



No. 68

www.harlanfamily.org

Fall 2026

HARLAN FAMILY IN AMERICA REUNION 2027

Many readers are aware of the Harlan Family in America Reunion our Board of Directors has been diligently planning for June 2027. The few recent Harlan Records are dedicated to showcasing the many activities and Harlan connections offered by the reunion in and around Sacramento, California.

After the humble beginnings of our first Harlan ancestors in America in Pennsylvania, their descendants spread throughout the United States and abroad. Our cousins populate the East Coast, Midwest, and West. Fascinating histories accompany those migrations. On a journey to the 2027 reunion, you can connect with Harlan cousins gathering from around the world, especially those who landed in California, where there is much to learn about our ancestors.

In addition to fascinating history, the state's capitol offers abundant activities. Also known as the City of Trees, Sacramento is ripe with natural and artistic beauty. Recreation enthusiasts will not tire for choices. Opportunities to enjoy unique foods, fine wines, and cultural events abound here as well.

Beyond the Sacramento area, California is home to the tallest point in the lower 48 states (Mt. Whitney) and the lowest (Death Valley); and if you're feeling extra spry, you can race between the two! Twenty eight national parks have been designated in California (<https://www.nps.gov/state/ca/index.htm>), several of which are a few hours' driving distance from Sacramento.

Let us share California with you in 2027!



OUR 2027 HARLAN FAMILY IN AMERICA REUNION HOTEL & GATHERING PLACE

After considering several hotels in the Sacramento area, we are excited to announce that Embassy Suites by Hilton Sacramento Riverfront Promenade in Sacramento will be the hotel for the Harlan Family in America reunion.

We visited several hotels, but this one was, hands down, our favorite. The location is fantastic – right along the Sacramento River and within walking distance of Old Sacramento Waterfront, Tower Bridge, Sutter Health Park, and several museums and attractions. Sutter Health Park is the current home of the Athletics baseball team, who aren't scheduled to move to Las Vegas until the 2028 season.

A Great Place to Gather

The hotel has 242 all-suite rooms and a bright, open floor plan overlooking the first floor bar and gathering area. Everything is clean, comfortable, and well-maintained. The bar and lounge area have plenty of tables, chairs, and comfortable sofas - perfect for sitting around with family, catching up, and enjoying each other's company. The bar is well stocked, and the service has been excellent.

One of the things we especially liked is the complementary afternoon happy hour, giving everyone another opportunity to gather and socialize without having to leave the hotel.

And Then There's Breakfast!

One of my favorite features of this hotel is the complementary custom-order breakfast, and it is phenomenal. I had a made-to-order omelet for breakfast every morning. It was phenomenal! There is ample seating in the dining area or in the main bar and lounge area.

For a family reunion, having a great breakfast included every morning is a tremendous benefit. It gives everyone a chance to start the day together before heading out to explore Sacramento or participate in reunion activities.

The Suites

Every room is a suite, giving families considerably more space than a traditional hotel.

Every room contains a separate sitting area with a large pullout sofa, desk, and flatscreen TV. The hallway to the bedroom includes a minifridge, microwave and minibar/coffee area, and access to the bathroom. The bedroom includes another flatscreen TV and either a king or two queen beds. With the pullout sofa, a suite could easily sleep up to six people, depending on the family's sleeping arrangement.

Bringing the Family Together

We realize the rates are higher than some hotel options. However, these are large suites rather than standard hotel rooms, and we hope the additional space and amenities will encourage families to come together and share a suite.

When you consider the complimentary breakfast every morning, the afternoon happy hour, the location and the space provided by each suite, we believe this hotel offers an exceptional value for a major California city.

Most importantly, this isn't just about finding a place to sleep. It's about finding a place where the Harlan family can gather, reconnect, share stories, make memories, and enjoy being together. We believe we have found that place.

We can't wait to see everyone in Sacramento for the next Harlan Family in America Reunion!

Nancy Gooding, HFA Board Vice President, GA

FUN THINGS TO DO IN AND AROUND SACRAMENTO

Old Town Sacramento (a 5-10 minute walk from the Embassy Suites)

This 28-acre historic waterfront district along the eastern bank of the Sacramento River features Gold Rush architecture, wooden boardwalks, cobblestone streets, and prominent attractions. Here you'll find the California State Railroad Museum and the historic Delta King paddleboat,

as well as many excellent restaurants and shops.
<https://www.oldsacramento.com>

California State Railroad Museum (111 I Street, Sacramento, Admission: free - \$12)

The cornerstone of Old Town Sacramento is the California State Railroad Museum (<https://www.californiarailroad.museum>). The museum covers railroad history from the construction of the transcontinental railroad to modern day. On display are locomotives and rolling stock from many different eras, as well as a large model railroad exhibit and children's play area. On Fridays and weekends, the museum operates an excursion train south from Old Sac along the Sacramento River. The round trip takes about an hour and is a favorite family activity.

Leland Stanford Mansion (800 N Street, Sacramento)

There is no admission fee for an interesting docent tour of the beautiful house that was the home of Jane and Leland Stanford, 8th governor of California. Stanford was the founder of Stanford University and a successful railroad tycoon. After Leland's death, Jane donated the home to the Catholic Church, which operated a children's home there until 1978. The house is well preserved with many of the original furnishings.

SMUD Museum of Science and Curiosity (400 Jibboom St, Sacramento, Admission: \$17 - 20)

This fascinating children's museum is an easy 1-mile walk from the reunion hotel along the Riverwalk Trail. Adults and children alike will be inspired to explore and learn about science: health, space, environment, energy, creativity, etc. The hands-on exhibits are entertaining for children of all ages.

Sacramento River Walk (out the back door of the Embassy Suites)

Flat, paved paths connect the Tower Bridge and the I Street Bridge. The walking/jogging paths follow the Sacramento River and lead to Old Town Sacramento, the Museum of Science and Curiosity, picnic areas, and Union Square with

views of the river and the city.

Pat Fluetsch (#7445-5-2)

Chris Fluetsch (#7447-5-2-1)

Gerry Lundgren, HFA Secretary

BIRD WATCHING

Sacramento and the surrounding area offers a fascinating variety of habitats in which to seek out and view birds. Year-round residents and summer migrants will be nesting and raising young at the time of the reunion. A number of bird species can be seen in the parks and the river parkway within walking distance of the reunion hotel. With a car, a wider range of grassland and forest birds, raptors, and waterfowl can be viewed. The Sacramento Bird Alliance (<https://www.sacramentoaudubon.org/summer>) describes these summer season hotspots and may host a guided field trip at that time.

FUN ON THE WATER

Sacramento was founded on the Sacramento River, which was the easiest route between the city and the San Francisco Bay for cargo and people. Today, the bodies of water near Sacramento offer a variety of opportunities for fun side-trips. Some ideas to consider include:

Rafting

While the Sacramento River is relatively flat as it flows by Sacramento, other nearby rivers are more active. One popular outfitter is OARS <https://www.oars.com/american-river-rafting>, which offers ½- 1-, and 2-day trips on the south and west forks of the American River. OARS operates trips for a variety of levels. Start/finish point is 50 minutes drive from the reunion hotel.

Kayaking/Canoeing/Paddle Boarding

The Sac State Aquatic Center <https://www.sacstateaquaticcenter.com/> offers rentals of kayaks, canoes, and paddle boards to use on Lake Natoma. The facility is located 25 minutes drive east from the reunion hotel.

River Cruise

For a less strenuous experience on the river, City Cruise California recently introduced an upgraded 180 person boat for cruises on the Sacramento River, which leaves from the Old Sacramento waterfront - a 5 minute walk from our hotel. <https://www.cityexperiences.com/sacramento/city-cruises/sacramento-historic-river-cruises/>

Paddlewheeler

The Delta King was built in 1927, and carried passengers and cargo between San Francisco and Sacramento until 1940. It is now a hotel and restaurant permanently moored on the Old Sacramento waterfront. <https://www.deltaking.com/>

Mike Harlan (HFA President, KY)

FUNDRAISING EVENTS AT THE 2027 HFA REUNION IN SACRAMENTO

Our national reunions are fun for so many reasons: we connect with those that we see every five years; we enjoy new cities and activities with our close family members; we learn about each other and about our family history, as well as the history of the local area. Another fun part of each reunion (and an important fundraiser for the HFA) is the RAFFLE! The funds raised are used to help reduce the cost of the next reunion, making it possible for more people to attend. Anyone can showcase their family, their home state, their hobby...you name it. The baskets can be brought to the reunion completed, or items can be brought and assembled at the reunion. We will help! We will have boxes and bags, cellophane, ribbons, markers, tape, and labels for you to use if you want to assemble it on site. Consider donating a basket, and consider buying raffle tickets to win another's donated basket. Tickets will be sold in the hospitality room throughout the reunion and winners will be drawn on Saturday night. Below are some helpful hints:

1. It is difficult to transport actual baskets on planes, so most people display their items in boxes or bags that are decorated and wrapped in

cellophane. As noted above, it might be easier to assemble your bag/box/basket on site.

2. Please attach a label to the outside of the basket with a list of contents, the theme of your basket, and your name. Optional: some people note the approximate value of the contents.

3. Large, and sometimes valuable, items are won by Silent Auction. Some examples of these are: The Alpheus Harlan Genealogy Book, paintings, quilts, fine wines. If you would like to donate an item for the silent auction, it would certainly be appreciated.

Please let me know if you have questions about the silent auction or the raffle: Gerry Lundgren: gerrylun@myfmtc.com. 712-370-2110. If you want to let me know ahead of time what you plan to donate, that would be great, but is not necessary.

EMAIL OR SNAIL MAIL?

We are making progress in our quest to increase electronic delivery of the biannual Harlan Record. I want to extend a hearty thanks to those who have switched from postal delivery to email notification of our newsletter over the past few years. The spring newsletter cost the HFA \$1,246.44 to print and mail. As such, twice yearly printing and mailing is a large expenditure. If you currently receive the Harlan Record by postal delivery, please consider switching to email delivery or making a small donation to the HFA.

Since we rely solely on donations, our budget is limited. The HFA Board has also used funds in the treasury to support various Harlan sites, such as the Harlan-Lincoln House in Mt. Pleasant, IA and the Chester County Historical Center in the Brandywine, PA area. We also subsidize some of the activities at our national reunions to make the event more affordable for families. The more money we save in our distribution of the Harlan Record, the more we can contribute to preserving Harlan sites and making reunions more affordable.

Gerry Lundgren, HFA Secretary, IA

THE WIMMER NUGGET

Who found the “Wimmer nugget”, the first gold discovered in 1848 that sparked the California gold rush? The question is important to California history as well as Harlan family history. Was it John Marshall or John Wimmer? Although there is no firm answer, I will explore the question in this article.

It seems possible that because John Marshall took gold to Sutter’s Fort to be tested, the “discovery” is credited to him. However, some documentation suggests that John Wimmer [#856-3] found the first nugget. Or it may be that Marshall found the nugget, but because he sent it with John Wimmer to Mrs. Wimmer, she thought the boy found it. Here is the story and some evidence for each possibility.

In documents accompanying the nugget, Peter Wimmer's wife, Jennie, writes, "They picked up a nugget of metal and Mr. Wimmer sent it to the house to me by our son [John] and I boiled it in a kettle of soap all day to test it to see if it was gold. It proved to be a nugget of gold. From that the mining began."

Shortly afterwards, Marshall took the gold piece, weighing a little over a quarter of an ounce, along with other samples he had discovered, to Sutter’s Fort and "had it tested with acids and proved it to be pure gold," wrote Jennie Wimmer. She writes that Marshall presented her with the nugget after his return from Sutter’s Fort as a memento of the great discovery and she carried it in a leather bag around her neck for the next 40 years. [Note that the “other samples” are in the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution.]

Subsequently it passed to San Francisco attorney W. W. Allen and Chicago collector Charles F. Gunther. The nearly one-inch long Wimmer nugget was exhibited as "the original nugget" at the California State Fair in 1892 and in the California Building at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. The Bancroft Library acquired it in the 1950s. The Wimmer nugget, and related documentation, are at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. [<https://>

digicoll.lib.berkeley.edu/record/279033?v=pdf].

In the “California Gold Book” by W. W. Allen and R. B. Avery (1893), it is recorded that “Marshall and Peter Wimmer were walking leisurely along the trail race of the mill. . . .” Marshall observed a shining specimen lying on a flat rock close to the side of the race. Handing it to Wimmer, he said, “What do you think of that?” Peter took it in his hand and felt its weight, and said, “That must be gold.” “Well Peter, we will send that to Jennie and let her boil it in her soap kettle all day and see if it will tarnish it.” Thus agreed, they sent it to Jennie by Wimmer’s boy [John].”

Wimmer Family Connection

John Marion Wimmer was the son of Peter L. Wimmer Sr. and his first wife, Mary (Harlan) Wimmer [#856]. Peter Wimmer, his second wife Jennie, and their extended family traveled overland to California in 1846 with the Harlan Party, led by George Harlan. Peter Wimmer stopped at Sutter’s Fort (now Sacramento) and went to work for John Sutter who sent Peter and his family up to Coloma to build a sawmill.

In 1848, while John was standing on the bank of the mill race in which his father and John Marshall were working, he witnessed the first discovery of gold that in the years following lured so many thousands to the distant West.

Jacob Wright Harlan, in his book “California ’46 to ’88”, relates the gold discover story from a letter he received from his uncle, Peter Wimmer. “While the mill-race was being dug, the children found it to be a place which they liked to play in and one day, while thus playing, little John Wimmer found a piece of gold of the value of about eight dollars. It was bright and pretty, and he ran to the house and showed it to his father and Marshall.”

George Van Gorden, a grandson of George Harlan, traveled with the Harlan Party to California. In his reminiscences published in “The Argonaut” [July 7, 1939], he credits John Wimmer with being the real discoverer of gold at Coloma. He recalls that John found the first nugget and gave it to his father, who gave it to

who gave it to Marshall, who in turn gave it to Mrs. Wimmer.



J. W. Marshall and Mrs. Wimmer Testing Gold in Boiling Soap.

Illustration from the California Gold Book.

Another account from “The Santa Cruz Sentinel” [May 29, 1880] states, “On a Saturday evening early in February 1848, the newly-dug race received the first influx of water, which was let on in full force in order to sweep out the rubbish accumulated during the building. On the morning of Sunday the water was cut off, and when the channel was dry, a little boy, the son of one of Marshall's workmen, desried in the race below the mill, the shining piece of gold, about as large as the first joint of the forefinger of a man's hand, which revealed to the world the untold treasures of California, and began the modern era in the search of the noblest metals. The name of the boy was John Wimmer. The historic piece of gold which he found was brought not long after its discovery to Napa Valley by his father, P[eter] L. Wimmer, or rather perhaps, by his wife, who was cook for Marshall and his hands at the mill, to whom, according to my informant, it was given.”

The history of the Wimmer nugget remains a mystery. However, the consequences of the discovery at Coloma are not disputed. And it is not disputed that a young Harlan was a witness

to the discovery, if not the discoverer.

Steve Harrison (#7445-54)

Note: See Harlan Record, Spring 2024, for the article “John Marion Wimmer”. Also see Harlan Record, Spring 2018, for an article about the Wimmer family in the California Gold Rush.

Also, consider a field trip to the Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park during the reunion to learn more about this piece of history!

TRAVELING TO SACRAMENTO

As you and your family begin to consider planning a trip to the 2027 reunion, below are several transportation options.

Driving - Sacramento sits at the junction of two national freeways: I-5, which connects the western U.S. from its border with Mexico to its Canadian border; and I-80, which spans from New Jersey to San Francisco.

Train - Sacramento is a hub for several Amtrak routes.

Flying

Five airports reasonably service Sacramento. When organizing road travel to/from any airport to Sacramento, bear in mind that traffic in and around the metropolitan areas can be heavy and add delays depending on time of day.

1. Sacramento International Airport (SMF). A smaller airport approximately 11 miles from the Embassy Suites. Ride shares and public transportation to/from downtown are optional.

2. Bay Area - Rental cars and private shuttles are available to/from Sacramento.

-Oakland San Francisco Bay Airport (OAK). Appr. 90 miles from the Embassy Suites.

-San Francisco International Airport (SFO). Appr. 96 miles from the Embassy Suites.

-San Joe (SJC). Appr. 120 miles from the Embassy Suites.

3. Reno-Tahoe Int'l (RNO). A small, regional airport. Appr. 140 miles from the Embassy Suites. Rental cars and Amtrak are available.

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Kenneth Harlan (IN)
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TREASURER'S REPORT

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

INCOME

Donations \$1391.94

TOTAL INCOME \$1391.94

DISBURSEMENTS

Spring newsletter \$1,266.44

Chester County History Center \$150.00

Storage unit rental \$752.66

Board meeting \$930.47

TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS \$3,079.57

Checking Account Balance \$4,121.11
(9/1/26)

Certificate of Deposit \$16,576.49

Certificate of Deposit \$40,052.26

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: 16982 Rancho Lane, Yorba Linda, CA 92886.

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