

CLOYD VERL HARRIS

August 1, 1994

My name is Cloyd Verl Harris. My name is Welch and my middle name (Verl) is after my father. The name Harris is the sixteenth, most common name in the United States.

MY BIRTH

I was born in Lindon, Utah, at my Grandpa and Grandma Cobbley's home. I was born in the northwest bedroom of this home. The home was on their farm and located about 3 miles north (?) from the I-15 Lindon Freeway Exit. It was what was one large country block from the Geneva Steel road. Utah-Idaho Sugar Co. had what they called a beet slicer and the home was due East of that. I was born at noon September 15, 1932. The Doctor was J.F. Noyes of American fork, Utah.

MY FAMILY

I was the first child in our family. My brothers and sisters from me to the youngest were Ardell Cobbley Harris (26 Dec 1934), Va Don Harris (31 Aug, 1936), Kay Bennett Harris (18 June 1940), Norman Chatterley Harris (26 Jan 1942), LaRee Harris (13 April 1943), Verla Harris (11 Aug 1944), Irene Harris (14 Aug 1945), and LeGrand Brent Harris (19 Dec 1951. All were born in the American Fork hospital except Va Don, Kay and Brent. These three were born in the Lehi hospital.

My father Verl Anthony Harris was born 26 March 1908 in Cedar City, Utah. My mother, Ruby Cobbley was born 14 April 1914 in Pleasant Grove, Utah.

MEMORIES OF MY FATHER, VERL ANTHONY HARRIS

My father stood about 5'9" tall when he stretched. He was fast. Mother used to send us to get him down to Grandma Harris'. We would race him back. He would always beat us until we got older.

Dad never knew how to say "yes" or "no." You never knew where you stood with him. When I would ask for the car I didn't know if I would get it or not. I would just get ready and then go ask him for the keys. Most generally I got them.

Dad didn't always confer with mother about what he was going to do. For example, one night he didn't show up for supper. We waited for a long time. Finally mother had us eat. Then some time after supper in came dad with a TV. He had gone out and bought the family a TV and brought it home. Another time he bought new kitchen tile and brought it home. It was gray and had a yellow strip around the outside.

Dad had a bit of a limp. He had a plate in his leg from when it was broken in a car accident at the point of the mountain when he was about 20. The leg was set wrong and had to be re-broken, the plate put in and eleven screws added to hold it.

I always thought that the problem with his leg was why he never got drafted into the military. However, one year I went to Yellowstone fishing with him. In Blackfoot, Idaho he kept stopping for green lights. After talking with him about it I realized he was color blind. He could see yellow, but everything else was just a shade to him.

Dad loved to fish. One time he was so sick he couldn't drive his car to go fishing. He had mother bring him out to Cedar Fort so we could take him to Fish Lake for the opening of the fishing season. We took him and never missed a fishing opening at Fish Lake for eleven years. Our family had some great fishing experiences together because of this. We had an old wood boat that we would pull right up to the front door to load up before we went. And we would put everything in it from mattresses to sleep on to food to eat.

My father worked most of his adult life at Geneva Steel.

MEMORIES OF MY MOTHER, RUBY COBBLEY

I remember once mother was going to go to our cousins. She wasn't going to let me go. So I had someone stand by the back of the car while I locked myself in the trunk to see if I could get out. I could. So, when mother went to leave I locked myself in the trunk. When she got to our cousin's place I got out of the trunk. She was sure mad.

My mother worked in the Primary. She was in the ward Primary Presidency. When she was released from there she started teaching Primary at the Utah State Training School. It takes a real special lady to do that. She taught Primary at the State Training School for years.

SCHOOL MEMORIES

I attended the Lehi Utah Elementary School and Lehi High School. At this time the junior high and the high school were all in the same building. Half way through my senior year I started attending vocational school in Provo. This is now the Utah Valley State College. I graduated from Lehi High School in May 1950.

In high school I played tackle on the football team and ran the mile on the track team.

BAPTISM AND THE PRIESTHOOD

I was baptized 29 Sep 1940 and confirmed the same date. I graduated from Primary on the 25 June 1944 and received the Aaronic Priesthood and was ordained a Deacon 1 Oct 1944 in the Lehi Utah Stake Fourth Ward by my father Verl A Harris. I was active until around my sixteenth birthday. Then for awhile I was inactive in the Church. Finally, on 17 Aug 1958, after I was married, I was ordained a Priest by my father.

MARRIED AND PLACES WE HAVE LIVED

After dating my high school sweetheart, Maxine Cook, for two years we were engaged 24 Dec 1949. We were married 7 October 1950 in Cedar Fort. We were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple 29 April 1959 by Fletcher B Hammond. We have made Cedar Fort our home all of our married life except for 5 1/2 months we lived in China Lake, California and the years were lived in Virginia while serving a mission together.

OUR CHILDREN

We have four children, all born in the American Fork, Utah hospital. They are Lewis Cloyd, (9 May 1951), Sharon (20 Jan 1953), Kent Cook (10 Jan 1955) and Bruce Boyd (19 Aug 1956).

SERVICE IN THE CHURCH

In August of 1953 I was called to be secretary of the Young Men Mutual Improvement Association (YMMIA), On 2 Nov 1954 I was called to be second counselor and in September 1958 I was called to be the first counselor. I was also the Scoutmaster from 1955 to 1959 and was ordained an Elder 12 Apr 1959 by my Father.

I was called as First Counselor in the Cedar Valley Ward to Bishop Ether Reed Carson on 25 Feb 1962 and was ordained a High Priest the same date by Armond Eugene Webb. Robert H Messersmith was the Second Counselor in the Bishopric. We were set apart on 9 Mar 1962 by Anthony R Ivins of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy. We were released from this bishopric 17 Jul 1966.

The same day I was released from the bishopric I was called and sustained as Bishop of the Cedar Valley Ward. Norman Erickson was my first counselor and Nathan L Vance was my Second. We were set apart on 19 Aug 1966 by Elder John Longdon, Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve. I was released from being bishop 26 Jan 1975.

I was Gospel Doctrine teacher until called as a High Councilor in the new Lehi West Stake 8 May 1983. I was set apart for this call 18 May 1983 by Stake President Boyd S Stewart. I was released as a high councilor 14 April 1985. That same day I was called and sustained as second counselor in the Lehi West Stake Presidency. I was set apart for the position 17 April 1985 by President Boyd S Stewart. I was released from the Stake Presidency 22 October 1989.

Maxine and I received a mission call to serve in the Washington DC South Mission on 15

Dec 1989 and was set apart for that mission by Stake President Boyd S Stewart on 23 Jan 1990. We depart for our mission 24 January 1990 and served until 21 December 1990 when a kind Mission President released us early so we could be home for Christmas.

On 6 Jan 1991 I was called as a Stake Missionary and the Ward Mission Leader. I was set apart 6 Jan 1991 by President Eldred Kaye Fox, first counselor in the Lehi Utah West Stake Presidency. I was released as a stake missionary on 17 Jan 1993.

On February 12, 1993 I was called as Second Counselor in the 16th Branch at the Missionary Training Center (MTC) in Provo Utah. I was set apart that day for that position by President John A Taylor. On 8 May 1994 I was released as Second Counselor in the 16th Branch. On 8 May 1994 I was called and set apart as President of the 11th MTC Branch by the MTC President Charles M Grant. I am still serving in this position.

EMPLOYMENT

I worked for the Federal Government for 37 years and 8 months. With credit it came to 38 years 6 months for retirement purposes.

I started work for the government at Dugway proving Grounds in 1949. I quit and went to school for awhile then started back again and Dugway in 1950 and then to Deseret Chemical that same year. In 1957 I was transferred to Tooele Army Depot. In 1979 I transferred to China Lake (Ridge Crest) California with full intentions of staying the seven years until retirement. However I learned of a job at Dugway and transferred back after only 5 1/2 months in California. I stayed at Dugway until I retired 31 Dec 1987.

THE WASHINGTON DC SOUTH MISSION

OUR MISSION

I had been talking about going on a mission for several years. Maxine said "you go and I will wait for you." I told her that that was not the way it works. She finally said, "Okey, if you will put in for only one year so we will stay in the United States," which we did.

THE CALL AND OUR FIRST ASSIGNMENT

We were interviewed by Bishop Howard Anderson 12 November 1989 and by the Stake President, Boyd S Stewart, 15 November 1989. We received our calls to the Washington DC South Mission 15 December 1989. We were set apart by President Boyd S Stewart on 23 Jan 1990 and arrived at the Mission Training Center (MTC) on 24 January 1990 at about 11:10 AM. We were assigned to our room in Bldg 5M room 239. All the beds are twin, so we pushed ours together. We went to the welcome from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM, Sharon, Heath, Kenzie and Quinn were with us.

THE MTC (MISSIONARY TRAINING CENTER)

Each day at the MTC is a full day. Our daily schedule was: Arise and prepare, 6:00 AM; Breakfast, 6:20 - 7:10; Book of Mormon Study, 7:30 - 8:00; AM Classes, 8:00 - 11:15; Lunch, 11:20 - 12:10; Personal time, 12:10 - 12:50; PM Classes, 1:00 PM - 4:00; Dinner, 4:00 - 4:50; Personal time, 4:50 - 5:20; Evening Classes, 5:30 - 7:30; Personal time, 7:30 - 8:15; Gym, 8:15 - 9:05; Topical Gospel study, 9:05 - 9:30; Retire no later than 10:30 PM.

OFF FOR FAIRFAX

We were at the MTC from 24 January 1990 to 10 February 1990. We then came home for a few day as they had a lot more time for travel than it would take. We left home on 14 February 1990 and arrived in Fairfax, Virginia, the mission office 21 February, 1990. We actually arrived the

day before, 20 February 1990, so Sister Harris could get her hair done before going to the mission home.

After staying a night at the mission home and having a good dinner and breakfast, we received our assignment. Our assignment was to work with the leadership in the Fredricksburg Stake and the Mount Vernon Stake, to improve the member missionary work, to help them make a bridge to the full time missionaries and to have success.

The mission headquarters has just moved into a new mission home. They still owned the old mission home so President Godfrey said that we could stay there as they had no place for us and there would be no hurry to move. President Godfrey told us to go and find an apartment somewhere between the two stakes so we could cut down on travel.

Apartments were very hard to find and expensive. A Sister Mary Hill in the Lakeridge Ward was a realtor and helped us find a place. If it had not been for her we never would of found a place, as fast and as good as we did.

When we found the place it had been empty for a while and she suggested that we make an offer for less than the \$575.00 a month they wanted. So we offered \$550.00 and also ask for a military clause in the contract and the offer was accepted. We purchased a new bed and a love seat from the thrift store (Salvation Army) and moved in.

We had started to work with the leadership even before we moved in, so we went on as usual. We were to meet with all the Stake Presidencies, Stake Mission Presidencies , Ward Mission Leaders, Bishops and as many stake missionaries as we could. We had a lot of outstanding experiences with these people. We were not teaching any new program. It was the same old thing. Some had never heard of it let alone try it.

PRESIDENT AND SISTER PETERSON

We met with President David Peterson and Sister Peterson of the Mount Vernon Stake on Saturday 7 April 1990. As we went through the discussion with them we ask if they would seek out names of non-members and pray as to which one to ask. Sister Peterson said "Oh I know who it is. I have this family I have been spoon feeding for some time now. I know it will be them." We ask again if they would pray about it and President Peterson said they would.

About two weeks later I met President Peterson in the hall of the Mount Vernon Stake Center. He started to tell me about Sister Peterson's experience, then he stopped and asked me to call her when we got back to our apartment and ask her about it. I called Sister Peterson and ask her about her missionary experience. She said that they had prayed about the names as we had asked and nothing happened. They continued to pray and in the mean time she was looking for a new car. She called the dealership and they sent a salesman over to pick her up and take her to look at a new car. They had been praying that the Lord would lead them to someone to teach. When the salesman was driving her over to the dealership she asked where he was from. He said Silversprings, Maryland. She said, "That is up by our Temple." He said, "Oh yes. What is that thing anyway." And Sister Peterson proceeded to tell him. Then she remember the part about "making a bridge to the missionaries, before you tell all." She said, "Oh Elder Harris, I was afraid that I had told him too much. But, I decided I was going to ask anyway." She said to the salesman, "You know we would like to have you over to dinner this Friday night. We would have the missionaries there and they could tell you more about the Temple and the Church." He said, "Oh you have done just fine." Sister Peterson said "I was so upset with myself for talking so much, I couldn't even think straight. She said they rode on down the road in silence. then he said just out of the blue, "You know, I think I would like that. I will come."

I don't think Sister Peterson's feet were even on the floor as we talked.

This man was no one they knew. He was also a black man. And guess what?, the only black Elder in the area was assigned to their area and he was one of the APs (Assistant to the President), and one of the very best Elders in the whole mission.

They had dinner, the missionaries were there and taught the man the first discussion and gave him a Book of Mormon and committed him to read it.

On a return trip to the dealership to have some service work done, the man saw Sister

Peterson. He came up to her and told her he didn't know how he made it through a day without reading a chapter from the Book of Mormon.

We don't know what happened to him as he lived in Maryland, which is in the Washington DC North Mission and we were transferred. But he was taught just as they had prayed would happen.

PRESIDENT AND SISTER BROWN

On 15 April 1990 we met with President and Sister Brown and their family. We told them the same things and asked them also to pray about the names. They said they would.

A few weeks later I was at the Chapel and President Brown was there signing Temple recommends. He opened the door to the room just as I was walking past. He said, "Elder Harris come in. I need to tell you something that has happened to us." I went in and this is what he told me.

He said, "Do you remember I walked you out to your car and told you about our neighbor? I told you that he was kind of an unsavory character. Well, we prayed as we said we would, about the names we had on the list but nothing happened. We talked about it in family home evening and prayed some more, but still nothing happened. Then one of the children said, 'dad, his (our "unsavory character neighbor's) name isn't on the list.' I asked if they all felt that way as I did also, and they all said yes." President Brown said, "Well I guess as I'm the head I should go ask him." This was okay with the family as none of them wanted to do it.

President Brown had the next day off. So did the neighbor. President Brown went over and asked him and this is what he said. "You know, that we are Mormon." The man said "Yes." President Brown then said, "we would like to have you over to a family home evening, would you come?" The man said he would love to but couldn't for a few weeks. He said that his daughter was graduating from high school and his family made a big deal of these things and he had to get the place cleaned up before they get here in 2 weeks. He said his three sisters were coming to stay with him and then said, "Oh, by the way, one of my sisters belongs to your Church. I'll bring her over to meet you when she gets here."

When she arrived the neighbor brought her over to meet the Browns. Sister Brown opened the door and the sister gave Sister Brown a big hug and then President Brown a big hug, with tears streaming down her cheeks. Then she told them this story:

"When I graduated from high school I didn't know what to do so I joined the service (army). My family didn't like it. Then I was sent to Germany where I met the missionaries and joined the Church. My family almost disowned me. They said 'you have joined the army, been sent around the world and now you have joined a white man's church.' I knew this graduation was coming up and I planned my leave to be here for it. I have been praying everyday for 3 weeks that someone would touch his heart (her brother's) and you did it." This was in June 1990.

THE DENWICKS

We see the hand of the Lord God in this work everyday if we but look for it. Sometimes it is not made known until sometime later, but it is there.

During the week of 03 June 1990 the Elders (Zone Leaders) were looking through their files and found a referral from the Washington DC Temple, at Christmas time for Ted Denwick and wife. So they decided to call upon them as they lived in Fredricksburg. When they knocked, Sister Dinwick opened the door and the first thing she said was, "Where have you been?" The Elders did some quick explaining and set up an appointment to teach the first discussion. When they finished the Denwicks asked if they had someone more mature that could teach them. The Elders told them that they did and set a date for the second discussion on 22 June 1990. The Denwicks were 70 & 71 years old.

The Elders called us and ask if we could teach the Denwicks on 22 June. We told them that we would be glad to. They ask if we could get a large print Book of Mormon for Sister Denwick, which we did.

On 22 June we met the Elders at the Denwick's home at 2:00 PM. They introduced us and

we talked for a while then started the discussion. The Elders left and we went on. Part of the discussion (Principle #7) from The Book of Mormon teaches that Christ set the example for us by being baptized. I ask them "Will you follow the example of Christ and be baptized by someone holding the Priesthood of God?" They said they would but Sister Denwick said they would like to go to Church at least four times first. What a golden contact.

We couldn't set a for sure date for baptism because of family comings and goings, but dates to attend Church were set and the date for the third discussion was set for 18 July 1990. We were transferred on 15 July 1990. The Ward mission leader and his wife finished teaching the Denwicks and they were baptized.

FRIDAY, 13 July 1990 - THE DAY THE BOMB DROPPED

Little did I know how important this day would be in our lives. All we had on the calendar for this day was a meeting at the mission office with the couples in the member referral program at 3:00 PM.

We went to the office at 2:30 PM as we needed some materials to teach the 3rd discussion to the Denwicks on the 18th of June, 1990. President Godfrey seen us when we came in and said he would like to meet with us in his office for half a second. That's all the time it takes to drop a bomb. He told us that President Olsen of the Winchester stake called him thursday evening 12 July 1990. He told President Godfrey that they needed a couple in the Woodstock Branch as branch president. President Godfrey told him that a new couple would be coming out the end of August. President Olsen told him that they couldn't wait for them. President Godfrey ask us to go out there. I told him that if that was what he wanted that's what we would do. President Godfrey called President Olsen and told him we would come and then talked to him for a few minutes. We set a time to meet him or one of the Presidency at the Chapel at 8:00 PM.

President Godfrey said we should go out there now as we didn't know where it was or anything about the area, and not to go to the meeting we came for. So we packed up and drove about 2 hours out to Woodstock. We drove around the town. One of the first things we noticed was the number of banks in the small town. Woodstock is not a large place even though it is the county seat of Shenandoah County. We located the Church which was not too hard and then we went and got something to eat. We then went back to the Church about 7:30 PM. We just set in the car. We didn't talk much as we were in a state of shock. President Godfrey had told us when we came to the mission, to find a good apartment, because we would be there all of our mission. President Buhl came just at 8:00 PM. He took us in the Chapel, showed us around then talked to us about the calling and how the branch was doing. We then left to drive back to Woodbridge about 9:30 PM.

On the way home we could talk a little more about what had happened and how it would affect us. One thing was the move and the expenses associated with it. The loss of our \$550.00 deposit and an additional part of a months rent. As they wanted us now and we couldn't drive back and forth and due the work of the Branch President. We also new now why I had asked for a military clause in our lease. We would not have to pay for the rest of the year that the apartment might be empty - the hand of the Lord and you don't even know it until later.

President Buhl had given us a list of branch members. On the way home and at other times I prayed hard and long that I would know what to do and who should be counselors. I also prayed that they would know that they were to be called to the positions. During our ride home I asked mother if she remembered our prayer's this morning. She said she did, Then I asked he if she remembered what I said. She said, "no not all of it off hand." I then told her as near as I could remember what I said. This morning for some reason when I ask that the leadership be blessed, I especially asked for a blessing on the Stake Presidents in the hard decisions they have to make, and to bless President Godfrey in the very difficult decisions he has to make. And bless us that we may accept the decisions they make. Little did I know when I offered that prayer in the morning of Friday the 13th of July, 1990, that we would answer it that very day ourselves.

The Church is true. God hears and answers our prayers. And may we always live worthy of this blessing.

(This missionary report will be finished?)