

## DR. J. WILL HARRIS RETIRES FROM THE PRESIDENCY OF POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE OF PUERTO RICO.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE SCHOOL  
A REVIEW OF HIS WORK.



DR. J. WILL HARRIS

To think of Polytechnic Institute of Puerto Rico is to think of J. Will Harris. One and the same, inseparable. For 25 years he has been its President. He founded the institution in 1912. March 5th he will lift anchor and sail away, bidding goodbye to Polytechnic and to Porto Rico, and become once more a citizen of the States—to be specific, the State of Texas.

He is being succeeded by Jarvis Scobey Morris, but more of him later; we are speaking of Dr. Harris now, and how came Polytechnic.

Having scanned a lengthy historical document, one scarcely knows where to take hold of the story. It is a long one and full of hard knocks, but Dr. Harris could take it. In fact, he is looking for more of the same, down in Texas, where he has some notions about a farm utopia.

It was 1902 when he graduated from Park College, and entered Princeton Seminary, coming out of there in 1905. Married his classmate, Eunice Harris, that year. They heard the call of Porto Rico thru the Presbyterian Home Board, which sent them forth.

July 1906 Will Harris and wife Eunice reached destination at San Juan. The land was full of beauty, superimposed upon poverty. Down on the Caribbean one night, preaching to about 200 souls in and about the shack of one named Peter, 75 children crowded in on him and asked him to send them a teacher. Their folks couldn't read or write. Harris caught the idea, and never let loose of it till he founded Polytechnic, where hand and mind could be trained cooperatively.

Pertinent tho it is, space forbids following the ramifications of a tortuous course, failure here, insolvency there, before the great idea took root and grew. On a shoestring he started a little Day School at Santa Rosa. It had ground but no money. He went as a Commissioner to General Assembly in Denver in 1909, secured a nice line of funds on paper and returned. But the School laid down and died. He then took over a defunct plant at Lajas, renamed it Palmarejo Institute, and opened for business Oct. 1, 1910. From causes beyond mortal control it too came to a premature end.

A native son, don Francisco Largarde, wanting to do something for his town before he died, offered to sell Mr. Harris his 100 acre farm in the Santa Marta hills. A bargain was struck Jan. 17, 1911; brother Clarence came over from Texas to help start something. They moved over a miscellaneous outfit of shopworn equipment from Lajas, including seven bad boys. Will Harris went to the States to find some money. He sold the idea to a number of folks,

got their support, and returned to find Largarde had much improved and wanted his farm back. A \$500 pacifier extended the option, and in January, 1912, Mr. Harris incorporated under the name of Polytechnic Institute, with a Board of Trustees.

### THE INSTITUTE OPENS

The first student was enrolled March 2, 1912. By May they had 8 boys and 4 girls. Mr. Harris was the whole faculty.

A Girls dormitory was built in 1913, and a boys the next year. Two Lajas buildings were knocked down and hauled over to form a recitation hall and another boys dorm.

In 1914 the School was offered to the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions, who took it over in 1915. A Board grant of \$75,000 erected Marquis Science Hall. A new Board of Trustees was incorporated in District of Columbia in 1920. The previous year a Porto Rican act permitted the conferring of degrees, and in 1930 D. C. authorized granting of the A. B. degree.

The Carnegie Foundation, in 1913, made a conditional grant of \$250,000, a like amount to be raised elsewhere in 3 years. It was raised. One-half went into endowment.

13 of the 17 buildings are Memorials. Many of them constructed with student labor, under the supervision of brother Clarence. There is 200 acres. The industrial program is well organized, each student working a required number of hours per week. Several hundred of them, prepared for earning a living, agricultural or otherwise, on the island. On the faculty over the years have been numerous Park graduates. Eunice Harris has served as Dean of Women.

Its Silver Jubilee is being celebrated February 26th to March 2nd, honoring the founder and inaugurating his successor, Jarvis S. Morris. 1920 Park conferred on Mr. Harris the LL.D. degree.

### TO TEXAS WITH AN IDEA

As you are reading this script the subject of our sketch is on the way to Dilley, Tex., to Guajolote Ranch, a small patch of 2500 acres. For him life is beginning again at 61.

The educator has turned farmer, but the farmer can't forget he is an educator. He has printed a pamphlet entitled "A New Philosophy of Applied Agriculture and Game Preservation." Its motto says: "The Unemployed educated man for the unemployed fertile land." You have guessed it,—a Back to the Farm Movement. The object is to show the youth of Texas how to eke a living out of the soil. He will organize these young sprouts, just out of college and nowhere to go, into a farm community. There will be an Administration Center, composed of Community House, store, shops, stables, bank. Ranged about in the distance will be the model farms and ranches. The whole will be known as the Harris Farms, an apprenticeship in applied agriculture.

Then about the game,—"to protect, propagate and preserve the wild life of the land," such as coyotes, panthers, Mexican lions, wildcats, badgers, alligators, aramadillos and civet cats. Doubtless this farmer-educator-promotor must have discovered within these predatory mammals a docility of disposition, a lovable, peaceful nature heretofore unrecognized by the amateur naturalist, which should be preserved for the comfort of posterity. On the other hand, it may be that the struggle for Porto Rican educational independence has been so combative as to docilize the above harmless creatures in comparison.

Thus the story of Polytechnic has not come to an end, but merely shifted its locus operandi.

A. W. O.

Copy  
Chl 23  
Lor 3



**BALLOT FOR PRESIDENT-ELECT**

- 1. Thos. A. Brown, '10, Kansas City, Mo.
- 2. R. A. Waggoner, '07, Sedalia, Mo.
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

As required by our Constitution, the Executive Board shall nominate in February each year a candidate for President-elect of the Association, to be voted on by the members of the Association.

To vote, place "X" opposite name. Or write in name of any other preferred candidate. Sign and mail to Secretary's office in Parkville, Mo.

**NOMINEES FOR PRESIDENT-ELECT**

The Executive Board has nominated two candidates for President-Elect of the Alumni Association: Thomas A. Brown of Kansas City, R. A. Waggoner of Sedalia.

A brief sketch of the nominees will acquaint you further with them.

**THOMAS A. BROWN**

Thomas A. Brown, of Kansas City, Mo., a nominee for President-Elect of the Association, is a member of the Class of 1910. A well-known alumnus, he has throughout the years maintained an active interest in and connection with the Association and its work.

He studied law at the University of Missouri 1910-11, and graduated from the Kansas City School of Law in 1912. Took the Missouri bar and practised for several years.

In 1920 he was appointed under the Civil Service to the Federal Internal Revenue Department. His work is in the Estate Division, Tax Dept. He is an Inheritance Tax Examiner for the State of Kansas.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown, the latter Sylvia Handel, '11, reside at 2843 Benton Blvd., Kansas City, Mo.

**RALPH A. WAGGONER**

Mr. Waggoner is pastor of the Broadway Presbyterian Church of Sedalia, Mo.

Attended Princeton U. and Seminary, from which he graduated. Spent a year in Germany.

Was pastor at Columbus, Kans. Then became minister of the Presbyterian Church of Kirksville, Mo.

He has for a number of years now been at Sedalia. Active in his Presbytery. Married.

Mr. and Mrs. Waggoner live at 209 W. Broadway.

+

**Mary Felts to Give Concert**

Mary Betty Felts, of the Class of '27, is to give a concert in Music Hall, Municipal Auditorium, Kansas City, Mo., Sunday afternoon, March 14th, 3:30 P. M.

In this appearance she is being sponsored by numerous musical organizations. She is an accomplished musician, of American and European tutelage.

The Kansas City Chapter is helping to sponsor this fine event, and urges all alumni and others to hear her.

Tickets may be purchased thru Chapter officers in advance of the concert. Prices: \$1.10, 83c and 55c.

**The Park Alumniad**

*Official Publication of the Park College*

*Alumni Association*

Published Quarterly at Parkville, Mo.

ALBERT W. ORR, '08, *Editor*  
524 Dwight Building Kansas City, Mo.

*Officers of the Association*

ROBERT A. WILLIAMS, '97 *President*  
Kansas City, Missouri

FRANK W. BIBLE, '01 *President-elect*  
Oak Park, Illinois

HOWARD A. DEAN, '97 *Sec'y-Treas.*  
Parkville, Missouri

*Members of the Executive Board*

B. L. MYERS, '06 Dorothy D. Meyers, '25  
Hazel Morrow, '27 OLA CHRISTINE ORR, '08

Annual Subscription	\$ 1.00
Association Annual Dues (includes Subscription)	\$ 2.00
Life Membership	\$35.00

Entered as second class matter at the post office at Parkville, Mo., under Act of March 3, 1879.

Kindly notify the ALUMNIAD promptly of any change in your address.

**THANK YOU, DUES**

We thank you for your response to our SOS.

And when you think about that valuable book you are getting for sending them, it's a fire sale. We haven't lost our lease or been forced to move, but these bargain prices will prevail until the present stock of merchandise (books) is cleaned up.

So hurry. We would like to declare a dividend by the end of the fiscal year.

+

**CLASS OF 1907!  
1ST CALL**

You have a 30 Year Reunion due, without pay, this Commencement!

Will you be back to look over the old camp grounds. Of course the place won't look the same. Even the people have grown 30 years older, including yourselves. Time perhaps has made a great improvement in many of you. But if not, come on back anyhow.

Such confidential information as you may care to divulge in this connection will you confide in writing to Ralph A. Waggoner, 209 W. Broadway, Sedalia, Mo. Ralph, you may remember, is your classmate. He is pastor of the Broadway Presbyterian Church. He is a big man in Sedalia, weighing about 200. You'd be surprised how the ministry has broadened him.

Write him and he will send you a liberal sample of 1907 tonic, with directions how to use in emergencies such as a 30 Year Reunion.