

## PAUL ERNEST FELT, JR.

My earliest memory of Grandpa and Grandmother Harris was at the Utah State Penitentiary in Salt Lake City. The recollection of the experience I shall relate shortly commenced with the discussion with my mother when I was a very young boy, on an occasion that I was speaking with her with regard to the prison. I commented that I could remember a situation and perhaps she could verify it. I recall that I was young enough to be in my grandmother's arms and can remember the balcony overlooking the prison yards and Grandmother pacing me up and down in front of the balcony. If my memory serves me correctly, regarding the discussion I had with Mother, I was sixteen to nineteen months old at the time.

I remember vividly one of the prisoners promising to build me a slide. This was the most magnificent feeling, to think that someone was going to build me a slide and that I would have my own, my very own plaything! I spent many hours planning the days that I would spend going up and down the slide. I also can recall Grandfather buying me bottles of soda pop. I imagined that inside the red machine a little man, one of the prisoners, used to sit, take the money, then push the bottles through the hole to us.

My memory of the Harrises always brings good feelings. Those bad memories we experience as children can sometimes bring a feeling of discontentment and frustration; however, any memories I have of the time spent with the Harrises are always those of excitement and a feeling of complete security. Many of our summer vacations, or at least a portion of them, would be spent with the Harrises in Provo. John and I would look forward with anticipation to those occasions. Grandfather always gave us the opportunity to work while we were there. I must mention here that at the time I didn't consider work to be an opportunity, but now as I reflect I can see the value of the lesson that I learned.

In one of my grandparents' bedrooms was a large portrait of, I believe, his mother. She had long flowing hair that reached to the floor. This portrait provided great fascination for two small boys. The portrait itself was bigger than we were, and the sight of this serious-looking woman standing there caused some amount of fright. One particular night it was raining outside and the night provided some of the normal eerie feelings, and looking at this picture I found myself not being able to look at it any longer. That night I woke up in the middle of the night and looked down the hallway, still having memory of the eerie portrait. I saw line after line of white ghosts moving up and down the hallway! John was lying beside me in the double bed sound asleep. I very quickly pulled myself under the blankets to



hide from this frightening experience. Every so often my sheer courage would enable me to look very quickly out from under the blanket to see if the ghosts were still there--and sure enough, they were going up and down the hallway as if coming after me, and quickly I went back under the blankets . . . somehow, my courage let me drop off to sleep. In the morning I found those ghosts were still there, moving up and down the hallway in the wind, but in actual fact, they were nothing more or less than Grandmother's washing.

The greatest of all memories, though, is associated with Grandfather's keen desire to be with his grandsons. Granddad was a great, avid fisherman and I believe, even though I am sure the moments of frustration made him wish he had never taken us, he still invited us to go fishing with him. However, his fishing trip was not complete without having Grandmother with him, and as we all grew a bit older, Grandmother's desire to go fishing subsided. He always made it a point that Grandmother's pole would be in the car and, therefore, perhaps an incentive for her. On

On one occasion we were all in the car, and I suppose Grandfather had talked to Grandma about her coming fishing with us . . . she had planned not to come. He looked over at me and said, "Paul, would you go inside and tell your grandmother that her pole is here. We are ready to go and we would love to have her come fishing with us." So, with a smile, I went in and related that to Grandmother. To the joy of all of us, she consented to this request, but I think under duress. Though she would come fishing with us generally, she would not go out in the boat. She would stay in the cabin and take care of things. I think Grandpa felt comfortable that Grandma was there with us.

I don't remember what we did for a boat prior to their fiftieth wedding anniversary. On that occasion the entire family was gathered together, which, incidentally, was a marvellous experience for me because I had high regard and respect for my aunts and uncles--and as a gift to Grandpa the family gave him a boat and a motor. As I said, I don't remember what we did prior to that time, but I suppose he rented a boat. From then on we always had a boat and we could go well out into the lake to fish.

I can remember the thrill I had on one occasion when I caught a five-pound rainbow trout. I believe I was about ten years old, and the trout was almost as heavy as I was. I was never a very big lad, and my memory tells me I probably only weighed about eighty pounds, and therefore that fish could just about have pulled me right into the lake! That trout hit my line and my pole doubled over three times and I began to battle with a real fighter! I kept yelling to Granddad to take the pole because I would lose the fish. He tried to remain as calm as possible, but he was too excited to be too calm. He was a wise man; Grandpa didn't take over. I'm sure the impulse was there, because he, too, was anxious to catch the fish. He just kept saying "Son, you just hold



on to that pole and I will tell you what to do." He let me fight that fish for the next thirty minutes. He just sat there anxious, but on the surface he was calm and instructed me what to do. When that trout came out of the water, we all screamed for joy because she was a beauty! As the line came in, he very skillfully put the net under the fish and brought her in. The photograph that was taken of me and the fish showed me almost doubled over with the weight, but it was a marvellous experience.

Granddad was a stern man, and John and I were different persons in the presence of our grandparents--we had to be! Any foolishness and we felt the wrath of a grandfather's alleged Irish temper coming out. We were always extra cautious around him.

I can remember Grandpa's expression to everyone when he saw them in the morning. It was, "Top of the mornin' to you". He used to say he was Irish, and then in reply the other may would say, "Good morning, Mr. Harris, and how are you?" And every day, every time, Grandpa used to say, "Never felt better a day of my life". I used to wonder if he always felt that great. If he didn't feel well, he never would let anyone know.

I don't remember ever thinking of my grandfather as an old man. He was always too active to be an old man. He didn't appear to ever get tired, even when we would go deer hunting together. I seem to remember that he would out-do all of us, but I think it was just the fact that he used to inch forward that way. He would always be on the hillside while we would be tramping up and down the hills, scaring the deer out.

I must have had very deep feelings of respect and love for my grandparents, even though I don't recall ever telling them that, because on the occasion that Grandmother expressed, shall we say, approval--even though that is not a good term--of Margaret, I can remember how thrilled I was to think that she felt as strongly about her in her way as I did in mine. We had been visiting with Grandmother and Margaret had been speaking with her. Later on Mother mentioned to me that Grandmother Harris was so thrilled with Paul Junior's little wife. That one experience was a great sensation.