

THE REMARKABLE MR. HARRIS

AND THE CLUB THAT CHANGED THE WORLD



In his 1906 novel "The Jungle," Upton Sinclair described Chicago as a "great sore of a city." It was dirty. It was corrupt. It was the home of Paul Harris.



A Japanese visitor wrote,
"If the most noisy place is hell -
surely Chicago must be hell."

written by **DIANA SCHOBURG** illustrated by **STEVE BUCCELLATO**

Chicago's central business district, where Harris worked as a lawyer, was one of the most densely packed commercial areas in the world at the time.



The city was filled with people, yet it was impersonal, and Harris was lonely.



He longed for a place where he could find people he could trust, people like those in the small New England town of his youth.



Paul Percy Harris was born
19 April 1868 in Racine, Wis.



His father took him to live with his grandparents
in Wallingford, Vt., when he was three years old after
the family ran into financial trouble.



He grew to greatly
admire his grandfather,
a serious and self-
sacrificing New Englander.



Growing up in Wallingford, Harris was mischievous. He skipped school*...



climbed out of his window while he was supposed to be sleeping...



hopped trains...



...and set bent pins on chapel pews for people to sit on.



He matched up his family's rooster, Methuselah, in a cockfight with the local blacksmith's rooster.

* The little red schoolhouse that he avoided is now the meeting place of the Rotary Club of Wallingford.

As he got older, Harris drifted from school to school, attending Black River Academy (he was expelled), Vermont Military Academy, and the University of Vermont, where he helped found what he called an "underground society for the subjugation of unruly freshmen." He was expelled along with three others over accusations about its activities, though later they all received degrees from the school.



He was studying at Princeton when he found out his beloved grandfather had died.



WORK HARD AND
LIVE HONORABLY FOR
YOUR GRANDFATHER'S
SAKE.

When the school year was over, Harris went back to Wallingford to live with his grandmother. Directionless, he took a job as an office boy at a marble company for \$1 a day. After a year, his grandmother decided he should go to law school.

En route to Iowa, where he worked in a law office and attended the University of Iowa law school, Harris stopped in Chicago. He was fascinated by the bustling city.

His grandmother died one year into his schooling, leaving him without any strong family ties.

Harris graduated from law school in 1891. At the commencement ceremony, the keynote speaker urged the graduates to take five years to go to a small town and make a fool of themselves before settling down in the city of their choice to build a career.



Harris took that as permission to go out on an adventure...

THE WORLD TRAVELER

SAN FRANCISCO

Reporter for the
San Francisco Chronicle

Explored
Yosemite
Valley

YOSEMITE

Climbed
Pike's Peak

**PLATTEVILLE,
CO**

Cowboy on a ranch

**FRESNO,
CA**

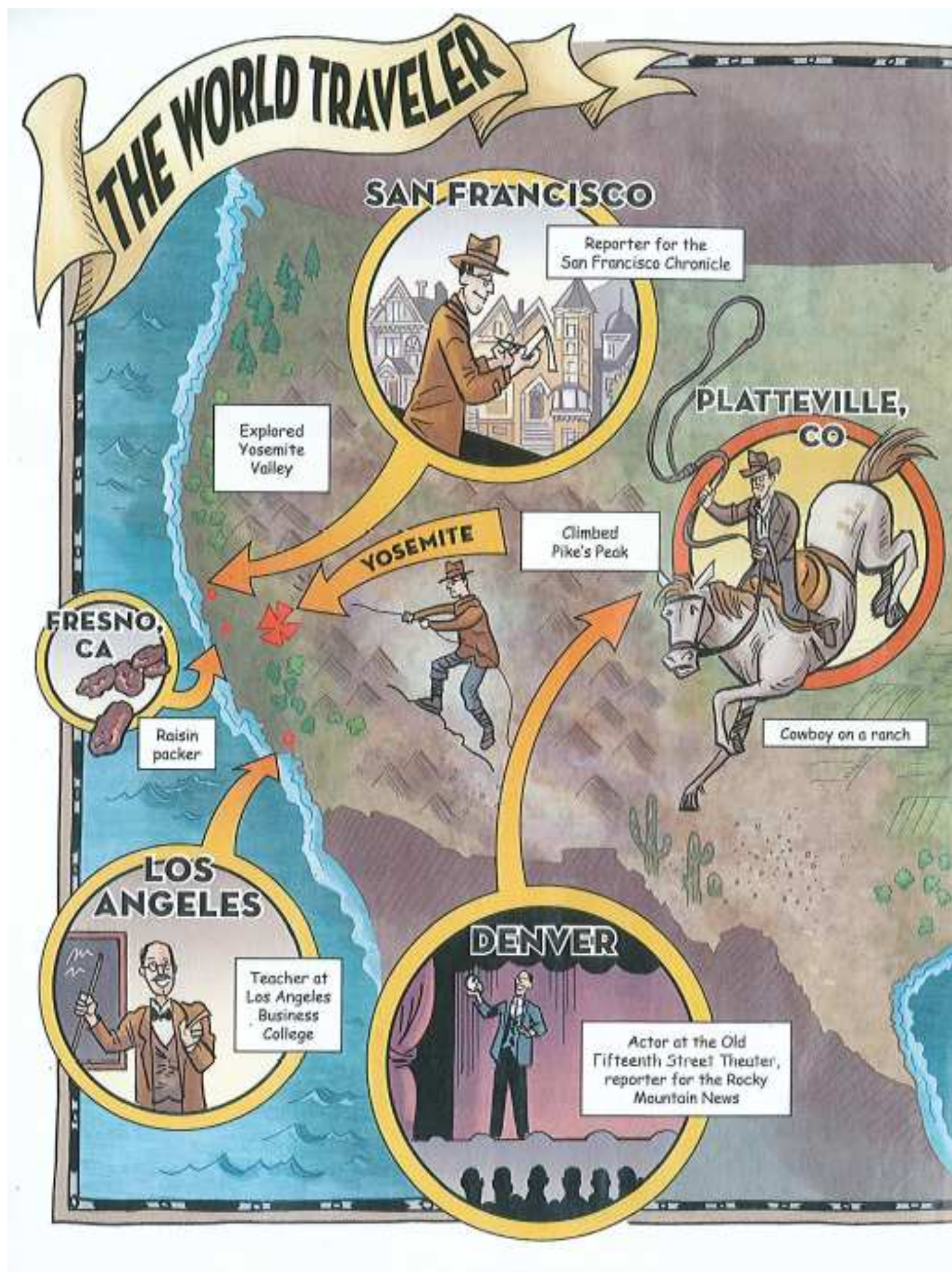
Raisin
packer

**LOS
ANGELES**

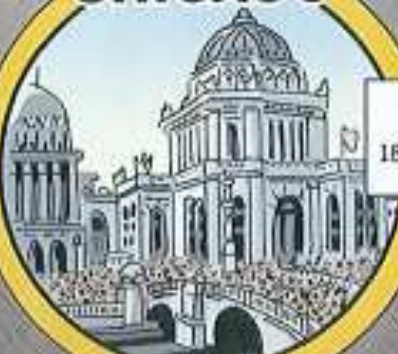
Teacher at
Los Angeles
Business
College

DENVER

Actor at the Old
Fifteenth Street Theater,
reporter for the Rocky
Mountain News



CHICAGO



Went to the
1893 World's Fair

Cattleman on
ships to England

LONDON



LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND



Watched Grover
Cleveland's inauguration
and had a temporary stint
at the Washington Star

WASHINGTON, DC



NEW ORLEANS

While an orange picker, saved a
little girl during the Cheniere
Caminada hurricane of 1893



JACKSONVILLE, FL



Night clerk at the
St. James, the best tourist
hotel in the city

And so
he traveled the world,
taking odd jobs
along the way to
pay for it.

BAHAMAS

CUBA

BELGIUM

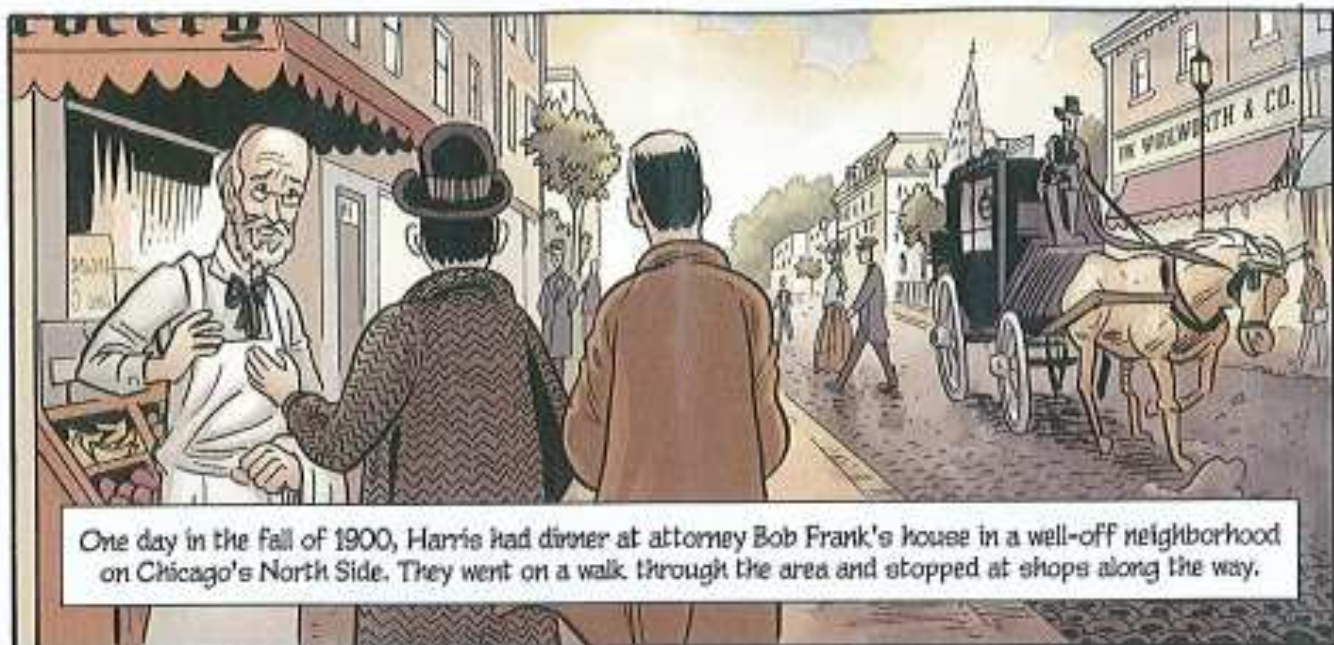
ITALY

Marble company
salesman

On 27 February 1896, at the age of 27, Harris settled in Chicago and built a law practice representing victims of bankruptcy and embezzlement. It was a good focus at that time in a lawless frontier town filled with fraud.

He found it difficult to settle down. He'd dine at ethnic eateries every night to learn about different cultures and attend churches of different religions every week.

Sunday afternoons were the loneliest of all.



Harris told Silvester Schiele, a client and coal dealer from a small town in Indiana, about his idea for a club. It would include members, each from a different profession, who would gather for friendship and mutual cooperation. They could join only if another member vouched for them.



Harris and Schiele talked it over with Gus Loehr, a mutual client and mining engineer, who offered to hold the organizational meeting in his office. Loehr invited his friend Hiram Shorey, another New Englander and a merchant tailor.

Harris hosted the next meeting, when the fifth member, Harry Ruggles, joined. By the third meeting, the club had 15 members. At this meeting, hosted by Schiele, they established long-standing traditions such as paying fines for misdeeds and addressing fellow members by their first names, which was unusual at that time.

23 February 1905, Room 711, Unity Building, Chicago

ROUND TABLE CLUB?

CONSPIRATORS CLUB?

TRADE AND TALK CLUB?

HOW ABOUT ROTARY?

They decided on the name Rotary, after the practice of rotating the meetings among club members' offices.

Schlele was the club's first president, and Harris was elected to the post in 1907. Harris asked Manuel Muñoz, who was going on a trip to San Francisco, to see whether people there were interested in forming a club. Muñoz mentioned the idea to Homer Wood, who ran with it, leading to the formation of the second Rotary club in 1908.

1908
San Francisco



1909
New York City

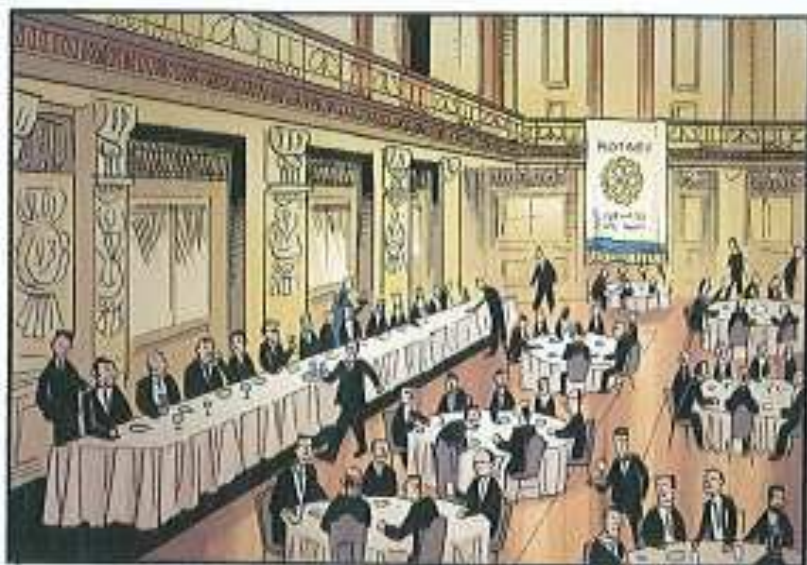


In 1909, the Rotary Club of New York was established, making Rotary a national movement. By now, Rotary's focus had turned toward good deeds in the community.



In 1910, Harris ripped his jacket while hiking with the Chicago Prairie Club, a wilderness group of which he was a charter member. Jean Thomson, also on the hike, offered to mend it.

Three months later, the two married. They named their home Comely Bank, after the street in Edinburgh, Scotland, where Jean grew up.



That year, the National Association of Rotary Clubs was formed, and Harris became its first president. In 1912, Harris retired, exhausted. He retreated from the public eye for nearly 15 years. General Secretary Chesley R. Perry said he suffered a "serious physical breakdown." Harris described what happened as a heart attack. His poor health continued throughout his life, including another heart attack and a nervous breakdown.

Arch Klumpf, Atlanta, 1917 Rotary convention

When he recovered, Harris returned to his legal work. He avoided Rotary conventions, sending messages to be read in his place.



I APPOINT A COMMITTEE OF ONE, WHO WILL BE **CHESLEY PERRY**, TO SEND A TELEGRAM TO OUR PRESIDENT EMERITUS, EXPRESSING THE APPRECIATION AND LOVE OF EVERY DELEGATE HERE AND OUR REGRET THAT HE IS NOT WITH US.



In 1926, Harris reemerged. "The Rotarian," which had been launched in 1911 to publish a treatise by Harris on Rotary, printed his autobiography, in part to dispel rumors about where he'd been all those years. The final installment, published in November of that year, showed the Harrises in Bermuda, where he made his first visit to a Rotary club on foreign soil since the organization's founding.

In May 1928, they sailed from Montreal to Great Britain, on what would be the first of several whirlwind tours of Rotary clubs in other countries.



THE DOCTORS TELL ME THAT I AM NOT TO SAY VERY MUCH, BUT HOW COULD I, IN ANY BRIEF SENTENCE, IMPART TO YOU EVEN A VESTIGE OF THE SENTIMENTS AS I WITNESS THIS VAST CONCOURSE?



Harris had a heart attack in 1929 but surprised everyone when he showed up at the 1930 RI Convention, his first convention appearance since 1912.

He set sail again in 1932, traveling to The Hague as a delegate to a law congress and visiting with Rotarians in places such as Helsinki, Finland; Riga, Latvia; and Stockholm, Sweden.



He channeled his mischief in a more constructive manner than before, uniting Rotarians the world over.*



That year, as the Nazi party was gaining power in Germany, Harris planted his first tree of friendship on European soil in Berlin.

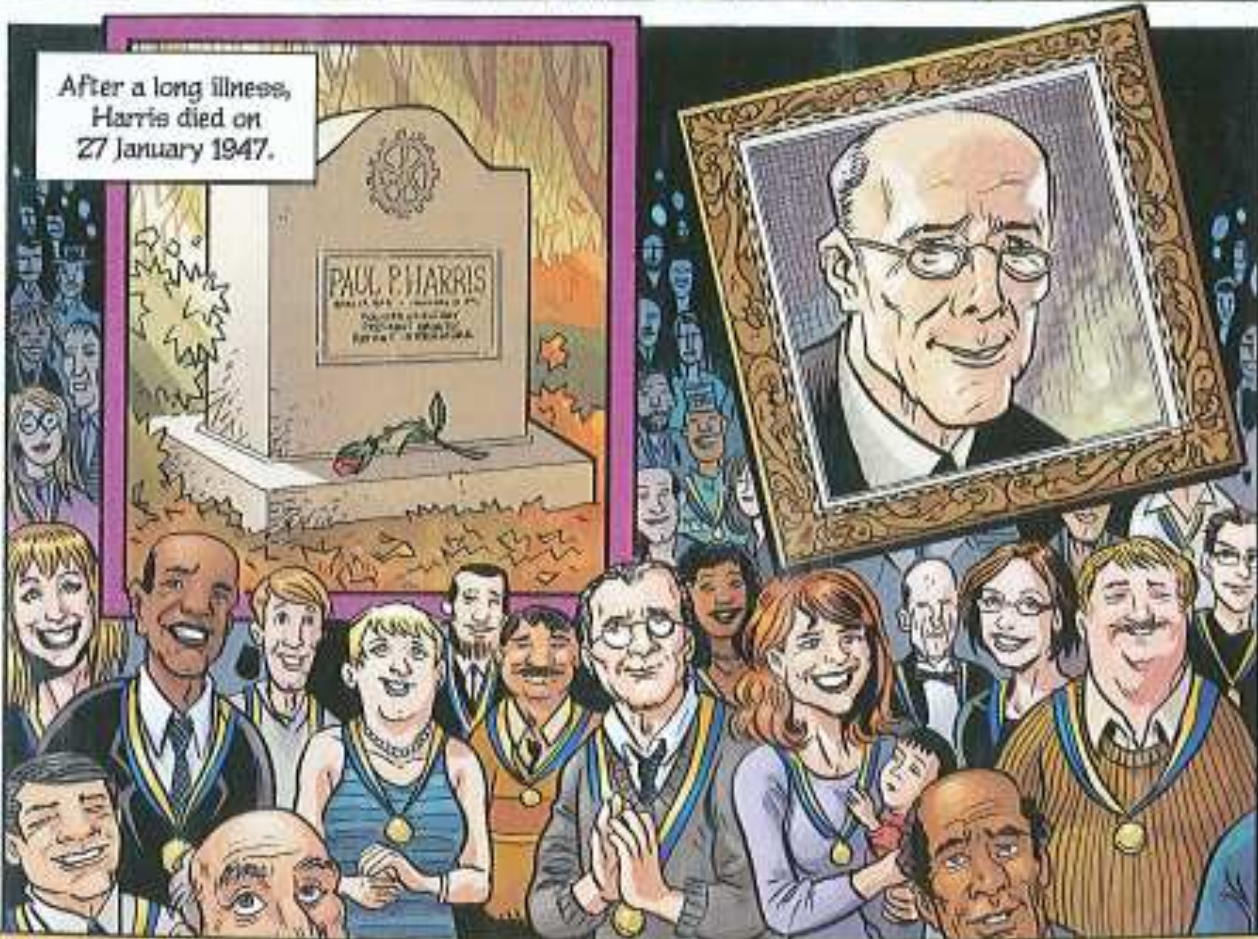
*Always up for shenanigans, Harris played a blond-haired beauty in a sketch at the behest of Danish Rotarians.

St. Louis, 1943 RI Convention

ROTARY HAS STOOD
THE TEST OF FIRE AND
BLOOD AND MANIFESTLY
IS DESTINED TO ENDURE.

After finishing his travels, Harris continued addressing conventions, contributing to "The Rotarian," and writing books about his life.

After a long illness,
Harris died on
27 January 1947.



An outpouring of donations to The Rotary Foundation inspired the creation of the Paul Harris Memorial Fund to fortify the Foundation. That year, the Foundation launched the forerunner to the Ambassadorial Scholarships program, calling the students "Paul Harris Fellows." In 1957, the Foundation Trustees created the Paul Harris Fellow recognition to honor donors of \$1,000. To date, more than a million fellows have been recognized.