



## Harlan Family Lecture

On March 8, at the San Ramon Public Library, Bill Harlan fascinated the audience with his description of the trials and tribulations faced by his ancestors during their travels from southwest Michigan to California. Bill is a great, great grandson of George Harlan (1802-1850) who, in 1846, decided to move his family far to the west beyond what was then the United States. Bill's great granduncle, Joel Harlan (1828-1875), bought land in the Norris Tract and had a house erected there for his family in the 1850's. The home, called "El Nido", still stands at the intersection of San Ramon Valley Boulevard and Westside Drive in San Ramon. Bill's great grandfather, Elisha Harlan (1838-1919), who grew up in the San Ramon area, eventually settled in Fresno County where Bill was born.

In 1845 George Harlan, inspired by Langford Hasting's book, "The Emigrant's Guide to Oregon and California," left Michigan with his wife and six children, and headed west to Missouri. Eleven other relatives,

including George's 90-year-old mother - in - law, accompanied them. They wintered over in Missouri and, in the spring of 1846, began their trek westward for California with a number of other pioneering groups including the ill-fated Donner Party. The parties generally followed the watercourses such as the Platte and Sweetwater rivers where there was sufficient water and feed for the oxen, cattle and other animals they were bringing with them.

Along the trail they encountered steep stretches of terrain where they struggled to get their wagons down the escarpment. Eventually the parties crossed the continental divide at South Pass and reached Fort Bridger. Here the Harlan-Young Party (the Harlans had joined together with another pioneer group for the westward trek) left the California trail and struck off to the southwest on the new Hastings Cut-off.

Instead of leading directly to the Humboldt River and the California Trail, the Hastings Cut-off took the party around the south end of the Ruby Mountains.

*(Please see Lecture, page 2)*

## Sheep Shearing Day

Sheep Shearing Day, held this year on Saturday, May 12, is one of the most popular events at the Farm. One of the highlights is, of course, the shearing of the sheep! The sheep belong to a small group of dedicated Border Collie owners who formed an informal sheep co-op to train their dogs in herding.

The sheep, dogs, and their owners came to the Farm in 2000. Watching the intelligent Border Collies herd a growing flock of sheep has become a favorite pastime of FHF volunteers and locals.

There are two distinct types of sheep on the farm. The white wool sheep grow a thick fleece coat each year and are sheared in the late spring to keep them cool in the summer. The smaller Barbados Blackbelly sheep have black markings and grow hair, not fleece.

In addition to the sheep and the dogs, there will be farm tours, wool spinners, wood turners, wood carvers, quilters, and music by the Whiskey Brothers Blue Grass Band. Members of the SRHF will be selling hot dogs, chips, cookies, soft drinks and water. Admission is \$3.00 per person for pre-registration through the city or \$5.00 at the door.



## Victorian Afternoon Tea

Foundation committees are already forming for the 2007 Victorian Tea, to be held on Sunday, September 9. In May, tea lovers who have previously attended will receive an invitation through the mail. If you do not receive an invitation, it will be available at the San Ramon libraries and community centers, and on the Foundation website, [srhf.org](http://srhf.org). This event is very popular and sells out early.

The Tea honors Ruth Quayle Boone, who generously donated Forest Home Farms to the City in 1997. She stipulated that the land become a public use area so that the spirit of the farm and the city's past would live on through the generations. *(Please see Victorian Tea, page 2)*

**Lecture** (from pg. 1)

This added several more days to their arduous trek. Fortunately the party was able to make it into the Sacramento Valley before the heavy snows came. The Donner Party, also taking the Hastings Cutoff, had fallen several weeks behind. They became trapped by the snow on the east side of the Sierras and several members of the party perished.

The Harlans were involved in several different ventures to earn a livelihood from the Napa Valley to San Jose, and many places in between, prior to the Gold Rush. When they got word of the gold discovery, they sold a business in San Francisco, and opened the first general store in Coloma. There they made a killing selling goods to the flood of miners coming into the area as well as to the Native Americans living there. The Harlans took the money they made in the goldfields and used it to purchase land and settle in the San Ramon Valley.



**The Farmer's Market begins May 5 at Forest Home Farms and continues every Saturday through October. Find an abundance of fresh produce, and enjoy cooking demonstrations and live music! Bring the family!**

**Art & Wind Festival**  
May 27-28, 2007

The Art & Wind Festival is always a big city event on Memorial Day weekend. Once again the Foundation has partnered with Chipotle Mexican Grill. The restaurant will be selling chicken, vegetarian, and bean and cheese burritos. The Foundation will also join with the Library Foundation to sell sodas and water.

The city and many volunteers make this a very special event with arts and crafts, entertainment, and a hot air balloon launch early Monday morning. It is a great family event that attracts people from throughout the area. Don't miss it!

**Upcoming Lecture**  
**Features Glass Family**

The next lecture in the series, sponsored by the San Ramon Historic Foundation and the Library Foundation, will be May 10, at 7:00pm. Forest Home Farms' upper tractor barn will be the venue for this event. Rob Churchill, a direct descendent of David Glass, will talk about his family's long history and contributions to the San Ramon Valley.

David Glass purchased 740 acres in 1859 for about \$5,900. The ranch was called Lora-Nita after his daughters. He planted orchards, and started a store in Alamo. In 1877 he built the white Italianate Victorian home, now located on the Boone farm. The home's original location was just north of Forest Home Farms, and was moved to its current location in 1998.

The Glass family owned the home until 1932 when it was sold to the Ellissando family. The house changed uses over the years; it was a French restaurant in 1932 to 1934 and later Sunny Hills Rest home. Locals can remember the Glass House being the site of a Montessori School and then an antiques shop. Eventually the house was occupied as city offices, then finally "retired."

**Victorian Tea** (from pg. 1)

Held in the Community Center's Fountain Room, 200 ladies and gents, many in vintage dress and great hats, gather for tea sandwiches, scones, cookies and of course, tea. Opportunity baskets and other activities keep the event lively.

Put on by volunteers, the event is an important fund raiser that supports restoration of historical buildings in the City of San Ramon.

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