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Justice Harlan's Brave and Lonely Dissent by C. J. King

Editor's Note: This year marks the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision Brown v. Board of Education, which ended state-sanctioned school segregation. I recently asked a group of school kids, and found that they universally know the name and courage of Rosa Parks. How many Harlans also know about the brave acts of Homer Plessy and of Justice John Marshall Harlan, the lone dissenter to the Supreme Court's Plessy v. Ferguson "separate but equal" decision? C.J.K.

In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing all slaves in the Confederate states. When the proclamation took effect on Jan. 1, 1863, Colonel John Marshall Harlan, an officer with the Kentucky infantry, denounced it as "unconstitutional and null and void." He had joined Lincoln's army to help preserve the Union, not to abolish slavery.

A slaveholder himself, Harlan was quite vocal in his defense of slavery as an issue of personal property rights the government should not intrude upon. In fact, he had threatened to resign his commission over the proclamation, but it was the death of his father a few months later that caused him to leave the Union army, return to Frankfort, Ky., and take over his father's law practice. He continued to own a few household slaves until the Thirteenth Amendment abolished the institution throughout the United States. Then he reluctantly complied, freeing them, but



*John Marshall Harlan
1833-1911*

denouncing the amendment as a “flagrant invasion of the right of self-government.”

How did this vigorous supporter of slavery come to be the lone voice of dissent in the famous *Plessy v. Ferguson* case, which legalized segregation?

By 1871, Harlan had changed his mind, saying, “I have lived long enough to feel and declare that the most perfect despotism that ever existed on this earth was the institution of African slavery. I rejoice that it is gone.”

Some attribute this change of attitude to simple political expediency. After being affiliated with several political parties, he had settled into the Republican party, which opposed slavery. But beyond that was the influence of his father, who, though a slave owner, hated the brutality of the system. His father’s close friend, Henry Clay, opposed slavery and favored gradual emancipation, as did many of Harlan’s teachers in college and law school and Harlan’s wife.

The legal struggle over blacks’ rights continued after the Civil War, as southern states passed laws restricting them. Congress passed the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, the first guaranteeing equal protection to all citizens, the second granting black males the right to vote. But white opposition continued, sometimes violently. In this time of beatings, killings, arson, and other acts of terrorism, those who favored segregation began to gain control, enacting what became known as Jim Crow laws.

In 1890, Louisiana passed the Separate Car Act, mandating “separate but equal” accommodations for blacks and whites on all passenger railways operating within the state. Whites were not allowed in cars assigned for blacks, nor vice versa, except for black nurses attending white children. Those who did not obey faced a \$25 fine or a 20-day jail term.

Immediately, a group of prominent black residents in New Orleans organized to fight the law’s constitutionality. A 30-year-old shoemaker named Homer Plessy agreed to be the guinea pig challenging the law. On June 7, 1892, Plessy bought a ticket from New Orleans to Covington, La. He boarded the train and took a seat in the whites-only car. Plessy didn’t look out of place because he was light-skinned (he was only one-eighth black), but the conductor discovered Plessy’s “colored” status and had him arrested when he refused to move.

Before the case could be heard in district court, Plessy’s lawyers filed papers with the Louisiana Supreme Court, arguing that district court judge Justice John Howard Ferguson had no authority over the case because of the constitutionality question. In

1893, the Louisiana Supreme Court disagreed, ruling the law was constitutional, and giving Plessy's lawyers what they had hoped for, the right to take the case before the U.S. Supreme Court.

It was three years before the Court heard the case. Plessy's lawyers did not have an easy task, because more precedents existed countering their claims than supporting them, and because most of the justices were not inclined to favor their arguments. The lawyers were hopeful, but they felt they really could count on only one vote. It turned out they were right. When the Court handed down its decision, only one justice went on record as a dissenter: Justice John Marshall Harlan.

The majority opinion, written by Justice Henry Billings Brown, argued that while blacks and whites were politically equal, they were not socially equal, and the Fourteenth Amendment surely could not have intended to enforce "commingling of the two races upon terms unsatisfactory to either."

Plessy's lawyers had argued that even though the Separate Car Act pretended to guarantee equal accommodations, the actual practice was something else.

Justice Harlan agreed and argued that the Louisiana law's intent was to satisfy white racial prejudice. "What can more certainly arouse race hate, more certainly create and perpetuate a feeling of distrust between these races, than state enactments, which, in fact, proceed on the ground that they cannot be allowed to sit in public coaches occupied by white citizens? That, as all will admit, is the real meaning of such legislation."

Justice Harlan believed that the Louisiana law was "hostile to both the spirit and the letter of the Constitution." He argued that if states were allowed to segregate by race, what would prevent them from also segregating by religion or other distinctions? "The thin disguise of 'equal' accommodations for passengers in railroad coaches will not mislead any one, nor atone for the wrong this day done," he argued.

The majority opinion in Plessy v. Ferguson gave support to even more Jim Crow laws during the years following. Soon "separate but equal" applied to schools, restaurants, restrooms, community swimming pools, and water coolers. And as time went on, no one even pretended the accommodations were equal. The resulting caste system relegated African Americans to inferior status that lasted from birth to death.

During the 1940s and '50s, Thurgood Marshall, who was then the lead attorney for the NAACP, would shore himself up during low moments in the fight to end segregation by reading from Harlan's dissent. According to one of Marshall's colleagues, Judge Constance Baker Motley, "Marshall admired the courage of Harlan more than any

justice who has ever sat on the Supreme Court.” Marshall’s favorite line was, “Our constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens.”

It took 58 years before Justice Harlan’s minority opinion become the majority one, when the Supreme Court overturned the “separate but equal” principle in 1954 with *Brown v. Board of Education*. Justice Earl Warren, who wrote that opinion, stated that “in the field of public education, the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.”

Anyone alive for the past 50 years knows that the struggle for equality did not end even then. But 2004 marks the 50-year anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, which carries within it the legacy of Justice John Marshall Harlan’s dissent.

Sources:

- (1) *Wayne Anderson’s Supreme Court Through Primary Sources: Plessy v. Ferguson; Rosen*, 2004.
- (2) *Louis D. Brandeis School of Law Library Web site, University of Louisville.*
- (3) *Charles Thompson’s “Harlan’s Great Dissent,” published in Kentucky Humanities, 1966, vol. 1.*

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This newsletter is published semi-annually by The Harlan Family in America, a permanent organization established to document the historical contributions made by Harlans in America. Stories, photos, and other information submitted for publication should be sent to:

The Harlan Family in America
P.O. Box 1654
Independence, MO 64055

Editor - C. J.
King joking@sover.net

Editorial Board -
John L. Harlan, Diana Harlan
Wells, Ed Wynn

FINANCIAL REPORT- 9/1/2003

CASH IN SAVINGS ACCOUNT \$ 21,682.72
9/1/2003

INCOME

Contributions	895.00
Harlan Genealogy Book Sales	660.00
Interest Earned (Savings Account)	38.78
Harlan Store Sales	338.51
-- TOTAL INCOME	\$1,932.29

DISBURSEMENTS:

Book Storage, Insurance, Shipping	427.62
Newsletter Printing/ Mailing	975.24
--TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$1,402.86

CASH IN SAVINGS & CHECKING
ACCOUNTS 3/1/2004 \$22,212.15

Contributions to The Harlan Family in America

from October 1, 2003 - March 1, 2004

AL- Roland & Olive Harlan
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If you want an electronic version of The Harlan Record, e-mail your request to Ruth Harlan Lamb at The e-mail newsletter will be sent close to the time that printed news-letters are mailed. The Harlan Record is also available on the Harlan Web site: www.harlanfamily.org under the link "Newsletter"

Note: Deadline for next newsletter is August 15, 2004. Remember, submissions of articles to The Harlan Record are welcome! They are subject to editing and may be held until a future issue if space is limited. E-mail them to the editor: C. J. King or mail to The Harlan Family in America (see address above).

TX- Clinton F. Cross
TX- Alice Dee Ford
TX- Mr. & Mrs. John L. Harlan, Jr.
WA -Jean & Buzz Berney Elva Harlan Mote

Address change? E-mail address change?

The Harlan Family in America is grateful to all who have made contributions recently, as well as in past years. Your donations help maintain the family association and its newsletter without the necessity of dues. Thank you!

Send mailing address changes to: The Harlan Family in America P. O. Box 1654 Independence, MO 64055 or to: Ruth Harlan
Lamb harlamb@aol.com Send e-mail address changes to: Junior Harlan harlanjay@cox.net who maintains a confidential file.

Addresses are not given out without your permission.

Harlan Board to Meet Near Reno

Looking ahead to a 2007 national Harlan Reunion in the West, the officers and board members of The Harlan Family in America plan to meet April 17, 2004, in the Reno, Nev., area.

Nearby Sparks and Truckee, Calif., are locations familiar to both the ill-fated Donner party and the Harlan family, led by George Harlan (#852) in 1846-47.

Written accounts of the Harlan wagon train can be found on the Web site: . Go to the [Stories](#) link for "Harlan Wagon Train" and the link, "[Great Trek](#)," by William K. Harlan.

Who Was Ellis Lamar Harlan? Submitted by Clinton Cross

In a recent deposition, Dr. Larry Gladstone (f/k/a Ladislav Gladdstein), born September 26, 1922, in a little village in eastern Czechoslovakia, recalled his experiences as a child in Czechoslovakia and as a prisoner of the Hungarians and the Germans during World War II.

Born in the same house where his great-grandfather was born in 1828, Gladstone's childhood was relatively pleasant. His father was an innkeeper and a teacher. Gladstone obtained a good high school education. As he grew older, however, he began to suffer the consequences of anti-Semitism. Other children cursed him for being a "Christ-Killer" and sometimes beat him up.

In 1943, Gladstone was forced to enroll in a labor battalion. He performed rigorous manual labor every day with minimal food rations. Many of his fellow laborers died. He was shipped from one place to another, and finally to Hungary. He at one point passed through a deserted village which had previously been inhabited by Jews. When he asked what happened to the inhabitants, a German soldier matter-of-factly explained, "We shot them all."

As the war drew to a close in 1944, Gladstone was liberated by an American soldier. The soldier's name was Ellis Lamar Harlan.

Gladstone had with him at the time a postcard picturing a river and a bridge in a Czechoslovakian city. Harlan signed his name on the postcard, and Gladstone never forgot Ellis Lamar Harlan. He treasured the postcard all his life.

Gladstone immigrated to the United States and tried to find Harlan. In his deposition, Gladstone, now eighty-one years old, recalled tearfully, "I tried to find this guy Harlan so many times, and I couldn't find him. It's his signature right here."

Ellis Lamar Harlan died in 1974. After his deposition, however, Dr. Gladstone located Ellis's children. He learned that Ellis had taken many pictures during his liberation of Jews. These pictures were given to the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. It is possible that Dr. Gladstone is the subject of one of these pictures.

Was Ellis Lamar Harlan related to the famous Ellis Harlan (#121) who married a full-blood Cherokee and who was the subject of the story in the Fall, 2003, Harlan Record?

No one knows.

Ship Leaves Famous Yard
Story from BBC News, Northern Ireland, March 22, 2003, courtesy of Fred Harlan

The last ship to be built at Harland and Wolff has finally left Belfast. The Anvil Point set sail from Queen's Island on Saturday, ending almost 150 years of shipbuilding at the famous yard.

The ship's departure had been delayed because of a problem with its German made engines. The

22,000 tonne vessel is the second of two roll-on roll-off ferries built at the yard for English shipping consortium Andrew Weir Shipping Ltd, which is leasing the ship to the Ministry of Defence.

It was named by Wendy Parker, wife of consortium member Michael Parker, in a champagne ceremony in Belfast earlier this year.

The Harland and Wolff company remains in business and is still tendering for ship repair and overhaul work. However, the yard which once employed more than 30,000 people now has a core manual workforce of only a few dozen.

Harland and Wolff will now be focusing on ship repair, converting vessels for new uses and civil engineering. The company has recently built two bridges which have been erected in Dublin. The yard can dry-fit bridges before installation and is seeking design work for aircraft carriers.

The company is currently tendering for a contract with a Chinese yard.

For related stories go to: www.harlanfamily.org Link: [Who's Who](#) ; "The Father of the Titanic" and "Titanic & Scarborough Connection"

Early Harlan History Available on Web Site

Max Millard, of San Francisco, the grandson of Sydney Harland (mentioned in the "Who's Who" articles about the Titanic) has edited his grandfather's autobiography and placed it on the Internet through Boson Books. It contains early Harland history in England. Go to: www.bosonbooks.com/boson/freebies/harland/harland.pdf

Update Genealogy Lists - March, 2004

#688 - p.226 SAMUEL F. HARLING— m.NANCY FITZPATRICK Correction: middle initial “F” is not in the book, and his last name is spelled HARLAN in the book. He and most of his family used the spelling HARLING, except his son, James H. and his family, who use the spelling of HARLIN. Later down the line, some started spelling it HARLAN. Contributed by Scott Harlin Reikofski, with corrections and additions by Hazel Holtyn

#703 - p. 227 SAMUEL HARLAN, m. NANCY BROWN Contributed by Kevin Lane

#2351 - p. 532 AARON HARLAN, m. LUCETTA CONWAY Updates, corrections, additions and documents by Vicky Helmer

#2717 - p. 609 WASHINGTON HARLAN, m. MARGARET ISARENAH HOUSTON* The book says Margaret JANE Houston. Contributed by Ruth McCloud from research by Marvin King, Dorothy Voncille Schmedake, Jean Murphy, David Harlan, Eleanor Bennett and Sharon Wilkey

#2720 - p. 256 JOHN WILLIAM “JACK” HARLAN, m. (1) SARAH MINERVA BEARD* (The book just has Minerva Beard as the only wife); m. (2) MARTHA ANN POOL (MARTIN); Martha is not in the book. Update by Sharon Wilkey and Norma Ballard

#6803 - p. 610 ISAAC NEWTON HARLAN, m. SARAH MARGARET “MARGERY” SEARS Updates by Sharon Wilkey and William Marion Harlan

#6953 - p. 620 JOHN A. HARLAND, m. LOUISA HARRIS Contributed by Susan McClurg w/obituaries and newspaper articles

Renovations at the Harlan-Lincoln House

The Harlan-Lincoln House, located in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, was the residence of U.S. Senator James Harlan who was closely allied with President Abraham Lincoln, both personally and politically.

Harlan’s daughter, Mary, married Robert Todd Lincoln, the only child of the President to survive to adulthood. The Robert Todd Lincolns brought their three children to spend summers here. Harlan deeded the property to the Lincolns in 1895, and the home became their secondary residence. In 1907, Mary Harlan Lincoln gave the house to Iowa Wesleyan College as a tribute to the memory of her father.

Since March, 2002, when pipes froze and burst, the Harlan-Lincoln House Renovation Committee at Iowa Wesleyan College has accomplished much to preserve the house. Following the advice of an architect furnished by the State Historical Society of Iowa, the college dismantled a one-story addition that was putting stress on the main, two-story structure. The college also regraded the property for better drainage; repaired ceiling, walls, and floor; installed a new heating, air conditioning, ventilation and security system with a central alarm; and painted the house its original yellow.

Design and funding plans are now underway to reconstruct the 800 square foot wraparound porch that Mary Harlan Lincoln built in 1895. This will create a more gracious appearance and allow handicap access to the museum.

The Harlan-Lincoln House and museum tells the story of the James Harlan family from when James and Ann Eliza Harlan built their home in 1876 to when their great-grandchildren visited there in the early 1900s. Over 70 volunteers have participated on projects this past year. Volunteers did carpentry work, cleaned, painted, altered curtains, repaired broken furniture, inventoried, and moved artifacts and books. Contractors and suppliers discounted their prices. Retired Iowa City guidance counselor Paul Juhl, whose avocation is photo historian, made and donated 20 copies of the video "The Lincoln Grandchildren in Mount Pleasant, Iowa." The videos are given to those who make a \$100 donation to the Harlan-Lincoln House (only four copies remain).

Art restorer Robert Norman of Pittsburg, Iowa, and Calvert, Texas, donated his time to restore one painting and clean another. Two Civil War themed events, the Love and Valor dramatic productions and Love and Valor Forest Home Cemetery tours, successfully raised funds and awareness for the Harlan-Lincoln House.

Tours can be arranged by contacting Lynn Ellsworth, archivist for Iowa Wesleyan College and Executive Director of the Harlan-Lincoln House Renovation Committee at 319-385-6320 or .

Contributions to the Harlan-Lincoln House Renovation Project are tax deductible. Checks may be made payable to Iowa Wesleyan College, with designation to the Harlan-Lincoln House project. Mail to Lynn Ellsworth, Iowa Wesleyan College, 601 N. Main Street, Mount Pleasant, IA 52641.

For more information, go to the [Historical Sites](#) link on the Harlan Web site: .

Note: When e-mailing anyone connected with The Harlan Family in America, please put “Harlan” in the subject line to differentiate family communications from the ever present spam.

Thanks!

Follow-up on the John H. Harland Company Story
By John H. Harland of Kelowna B C, Canada

The Harlan Record, No. 23, Fall 2003, features an article about the founder of the John H. Harland Company of Atlanta. A significant number of Harlan relatives will use checks printed by this firm.

A word about his origins and possible connection to the descendants of George and Michael Harlan may be of interest.

John Herdman Harland was born in Bessbrook, County Armagh, Ireland, on January 22, 1885. In later days the village became all too well known to units of the British Army, at the time of the “Troubles.”

During the years of the Cold War, battalions were rotated through Bessbrook, spending three months there as part of their training. They left their wives and children in Germany, arrived in full battle order, had little to do with the local population, and engaged in aggressive patrolling of the nearby “South Armagh Triangle.”

However effective this was in honing their military skills, I am sure they developed little affection for the area.

Fortunately things have settled down over there now, and I imagine that the Army is long gone and the village returned to the rural tranquility that John H. Harland would have been familiar with in his youth.

The article in The Harlan Record covers his career in America, but what, if any, was his relationship to the American Harlans? George and Michael Harlan were born in England but spent some years in or near Lurgan, County Armagh, prior to coming to the Quaker Colonies in Pennsylvania and Delaware, about 1687.

Their elder brother, Thomas, remained in Lurgan until his death and is buried there. He had four sons, and I think it quite likely that John H. Harland was a descendant of

one of these. His father (also John Harland) believed that the family had Quaker connections but apparently was uncertain of their exact nature. In turn, John Harland, the great-grandfather of John H. Harland was born in 1784 and is buried in South Armagh, but we know nothing of his family origins.

There are still Quaker Harlands in Lurgan to this day who must be descendants of the Thomas Harland who came from Durham. County Armagh is not vast in area, but I am guessing that in the 17th-18th Centuries, travel between its north and south areas was not easy. However, in 1720, a canal was built from Lurgan to Newry, to connect Lough Neagh with the sea, and this might explain a move by the family from the northern to the southern part of the County. We can only speculate about this.

In summary, I suspect that a Quaker ancestor of John H. Harland was “disowned” by the Society of Friends, and this was something he would have been reluctant to discuss with his children and family. Likewise, his Quaker parents and siblings severed all ties with the cast out relative, who became an unperson, never again to be spoken of. Casting out could occur for what we would today consider quite trivial reasons, but I believe the commonest cause was marriage outside the Faith.

As is always the case in Ireland, any genealogical search is complicated by the destruction of parish records during the Irish Civil War in 1922.

INDIANA STATE HARLAN REUNION

July 9-10, 2004 CRAWFORDSVILLE, INDIANA

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Holiday Inn in Crawfordsville, located at I-74 and State Road 231—Exit 34, for the Indiana Harlan Reunion.

The meeting will be held on Saturday, July 10, at the First Baptist Church in Crawfordsville. The Holiday Inn is available for Friday and/or Saturday nights if you want to spend the night for an additional get-together time. More information will follow in a letter this Spring.

Reunion reservations may be made with: Becky Hines
40 Dogwood Drive
Hagerstown, IN 47346
(765) 489-4263
cwbelleville@ruraltek.com

or e-mail: Esther Wells
bewell123@att.net

If your address has changed since the last reunion, or you didn't receive a letter and want to attend, please e-mail Esther with your name and address.

For motel reservations at Holiday Inn: Phone: (765) 362-8700
Group Name: HARLAN FAMILY REUNION
Group Code: 2/HFR

The Best Present I Ever Got

Earl Harlan of Lakewood, Ohio, turned 80 in December. His son, who also lives in Lakewood, took him out to eat and while waiting for a table, in walked his other three sons. They had not been altogether since 1977.

Earl said, "My four sons (David, Richard, Steve and Gregory) played me like a fish on a line, and it was "the best present I ever got."

Earl has attended the 1987, 1997 and 2002 national Harlan reunions. His wife is Lois.

Centenarian Joins 90-Plus Club

Helen H. Henderson, from Iola, Kan., celebrated her 100th birthday on December 28, 2003. According to her cousin, Tina Palmer of Ariz., Helen is very knowledgeable of her family's history and is a wonderful individual. Helen's name appears in Alpheus Harlan's genealogy book on page 887, the daughter of Maud and John Humes and granddaughter of Livy Clay Nogle #5724-e. Tina's father, Clay Edward



"You found who in your family tree?"

Nogle (son of Robert Milton Nogle), is listed on page 886.

Helen was born in Humboldt, Kans., in 1903, but at various times in her life, she lived in Tampico and Mexico City, Tokyo and Shanghai, as well as several of the United States. She served as field advisor for the Girl Scouts in the Iola area for seven years.

A three-month stint as curator of the local Allen County Historical Society turned into an eleven-year stay from 1977-1988. Helen used her talents to create inspired museum exhibits and also learned the art of properly preserving, exhibiting and storing historical artifacts.

In 2002, the Allen County Museum named its library the “Helen H. Henderson Research Library,” honoring her for years of tireless service and support for the historical society.

Helen lives at Fountain Villa, an assisted living facility in Iola. A reception in honor of her 100th birthday was held there last December 28 and during the two-hour gathering, nearly 80 people from 10 cities and five states stopped by to wish her well. She also received a call from a friend in England who once sent her the cartoon shown here.

Congratulations, Helen!

(Note: Helen sent a 7-page handwritten letter to The Harlan Family in America after receiving birthday greetings from the Family.)

Then and Now

Vol. 1, No. 1 of the 1901 version of the The Harlan Record was published in St. Louis, Mo., in December of that year. Out of hundreds of Harlans who sent their names to the publisher, plus \$1 for a year's subscription, some indicated their occupations. They include:

146 physicians	2 opticians
76 attorneys	18 druggists
34 ministers	22 dry goods clerks
16 bankers	12 dentists
143 merchants	6 blacksmiths
187 teachers	1 drugless doctor

54 professors	1 corn doctor
2,376 farmers	3 saloon keepers
116 mechanics	16 motormen on elect. cars
16 electricians	23 conductors on elect. cars
27 telegraph operators	1 boot black
87 railroad clerks	7 barbers
52 railroad employees	23 butchers
5 railroad detectives	2 horse traders
7 railroad conductors	6 music teachers
82 traveling salesmen	3 phrenologists
7 plumbers	1 historian
1 mattress maker	1 manufacturer of perfume
10 photographers	18 professional actors

Harlan Descendant Honored Posthumously

Puxico High School, Puxico, Mo., recently dedicated its gymnasium to the memory of the late Arnold Ryan, former coach and Harlan descendant. The dedication ceremony, held in the school's packed cafeteria in August, 2003, included tributes paid by former ballplayers and students of Ryan, who began his career in Puxico in 1945.

Ryan's widow, Nola, was presented an autographed copy of Matt Chaney's book, "My Name is Mister Ryan." The book, published in 1994, was signed by members of Ryan's baseball, basketball and volleyball teams, as well as former students of both Arnold and Nola Ryan.

Fundraising efforts are underway for a sign deserving of Coach Ryan. Under his direction, Puxico made several appearances at state basketball tournaments and won state titles in 1951 and 1952. He was tragically killed in 1970 when he was struck by a baseball to the back of his head while at a practice session.

Some quotes of Ryan's, given by former students at the dedication, include: "If you don't like to lose, do something about it." "You will win because you will have worked harder and practiced more than the other team." "You will live by the rules. You will not correct any other player. You will not question a referee's call, and you will conduct yourself in a manner, on and off the court, that will bring honor to those whom you represent."

Ryan's great-great-grandmother was Rebecca Jane Harlan, #2379, in Alpheus Harlan's History and Genealogy of the Harlan Family.

Harlan Family Reunion Held in Walsh, CO

The descendants of Frank James and Rosa Ella (Phipps) Harlan gathered August 9, 2003, in Walsh, Colo., for a family gathering that included all six of their children: Jewell Stewart (age 98), of Elkhart, Kan.; Dorothy Doner (94), Walsh, Colo.; Olan Harlan (89), Lakin, Kan.; Fay Brooks (84), Vilas, Colo.; Leon Harlan (81), Walsh, Colo.; and Russell Harlan (79), La Grange, Ohio. Forty-two other relatives and guests joined them, including family members of each of the siblings.

Name tags and table decorations had a patriotic theme. Following a delicious meal, the Harlan clan spilled outside for a family reunion photo.



*Standing: Olan, Leon, Russell
Seated: Jewell, Dorothy, Fay*

This family enjoys music, both singing and performing favorite and familiar songs. A highlight was three-year-old Dakota Ray's rendition of his favorite, "Jesus Loves Me."

The family history specialist, Shirley Stoner, shared new and interesting family history she recently discovered, and tribute was paid to those in the armed services, both past and present. Keeping the patriotic theme, the program closed with everyone singing "America, the Beautiful" and feeling blessed to live in this great country.

It was this family's 15th Harlan Family Reunion in the past 20 years, and the next get-together is planned for August in 2004.

John Bailey Harlan Was Shrewd Detective

In the late 1800s, John B. Harlan, #7956 (v) in Alpheus Harlan's genealogy book, was deeply involved in investigating a mysterious train wreck.

According to some undated mimeographed copies submitted by Juanita Creighton of Richmond, Va., her great-uncle John Bailey Harlan was Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company's shrewdest detective. He "assumed charge of the investigation of the wreck of a freight train in the Decatur yards Wednesday night.

The attempt was directed toward the fast mail train and as it was the sixth attempt to wreck mail trains of the Louisville and Nashville, the road's chief of detectives is directing the work in this district."

John was head of this special service of the L & N Railroad for many years and was reputed to be one of the best detectives in the south. "It is confidently believed that he will unravel the mystery surrounding repeated attempts to wreck trains on the Louisville and Nashville."

The story goes on to say, "The continuous attempts to derail and wreck passenger trains on the L & N have created the most exciting days experienced in Louisville and Nashville circles in many months. The result is that every engineer, conductor, flagman and other employee is making it a personal matter to assist in apprehending the guilty."

However, a conclusion to the mystery of the train wrecks wasn't given. Some believed that one man or one gang of men were responsible, possibly due to being discharged from their jobs.

John Bailey Harlan, born 5/14/1864, was originally from Albemarle County, Va. He wrote "Pleasant Recollections" about his life in Virginia, as well as an article about his brother, James Forbes Harlan.

Annual May Day Sing in Texas Is May 2

The Blue Ridge Baptist Church will hold its annual May Day Singing on Sunday, May 2, 2004. The songfest has been held for over 115 years.

The church was founded by early Harlan settlers in 1859 on land bought from Mexico before the Texas Revolution.

Singing begins at 10:00am, and a short sermonette will be given before the noon lunch. Singing resumes about 1:30 and continues until all have departed.

The church is located about 10 miles east-southeast of Marlin. Contact Harlan descendant Robert Powers at 254-399-9564 for more information.

Contributions to the Remembrance Fund

In Memory of

Harlan Cross, 92, died November 10, 2003. Harlan was born September 24, 1911, the son of Oliver Harlan Cross from Waco, Texas, who served in Congress beginning in 1929. Clinton Cross (see article on page 3) is a nephew.

Lowell B. Harlan, 80, passed away December 7, 2003. He was a former U.S. Army Infantry Colonel with a 32-year career from World War II to Vietnam. After retiring from the military, he became an Episcopal priest and served in Annandale, Va., from 1980-1998. Lowell assisted with the planning of Celebration 300 and presided at the services at Old Kennett Meeting House in 1987. He also helped with the church service at Celebration 310 in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. Lowell is survived by his son, John L. Harlan (OK); daughter, Linda Harlan (IN); and his brother, Wayne C. Harlan (IN). He was preceded in death by his wife, Connie, in 2001.

Joe Gaskill, father of Becky Gaskill (director of music at all three national Harlan reunions), died December 26, 2003, in Indiana. He was 89. Joe was a newspaper columnist and in 1987 wrote a story about the Harlan Tricentennial. He enjoyed his time as an "honorary Harlan." Becky composed the song, "A Family of Friends," in honor of her mother and Joe's wife, Mary Harlan Gaskill.

David E. Harlan, 81, passed away January 6, 2004, in Arizona. In 1997 David played the bagpipes which began the impressive church service at the Harlan reunion in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. His wife, Mary Ann, survives.

Determining Unknown Birthdates

by Cynthia Rhoades, Director of Genealogy

There is a process called Formula or Rule 8870 that enables one to determine the date of birth if only the age and date of death are known. Using this Formula 8870 is a tremendous help to ascertain a birth date. In order to arrive at the birth date you only have to use the formula to quickly get the date of birth rather than try to count backward.

For instance, if a tombstone records that a person died on May 6, 1889, and was 71 years, 7 months and 9 days old, this is a quick way to establish the date of birth:

YEAR/MONTH/DAY

Died 6 May 1889	18890506
Subtract age at death (71 yrs, 7 mo, 9days)	- 710709

	18179797
Subtract the formula	- 8870
	18170927

(Born 1817, Sept. 27)

If the age in months and the age in days are less than the month and day in the date of death, you can just subtract directly. I can give you an example that I know is correct.

Date of death - 1879 September 25
Age at death - 83 yrs., 1 mo, 5 days
Subtract 83 from 1879 = 1796
Subtract 1 from 9 = 8
Subtract 5 from 25 = 20
Result = 1796 August 20, the date of birth

I hope you find this works for you when you are trying to determine your ancestor's date of birth.

Over 10,000 Harlans are listed on over 1,000 pages in this valuable family reference book. *The History and Genealogy of The Harlan Family* compiled by Alpheus Harlan, 1914.

Copies are available for \$60 from:

Peggy Harlan Talley
104 Fern
Poteau, OK 74953

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Ruth Harlan Lamb at

harlamb@aol.com

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