

## **The Harmer Family Association – American Branch**

Hello Harmer Related Family Members.

My name is Deborah Dalton from Bentonville, Arkansas. I joined the Harmer Family Association (as a volunteer like others) with a connection as your Secretary for the United States. I felt a prompting to help for I do have a good back ground in research and secretarial skills. I've always been a 'puzzle type' of person and since my mother and father wouldn't accept my detective occupational choices I



choose to be a detective within our family lines. If you love history, you'll love finding your ancestors because you are history in the making. You'll have generations after you that will be so grateful for the collections of data about your family links. You'll understand where you came from, why you have these funny habits and traditions, and if you are like me, being born late in life, you'll find cousins and cousins to share those reunions with, longer phone conversations, and more mail full of information for unanswered questions. Sometimes the cousins are closer than one's own siblings. I have in my possession CD's that have all the previous newsletters up to June 2009, they are open to the members for the asking. I have 33,000 logged relatives at my finger tips if anyone is interested. I have contacts all round the world that could also assist in research. Our membership fee is minimal, \$10 a year to the new members with 4 newsletter subscriptions. Additional \$10 donations are helpful for the research in the Harmer lines. On line e-mail has made the convenience, speed, and cost more efficient. Send your name, address, phone number along with your e-mail address to me, Deborah Dalton, (see "contacts" for full details) with your check to start opening the doors to your ancestors. We can't always promise results but we can certainly try to help you in your own research. I hope to hear from you soon.

Deborah Dalton

## **The Founding of the HFA in America and the UK**

The impending birth of his second daughter, Betsy, in 1976 led Dale Harmer to begin a search for his ancestors who had this very unusual surname, Harmer. This search began in the US with the usual searches of birth, marriage, death and census records and led to further searches in Sussex County, England where his grandfather, Samuel Edward Harmer was born according to his marriage certificate from Wisconsin. Since England was a long way away from Washington State, where Dale resided in 1976 he decided to

hire a professional genealogist, Leslie Suggars, to search the English records. Much was learned from this search, but the best result, by far, was the introduction to Stanley John Harmer who, according to Mr. Suggars, had already done considerable research into the Harmer family!

Dale and John began a long correspondence which led to the founding of the Harmer Family Association, which was incorporated in Washington State in 1977, the first Harmer Family Newsletter was published spring 1978 and the first Harmer Family Reunion was held 9 September 1978 at Haremere Hall, Etchingham, East Sussex, England. Although this first HFA reunion was a big success, unfortunately Stanley John Harmer died within weeks of the event and the fledgling HFA was thrown into disarray for a time before several new UK members stepped in to fill the gap. The HFA Newsletter was published by Dale Harmer for the first three years before being transferred to the UK, where it has remained since. During this first three years, much of the recruiting of new members was done by mail from the USA. Although the HFA is very ably run by a UK Committee now, the American Branch has continued to thrive and we (as of Jan. 2010) have 63 members from 22 states of the union. States with the most HFA members are Oregon with 11 members, Minnesota with 8 members, and California with 7 members.



John and Dale Harmer  
at the first HFA reunion

The earliest known Harmer to arrive in the USA was George Harmer, a Quaker from Wiltshire, England who landed in Pennsylvania prior to 1690 with his wife, Mary. George was one of several brothers who settled and raised families in Philadelphia. Some of the more well-known American Harmers include: General Josiah Harmar, (an alternative spelling of Harmer) from the Revolutionary War, Alexander F. Harmer a painter from Santa Barbara, California and E.G. Harmer of the Harmer-Rooke stamp and coin collectors fame.



Right: General Josiah Harmar  
Painted by Raphael Peale circa 1795-96  
Diplomatic Reception Room,  
United States Department of State