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The persistent complaint of "too many HARRISES" in the Polytechnic Institute makes me write the following to the trustees, although the doing of same is a very distasteful task and one from which my soul draws back. I do not like to blow my own ~~horn~~ <sup>horn</sup> nor to have others blow it in a wrong way for me.

The following are the salient facts of the Harris connection with the Polytechnic Institute.

1. In 1906 J. Will Harris opened a day school for first and second grades in a slum district of San German, with Guillermina Nazario as teacher. After a time it was evident that this school was not making the desired progress toward his ideals of <sup>he wished to develop</sup> ~~the~~ school. This attempt failed in ~~that while a success in itself, it did not allow development.~~

2. In 1908 J. Will Harris bought with his own money one acre of land adjoining the Presbyterian Church in San German for \$300.00. On this he expected to build his school. He was soon thereafter offered <sup>(but</sup> ~~to~~ refused) \$1000 by the Municipality of San German for the right of opening up a street through this acre. The city council of San German then offered me the old Army Barracks for my school. Opposition arose to the City's transfer to me of the Barracks. Their offer after months of discussion was withdrawn by the City because the priests opposed it.

I then had 25 yards of sand and gravel hauled to my acre of land and was staking off the foundations for a dormitory when mayor Juan Cancio Ortiz, <sup>who was</sup> ~~and~~ also elder in the Presbyterian Church of Palmarejo, rode up on his horse to where I was driving in stakes for my building. He urged me not to spend money on buildings in San German, since he had four buildings in Lajas which he would give me. I had at the time three boarding students Esperanza Acosta, Ursula Nazario and Clotilda Rodriguez living in my home and attending Public schools till I could get the dormitory and class room erected. *Mrs. Harris acted as mother of the girls.*

I accepted Mayor Ortiz's offer and began my

3rd attempt to establish a school for Puerto Rico. During the Summer



of 1910 I employed Fernando J. Rodil to solicit funds with which to revive Mayor Ortiz's school in Palmarejo. With Mr. Rodil in charge and Guillermina Nazario and Coloma Pardo I opened the school in Palmarejo, Lajas, September 10, 1910. Doña Guese Schroder, an old saint from Holland was in charge of the kitchen. Before Christmas vacation I was convinced that I had made a mistake in trying to revive the Lajas school, and I began to look around <sup>for</sup> another site. In December 1910 I closed up the Lajas school and moved <sup>in January 1911</sup> the eight or nine boarding boys over to San German into an old farm house on which I had secured an <sup>purchase</sup> option ~~to buy~~. Rodil left me when I abandoned Lajas. I sent for my brother Clarence who had recently <sup>who arrived during Christmas vacation</sup> graduated from Park College. He worked with these eight boys for two or three months, slept with them, ate with them and finally kicked them all out, and closed up the old farm house. In the teaching he was assisted by Guillermina Nazario. Brother Clarence went to teach in the Public Schools of Aguada <sup>during the school year of 1911-12,</sup> and I continued my solicitation for \$8000.00 with which to buy land for a site for my proposed school.

4th and successful attempt.

On January 6, 1912 I bought from Francisco Lagarde 100 acres of land adjoining San German for the site of my proposed school, paying him cash \$8000.00 for same. I had not a cent left. I then solicited funds and on

March 2, 1912 I opened the Polytechnic Institute of Puerto Rico with one student, Leopoldo Ortiz. Within a month I had eight boys and 4 girls, all in 3rd and 4th grade. I taught these in one of the old rooms of the ground floor during the A.M. and directed their work in the afternoon. At night I went out to the preaching stations of my district, getting back home usually about midnight, but sometimes not till 2:00 A. M. when I visited the farthest away places. Up again at 5:30 A.M. for prayers with the students, and school after prayers till noon. This I did till brother Clarence returned to help me in September 1912. Miss <sup>of</sup> Villanueva was also employed to teach. Later she added the matron's work to her duties.

*In 1914 we moved our family into the old farm house above and with students below,*  
During the early years there was a ~~continuous~~ periodic employment of



matrons for the girls; Mrs. Harris filling in the gaps between. ~~Our last~~  
~~no matron ever lasted a whole year.~~

matron I think was Mrs. J. J. Osuna who served for part of year and  
 resigned. Mrs. Harris then said she would do the work all the time or not

at all, for with each matron new methods were introduced according to the  
 matrons ideas of what should or should not be done. *it was therefore for Mrs. Harris to adopt a system and keep it going it*  
 least desirable position in the Polytechnic Institute. Mrs. Harris was *the matron's job, was to*  
 then made permanent matron which duties she performed in addition to the *be con-*  
 rearing of five little children whom she personally taught through the *tinually*  
 5th grade, *and for a long time without salary.* *matron's system.* *the best*

This in brief is the story of how it came about that two other HARRISES  
 are employed in the Polytechnic Institute by me.

I grant without hesitation that if a man comes into an established  
 work and begins to add members of his own family to his staff of workers  
 that such is a wrong policy and surely leads to friction and final ruin.

But as to the HARRISES and their attitude to others in the Polytechnic  
 Institute, in the light of the above history since 1912, let us face the  
 following facts:

1. This school was conceived and built up by J. Will Harris, his wife  
 Eunice W. Harris and their brother Mr. Clarence Harris, with the valiant  
 and heroic faithfulness of loyal teachers during the years. J. Will Harris  
 made the general plans and secured the money for same. Mr. Clarence Harris  
 erected the buildings and drive ways. Mrs. J. Will Harris has through the  
 years built up a fine esprit-de-corps among the women. We have not  
 always agreed in ~~the~~ fact we seldom all concur on anything till after  
 days of discussion of it, for we all have minds and think for ourselves.

~~Dean Leker gets the credit for building up the curriculum of the~~  
~~college as it is today equal to that of any small college.~~

J. Will Harris was and is the final authority in all considerations  
 when ~~xx~~ a difference prevails. He cannot now recall but one instance in  
 all these years where he has had to go against the judgement of his advisors.



In time when the liberal arts college took first place in our work, the advisory functions of individuals to the President were changed to a definite committee called the Administrative Committee which, as its name suggests, deals with the Administration of the college in cooperation <sup>with the president</sup>. Naturally the three members whose lives have been given to the development of the school from nothing through all the vicissitudes of intrigues, adverse criticism and financial strains, and whose long experience peculiarly qualified them for helpful service to others, J. Will Harris, Eunice White Harris and Clarence Harris, were a part of the committee, not because of the above, however, but because this committee is composed by action of the faculty of the following members:

1. The President of the College	J. Will Harris
2. Vice-Pres and Dean of the men	Clarence Harris
3. Dean of Women	Eunice W. Harris
4. The Dean of the College	C. A. Leker
5. " Registrar of the College	Elward Caldwell
6. " Local Treasurer of the College	Patria A. Tio
Two other members elected annual by the Faculty, At present	Boyd B. Palmer B. Bover

These members are no puppets nor numskulls. The Harrises are often <sup>among themselves</sup> divided in discussions. I ask no one to surrender his judgement in order to serve here. I welcome different opinions. It is the only way to grow a healthy vigorous body. <sup>just as</sup>

While I reserve the right as President to veto anything the faculty or Administrative Committee does, I <sup>do not</sup> ~~do not recall~~ of even having been compelled to exercise that right.

All things affecting faculty are referred to the faculty for faculty action, for example

The use of tobacco,  
Card playing  
Dancing  
Vacations, etc. etc.

} These are held by the Presbytery as unbecomingly evangelical thus



The Administrative Committee has nothing to do with salaries nor with the employment <sup>or dismissal</sup> of individuals. However, the President never has hired nor dismissed any one without consultation and agreement with his Administrative Committee, *since that committee was organized*

The only time another Harris was employed here was when Helen, my daughter lost her job in New York by the failure of American Wool and she was employed to finish out the two years of English work in the High School which we had previously decided to close. In justice it is stated here that I employed Helen against the better judgment of Dean Leker and on recommendation and orders of the President of our Board ~~of~~ Dr. Keigwin, whose letter asked me to employ Helen.

There have always been objections by certain individuals to the Harris~~es~~ way of doing things. I have made many mistakes during the years, the greatest of all mistakes was the retaining of our staff, hoping to reform them, of narrow minded, clever people with social qualities permeated with such convictions as free love, companionate marriage, communism, determined to do about as they pleased regardless of consequences to others or to the school; devoid of honesty and given to malicious gossip, which was worse than ~~that~~ heterodoxy. Yes I have made mistakes.

I would ask you to consider further:

1. That this work has been built up without definite support of the current expense budget. For a few years past we have had \$15,000 income from permanent endowment. In order to carry on ~~expenses~~ and to develop this work I have always had to cover our expense budget from student labor on buildings. And these buildings we have constructed at about one half cost of architect's and contractor's estimate. Credit here is due to brother Clarence.

2. During the years of the present Board of Trustees, since 1920, I have asked the Board as a Board only once to meet a deficit and that was



for \$800.00 only, two years ago,

3. During the last two years the trustees have washed their hands clean of all responsibility beyond the actual income from endowment, and cancelled all contracts. The result of this was that I got my pants kicked hard and my reputation impaired, when I was forced to reduce salaries by one half.

4. For ten successive years we have been convinced that the time had come for a liberal arts college where stress should be laid not on scholastic training only but on the religious development of students for a field of broad Christian service in Puerto Rico. During the past seven years we have graduated over 200 students with the B. A. degree, who are finding their places of efficient service in medicine, in teaching, in farming, in the ministry, in home making, in business, meeting with the highest approval in ~~xx~~ every instant, in Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, Venezuela, and the United States.

Dr. Fansler's report after a month's stay on the Island supports us 100% in our objective as a liberal arts college as the only legitimate course open to a private school at the present time in Puerto Rico. He did not see our school in operation, nor did he meet our regular staff of workers. He was here during the worst Summer Session we ever held and after a storm of criticism had been shattered over all the Island.

I set out nearly a quarter of a century ago to develop the kind of a college that will meet the needs of Puerto Rico. I was not interested in a mere intellectual, academic excellence unless it is connected and shot through with religious zeal according to Bible knowledge. I selected my trustees to help me in this work. If you have doubts about it or questions to ask, I beg of you to investigate, before you allow yourself to act ~~arrogant~~ <sup>and deeply rooted in the minds of trustees, some of the trustees</sup> conclusions based on supposedly good authority.

This talk of "too many Harises" has sprung up during the last very recent years. <sup>you will agree with me that the</sup> members of the Board of Trustees should do



one of two things:

1. Investigate the recent accusations sent you together with all the evidence in support of same, not leaving a stone unturned till it is all thoroughly considered. This I urge you to do now that there are men here who know and can judge the merits of the accusations.

2. Unless this is done the trustees should cease to sustain those accusations but condemn them as untrue. In other <sup>words</sup> do as Dr. Keigwin stated would be done in the June meeting of 1933, "That as far as the Board is concerned nothing has ever happened in Puerto Rico and we will forget it."

I recall also Dr. Keigwin's convincing argument to me in his home of the lion and the skunk, which story led me to desist - at that time from demanding an investigation. I did not want to carry about with me the smell of the skunk, though I was sure the skunk could be killed in a fair investigation. Results are however that the skunk is alive and I am covered with its pestiferous, offensive odor. <sup>fair</sup> I ask for a trial before conviction by <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>men</sup> of the jury, ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~mind~~ <sup>of</sup> any of you.