 1845, a friend gave George a book entitled "The

Emigrants' Guide to Oregon and California." He was enchanted by the account. Hastings' book certainly made it sound simple enough, assuring the emigrant of the ease of the trail and the abundance of good water and feed for their animals. Alta California was a remote province of Mexico that was sparsely populated and largely agricultural at that time.

On October 14, 1845, with \$3,000 (\$128,000 today) acquired from the sale of land, home and possessions, he and his extended family left Michigan. At least 25 people traveling in 11 wagons left Niles, along with a herd of cattle and dairy cows they drove all the way to California.

One of my favorite journey stories concerns my great-grandfather Elisha (#2995) when he was 7 years old. In Hancock County, Illinois, he leaned too far out of the wagon, fell beneath the wheels and was run over. He was treated by a nearby doctor who, in bleeding him, severed an artery and nearly killed him. A week later, he was sufficiently recovered for the party to proceed.

Mary Harlan in her memoirs "Recollections of a Pioneer Mother" recalls, "We reached Lexington, Missouri, December 1st and decided to winter. Father rented an old hotel, which accommodated the entire party, and the time was spent very pleasantly. There was a large ballroom connected with the house. Lexington had quite a population of Negroes (Missouri at that time was a slave state) who, with Father's permission, often came here to dance. The dances were very entertaining for us young people. We also had our own dances and good times, Bill Richardson, a member of our party, playing the fiddle. Two weddings were celebrated during the winter: I was married to John Van Gordon [sic], a brother of my sister Rebecca's husband, and my cousin Sarah was wedded to her cousin George [W.] Harlan."

In May 1846 at Indian Creek, Kansas, the company spent a month preparing for the trip. The wagons held all the supplies they expected to need. 500 wagons were preparing for the trip at the same time (2/3 going to Oregon). Joining the Harlans in Missouri was the Wimmer family. Peter Wimmer had married George Harlan's daughter, Mary, and they had 7 children. Peter

remarried after Mary's death in Missouri in 1843. It wasn't long after departing in April the Harlans decided to travel in a smaller group.

Lansford Hastings, the author of the guidebook, met migrants at Fort Bridger in what is now Wyoming. After a few days' rest and much discussion, four groups, known as the Harlan-Young Party, left Fort Bridger on July 20, 1846, with Hastings as their guide.

There is no documented evidence that Hastings had ever traveled the route that was called "The Hastings Cut-Off." It was a shorter route by distance but much longer in time. The Hastings Cut-Off ran west from Fort Bridger, through the Wasatch Mountains in what is now Utah, to the Great Salt Lake, then south and west across the salt flats, and finally in a great loop around the Ruby Mountains to join the established California Trail at what is now Elko, Nevada, on the Humboldt River. By the time the Harlans arrived at the river, all the other immigrants traveling to California by an established northern route had already passed through.

After hundreds of grueling miles across the mountains, the Harlan Party arrived at Johnson's Ranch in the western foothills of the Sierras October 24, 1846. It had started to rain and they could see snow falling behind them near the crest of the Sierra Nevada.

A sad footnote to this story is that the Donner-Reed Party arrived at Fort Bridger just after Hastings departed with the Harlan Party. They had followed Hastings into the Wasatch Mountains. When Hastings realized the difficult travel through the mountains, he backtracked to leave a note along the trail for Donner Party. The note urged the party to route south and not follow them, which further delayed the Donner Party. Their delay in crossing the mountains and the Great Salt Desert led to the party stuck in Sierra Nevada snow at (now) Donner Lake. The Harlan Party, the last group of immigrants to safely arrive in California, continued to Sutter's Fort and wintered in abandoned missions (San Jose and Santa Clara) at the south end of San Francisco Bay.

Read more on the HFA website:
[The Great Trek](#)
[Harlan's Head West in Record #30](#)
and [Elisha Harlan's pioneering life](#)

Eyewitness to the Settlement of the West: Jacob Wright Harlan's California 1846-1888.

What I Saw in California, Edwin Bryant, originally published in 1848.

Pat Fluetsch (#7445-5-2)
Steve Harrison (#7445-5-4)

[Note: [Donner Memorial State Park](#) is 1.5 hours drive east along I-80 from Sacramento. It would make a great historical and scenic mountain day trip if attending the Harlan reunion.]

TOM HARLAN: DENDROCHRONOLOGIST*

In 2025, I was fortunate to pay a third visit to the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest in the White Mountains in eastern California. There is a steep and winding road leading up to about 10,000 feet where the U.S. Forest Service has a very nice [visitor center](#). The forest is a moonscape of the oldest living things on earth. One bristlecone pine tree in the White Mountains is nearly 4,900 years old. The trees live in a harsh environment with very little competition. You can imagine my surprise to see “Thomas P. Harlan Theatre” above the door of the small theatre in the visitor center. I took a photograph and determined to find out if I was related to this Tom Harlan.

I quickly found a tribute to him after his death in 2013, “In memoriam: Thomas P. Harlan, bristlecone pine tree expert (Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research, University of Arizona. Special to the Arizona Daily Star April 12, 2013. Updated Jun 25, 2015). “Thomas P. Harlan, long-time research associate and dendrochronologist at the University of Arizona’s Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research (LTRR), early member of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, and Jefferson Award winner, died Thursday, February 28, 2013, in Tucson, Arizona.

Born on a family ranch outside of Harper, Texas

in 1935, Harlan arrived at the UA in 1956 after completing his undergraduate anthropology degree at Texas Tech University. Two years later he was hired by the UA Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research to carry out tree-ring dating of timbers from Southwestern archaeological sites. He completed a Master of Arts degree in anthropology at the UA in 1962 on the dating of cliff dwellings near Flagstaff, Ariz. Harlan worked full-time for the UA tree-ring lab until his semi-retirement in 2000.”

I also found “Remembering Tom Harlan” that states, “Particularly important was his fieldwork among the bristlecone pines of the White Mountains of California, where he was not only a participant in some of the pioneering studies, but latterly led a large group of volunteers over many summer seasons.”

My next quest was to see if his ancestors were in the “History and Genealogy of the Harlan Family.” I did not succeed at first. But I kept looking and finally discovered the reason I had not easily found his family line. It seems his great-great-grandfather, Thomas P. Harlan (1827-1870), was number #3498 in the genealogy, and nothing further is listed for that line. I was able to determine that Thomas P. Harlan had a son, Thomas Harlan Jr. (1869-1948). He in turn had a son, Thomas Harlan III (1899-1991), who was the father of Tom Harlan (1935-2013). My quest had ended.

I was delighted to discover this connection with a Harlan relative who was a scientist and researcher in the Bristlecone Pine Forest.

Steve Harrison (#7445-54)

[*Dendrochronology is the science of dating events and variations in the environment in former periods by comparative study of growth rings in trees and aged wood. Editor's note: For those driving to the HFA Reunion 2027, the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest is a scenic six hour drive from Sacramento across the stunning Sierra Nevada and down into the Great Basin Desert. Consider adding another awe-inspiring Harlan connection to your journey!]

TOP NOTCH WINERIES WITHIN SACRAMENTO'S REACH

Get ready for the Harlan Family in America 2027 Reunion in Sacramento, California! We will have some great excursions and experiences when you are in Sacramento, and here is one that we are planning: wine tasting in Lodi.

Why Lodi and not Napa, you ask? Lodi (“LOW-dye”) may not be the best known American Viticultural Area (AVA) in California (Napa and Sonoma fight for that title), but true wine enthusiasts know that just south of Sacramento is one of the largest, oldest, and most important wine regions in the state. In fact, it’s an area so large and abundant that it has multiple subregions and offers over 125 grape varieties.

The Lodi AVA is one of the largest in California at approximately 550,000 acres, more than 100,000 acres of which are planted to wine grapes. This is 20% of the state’s total grape harvest and nearly 40% of its premium wine grapes. In 2006, Lodi was subdivided into seven smaller appellations based on differences in soil types, climate, and topography. Conditions here make it possible to grow more varieties from around the world than anywhere else in California. It is nestled in California’s Mediterranean climate with hot days, cool nights, and fertile alluvial soil.

Out of more than 125 grape varieties in the region, one stands out. It is the Zinfandel grape. For more than 175 years, Zinfandel was the most widely planted wine grape variety in California, making it the state’s heritage grape (and among the top five today). Planted in Lodi during the California Gold Rush, Zinfandel holds a special place in the region’s history. As the self-proclaimed Zinfandel Capital of the World, Lodi produces nearly 40% of California’s premium Zinfandel.

Today, the Lodi AVA hosts more than 85 wineries, with over half offering tasting rooms. These range from small, artisan producers to larger establishments producing hundreds of thousands of cases of wine. The region has

evolved from humble grape fields into a powerhouse of viticulture, known for its historic vineyards and its innovative winegrowers.

At less than one hour drive from downtown Sacramento, won’t you join us in 2027 to sample this often overlooked and beautiful region of California?

*Kelli Williams Page (#7447-311)
Las Vegas, NV by way of Lodi, CA*

TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALLGAME

As we look ahead to the 2027 Harlan Family in America Reunion, there’s an extra reason to be excited: the Sacramento Athletics will be playing right next to our reunion hotel!

Catching a game is affordable, walkable, and perfect for families. The smaller, more intimate stadium means you can see MLB players up close in a way you rarely can elsewhere—an unforgettable experience for kids and adults alike. It’s an easy evening outing for cousins, grandparents, and friends to enjoy together without worrying about parking or commutes.

Last summer, a few Harlans attended a game featuring the A’s and the Houston Astros—and it ended with a thrilling walk-off home run that had the whole crowd on its feet. It was pure baseball magic and a memory I’ll never forget.

In 2027, we’ll have that same kind of fun just steps away. Let’s plan to cheer together and make it part of our Harlan family story!

R. Scott Harlan, Esq. (#7035-3131), HFA Board



PLANTS, ANIMALS & ART - FUN THINGS TO DO IN SACRAMENTO

While in Sacramento, you might want to check out three small and beautiful gardens. Two are on the grounds of the California State Capitol and one is the WPA Rock Garden in William Land Regional Park. The Sacramento Zoo and the Crocker Art Museum also deserve a visit.

California State Capitol World Peace Rose Garden

The World Peace Rose Garden, established in Capitol Park in 2003, was created as a sanctuary of peace, love, and inspiration for people of all nations, cultures, and religions. The garden is dedicated to women, children, and families. This Victorian style garden, with a fountain as its centerpiece, features more than 650 roses with more than 153 varieties, colors, and fragrances.

Visitors can stroll the garden's numerous pathways or relax on benches that line them. Inspirational peace messages written by children are inscribed on plaques throughout the garden. One such message, "A single rose can make a garden. A man of peace can change the world." was written by an 8th grader.



Native Plant Section of Capitol Park

Next to the World Peace Rose Garden is the Capitol Park's Native Plant section. The garden was started in 1914 when the governor asked children in the state's 58 counties to identify and donate common trees and shrubs from their geographic region for Capitol Park. Today, this area of the park preserves several endangered native species that were once common in California. The garden has a large collection of plants, including cactus and succulents, that

represent California's ecological diversity.

Both the World Peace Rose Garden and the Native Plant Section of Capitol Park are on the 15th Street side of the capitol grounds. Both gardens are free to visit and open dawn to dusk.



Manzanita, one of the many native shrubs in the Capitol Park.

WPA Rock Garden

Another must-visit garden is the WPA Rock Garden. It is in William Land Regional Park located at 15th Avenue and Land Park Drive. The garden was established in 1940 through the Works Progress Administration during the Great Depression. In the fall of 1988, Daisy Mah, City of Sacramento Parks employee, began a major undertaking of revitalizing this neglected site.

The one-acre garden consists of plants in rock-lined beds along meandering paths that are mostly from Mediterranean regions with a growing emphasis on California natives.

When I was there in 2024, Ms. Mah was working in the garden, and I was lucky enough to get to speak with her. Ms. Mah maintains the garden on a part-time basis with help from a fabulous group of garden volunteers.

YOU ARE INVITED!

Please be a guest at the Harlan Family In America Board Meeting on Saturday, June 20, 2026, in Sacramento, CA. We would appreciate ideas about activities and speakers from those of you who live nearby. Contact me for more information: Pat Fluetsch, pfluetsch@icloud.com or 209-608-9446.

Sacramento Zoo

After visiting the WPA Rock Garden, you may want to stop for a visit to the Sacramento Zoo, which is around the corner.

The Sacramento Zoo, founded in 1927, is home to more than 300 native, rare and endangered animals. It is open 9 am to 4 pm daily. To get the best price, it is recommended to purchase tickets in advance. Tickets can be purchased through the zoo's website. Prices may change daily based on capacity and seasonality.

Crocker Art Museum

The Crocker features a diverse array of art and objects, including the world's foremost display of California art, one of the largest collections of international ceramics in the U.S., and art from the Americas, Africa, Asia, Europe, and Oceania. Its collection consists of more than 25,000 objects reflecting the region's diverse history and population.

Before the museum opened in 1885, it was the E. B. Crocker Art Gallery. The gallery opened in 1872 and housed the art collection of E. B. and Margaret Crocker, which was acquired during a trip to Europe 1869–1871. The collection of European paintings and works on paper was one of the first to enter the U.S., and the Crockers collected and commissioned work by artists in California.

Two paintings I particularly liked were “He Who Laughs Last, Laughs Best, 1876, by Toby Rosenthal (American, born Germany, 1848–1917), depicting two boys descending the stairs. In one picture a boy is laughing at the other because the dog is about to eat the other's food. In the second picture the laughing boy is not paying attention, and he trips on the stairs with the dog getting the laughing boy's food.

The Crocker Art Museum is located at 216 O Street and is open 10 am - 5 pm Wednesday, Friday, Saturday - Sunday, and 10 am - 9 pm on Thursday. Closed on Monday and Tuesday.

Ed Hill, KY, HFA Board Member

FOLSOM, CALIFORNIA

Following our board meeting in Sacramento, Pat Fluetsch and I made our way over to Folsom. It is a quaint town with lots of history that is a short, easy trip from Sacramento.

Folsom sits on land that was once inhabited by the Nisenan Tribe. The Gold Rush of 1849 brought violence, disease, and overwhelming loss for the tribes. A gentleman named Joseph Libbey Folsom purchased the land and laid out a town called Granite City, which became home to mostly gold miners. He then lobbied to connect the railroad to the town of Sacramento. After Folsom died in 1855, the city name was changed to honor him.

Folsom Prison was established in 1880 when the Livermore family donated land in exchange for prison labor to build a hydroelectric dam on the American River for a sawmill. The sawmill never operated, but the family realized they could use the natural force of the running water to generate power that could be transmitted to Sacramento. The Folsom Powerhouse operated until 1950 and is now a National Historic Landmark.

The Folsom Historic District is easily and economically reached by using the light rail Gold Line from downtown Sacramento. The ride takes about one hour. Folsom has over 50 miles of walking trails and is connected to the 32-mile American River Bike Trail at the Livermore Community Park. There is also the Johnny Cash Trail, a public art experience, and bike trail honoring the singer.

Folsom also has many boutiques, restaurants and dessert shops, as well as several museums, and The Square. The Square was formerly known as Pioneer Village, where you can pan for gold and see a working blacksmith forge in action. You can tour a Southern Pacific Railroad caboose and check out a miner's cabin. This could easily be a nice excursion from Sacramento while attending the HFA Reunion in June 2027.

Nancy Gooding, GA, HFA Board Vice President

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TREASURER'S REPORT

Checking Account Balance (7/1/25) \$4,456.03

INCOME

Donations \$2,989.60

TOTAL INCOME \$2,989.60

DISBURSEMENTS

Fall newsletter \$1,341.70

P.O. Box \$126.00

Storage unit rental \$169.19

TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS \$2,980.13

Checking Account Balance (3/1/26) \$5,808.74

Certificate of Deposit \$16,694.00

THE HARLAN RECORD

The *Harlan Record* is published semiannually:

The Harlan Family in America
P.O. Box 333
Pleasant Unity, PA 15676

It is a permanent organization established to document the historical contributions made by Harlans in America. Submissions of articles are welcome, are subject to editing, and may be held for future use. Send articles to the Editor, Stephanie Hines, at stephanieshines@gmail.com or mail to: 1733 Dali Way, Hanford, CA 93230.

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