

## Foresthill Grocery has Interesting History

By Carl Sahn

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Among the oldest commercial family-owned enterprises which is still in operation in Foresthill is the Foresthill Grocery. This is its ninety-eighth year of service to the community for which it has been named [that makes it now 144 years of service]. And, as far as is known, this store has done business in the same location for all of these years. However, the operation has not always been what it is today. Let us trace the history of this firm back to its founder.

In 1846 Leonard Remler, grandfather of Varian Clark, came to the U.S. from Germany. He was seven years old at the time. Much of his boyhood was spent in Illinois, where he received a good education in the public schools. As a young man, Mr. Remler learned the shoemakers trade. In 1859 he traveled across the plains in a wagon train, and arrived in Placerville with but \$5.00 in his pocket. With this amount, and a great deal of determination and energy, he began a most successful career.

Leonard first went to Fiddletown, then to Volcano to seek his fortune. For a brief period he was employed as a butcher in Todd's Valley. Next he started a shoe shop at North Star Ranch. Then in 1864 Leonard Remler established himself in Foresthill. Though this writer was unable to determine the name given to this shop, we did find the merchandise to be that of ready-made boots and shoes. Later dry goods and gent's furnishings were added to the line, and in 1878 the items stocked were such that now it became known as a general merchandise store.

A fire swept through Foresthill in the year of 1887, with many homes and businesses suffering heavy of complete losses. Mr. Remler's store was no exception, and his loss was great. But, with help from the townspeople, he was able to carry on business soon after this catastrophe.

Mr. Remler's two sons, Leonard C. and Walter, took over the operations around the turn of the century. These two carried on the business in the same manner as their father, with Walter driving a team of eight horses from Colfax to Foresthill with all the necessary supplies. Walter also practiced his trade in the rear of the store when the need for it arose. He was the town's undertaker. Even today some evidence of this remains. For in the basement of the building are some old caskets which were never put to use.

Upon the death of Walter in 1923, his portion of the business was left to his daughter, Varian. However, Leonard C. remained as the only active partner for some time. In fact, it wasn't until 1946 that Varian and her husband, Harold Clark, moved to Foresthill from Kansas to assist Leonard. Since 1950, the year of Leonard's death, the store has been under the management of the Clarks. During this period other stores in Foresthill were established which carried many of the non-grocery items, so that more attention was given to groceries and meats. And in 1950 the name of **Foresthill Grocery** appeared to replace **Remler Bros.**

Today Harold carries on in the tradition of his predecessor, Walter. Twice a week he makes a trip to Sacramento to pick up a portion of the necessary supplies. The team of eight horses has now been replaced by an eight-cylinder truck, however, with a station wagon serving on occasion. Harold and Varian display much of the determination and energy that was shown in the early beginnings nearly one hundred years ago. They have done a great deal in modernizing the building to more efficiently serve the local residents as well as those who travel through the community.

The Clarks have had many fine employees in the past. Those who presently assist them are Leona Wade, Nora Alford and Ann Laucirica.