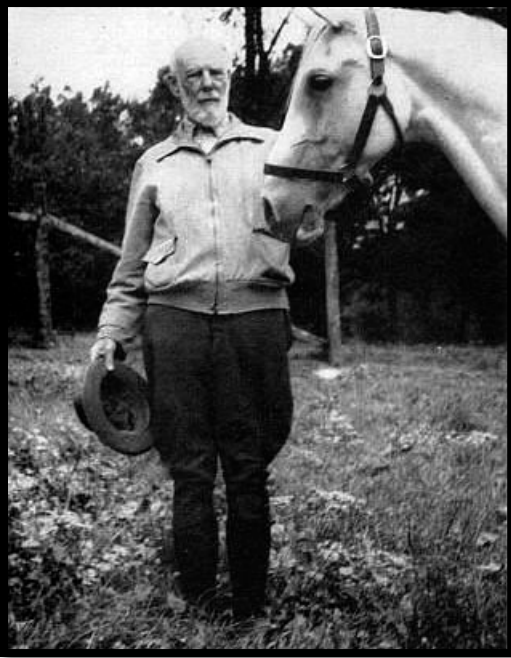


# Albert Wadsworth Harris and Kemah Farm

*Financier, Philanthropist, and Great Lover of Animals*



Albert Wadsworth Harris was the eldest child of Chicago banker Norman Wait Harris and his first wife, Jacyntha. He was born in Cincinnati, Ohio on November 4, 1867. His mother died when Albert was five; his father remarried but his step-mother died when Albert was eight. His father remarried again in 1879; Albert was almost 12.

Albert graduated from Gem City Business College in Quincy, Illinois in 1886; joining his father's investment banking firm, N.W. Harris & Co. in 1888.

Albert married Harriet Amelia Meilke in Rockford, Illinois in November 1889. They had two children, Martha Marie born in December 1890 and Norman Wadsworth born in July 1894.

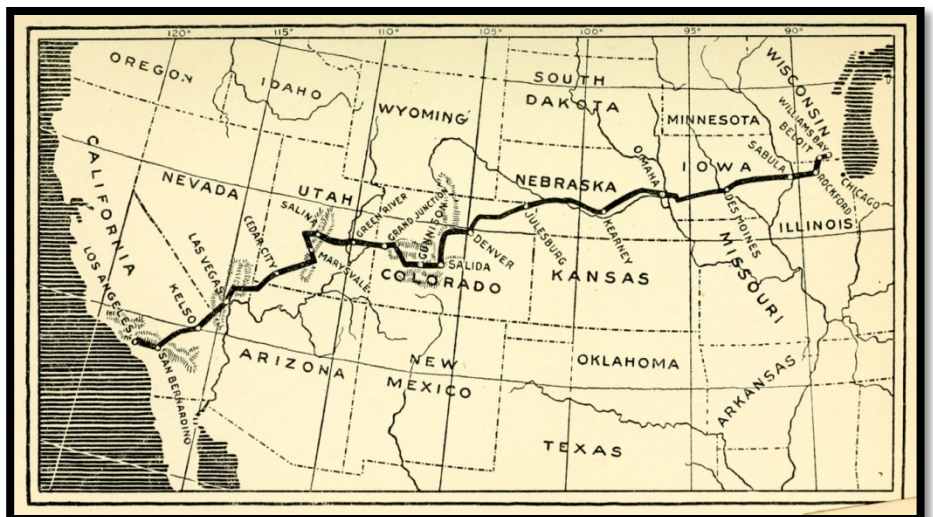
Albert rose through the ranks at Harris Bank. The 1909 Chicago Blue Book of Selected of Names lists Albert as a vice president at Harris Trust & Savings Bank. The United Census from 1920 lists him as bank president.

Albert was a man with a passion for life, with a commitment to making his own mark on the world, instead of resting on the laurels of his father and family, and he did so with energy and enthusiasm until his death in 1958 at the age of 91.

The obituary of Albert W. Harris in the Chicago Daily News said "*As a financier, philanthropist, and government advisor, his voice was a powerful one in shaping the city's history.*"

Albert W. Harris' passion for life was extraordinary and exhilarating. He had dreams as child that people called "castles in the air", but as an adult he made most of those dreams come true.

In 1910, at 42 years of age, he made the trip of a lifetime, driving a prairie schooner, also known as a covered wagon, from Los Angeles, California to his farm in Williams Bay. A 1,700 mile trip he wrote about in his book *Cruise of a Schooner*



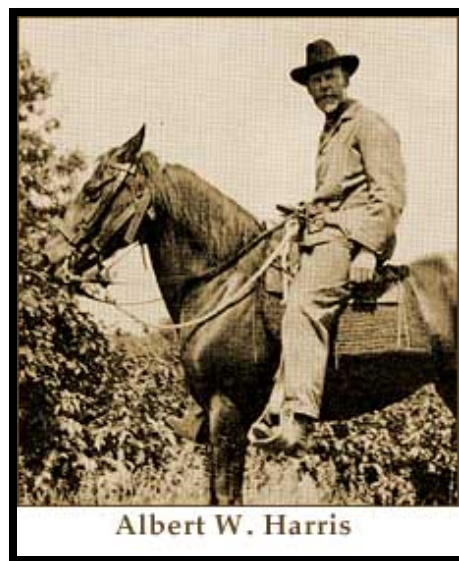
Horses were one of Albert Harris' greatest passions. He rode in endurance races until he was in his early fifties and was in fact one of the last Chicagoans to let go of his horse and buggy. As a boy he dreamed of owning ponies, as an adult he bought his first horse, which he named Ned, in 1891. Albert W. Harris dreamed of getting away from city life and living on a farm and raising horses.

In 1902, Harris purchased a 140 acre farm from descendants of Captain Israel Williams, and named it Kemah (a Native American word that means "in the face of the wind"), Farm. This was the farm he traveled to in the prairie schooner. The family used the Williams farmhouse until 1938 when it was razed and a new white cottage with a gray shingle roof was built in its place.

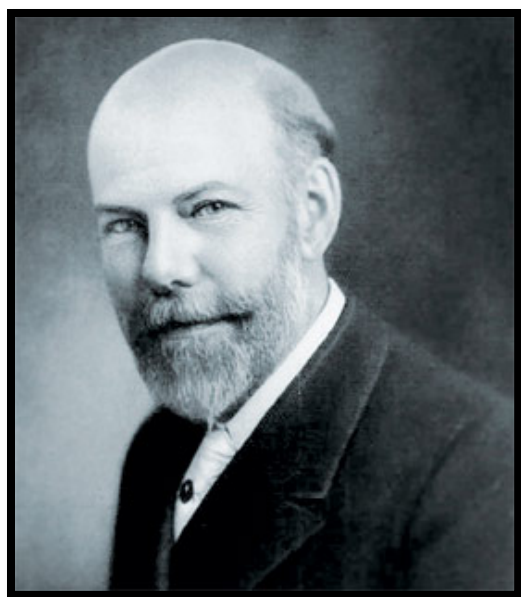
This farm was where Albert Harris could pursue his passion for horses and the great outdoors. He would stock the farm with dogs, Indian ponies, mustangs, and Hereford cattle. Eventually, he would bring one of the first Arabian horses to the United States. He would go on to breed a famed line of Arabian horses that are still called Harris Arabians. He would act as director of the Arabian Horse Registry in America from 1924-1949 and president of the Arabian Horse Club of America from 1939 until 1949. He would have four books about the breed published, including *The History of Arabian Horse Club Registry of America* (1950) which is still cited today.

A promotional brochure, *The Ponies of Kemah*, written in 1906, describes the advantages of his horse training facility in Williams Bay. A promotional brochure, *The Ponies of Kemah*, written in 1906, illustrates the advantages of his horse training facility in Williams Bay:

"...just a few minutes' walk from the Williams Bay station of the Chicago & Northwestern Railway...we have splendid pastures with spring brooks running through them; woods,...and warm spacious barns for the winter. The Williams Bay station ...lies just across the road from the south line of the farm, where in summer there are numerous pleasures of all descriptions, and automobiles are as numerous as the boats, so that the experience our ponies get before leaving Kemah, in the way of sights and noises, cannot be improved upon for training. And no country roads carry any more automobiles in summer than do those around Geneva Lake."



Albert W. Harris



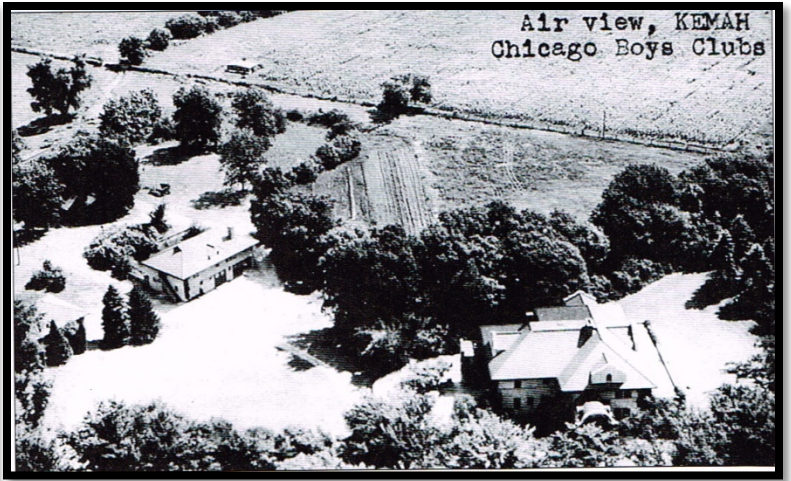
Philanthropist Albert W. Harris and the Board of Directors of Harris Trust and Savings Bank established The Chicago Community Trust on May 12, 1915, with an initial donation of \$200,000. Today the Trust is the second oldest and fourth largest community foundation in the United States and one of the largest community foundations in the country with assets of over \$1.5 billion.

In January 1953, Harris donated Kemah farm to the Chicago Boys Club, one of his favorite social organizations. The gift included 30 acres, the family's summer home on the lake, five outbuildings, and a collection of buggies and equine equipment.





*The Lodge - Chicago Boys Club - Camp Kemah*



*Aerial View of Camp Kemah*

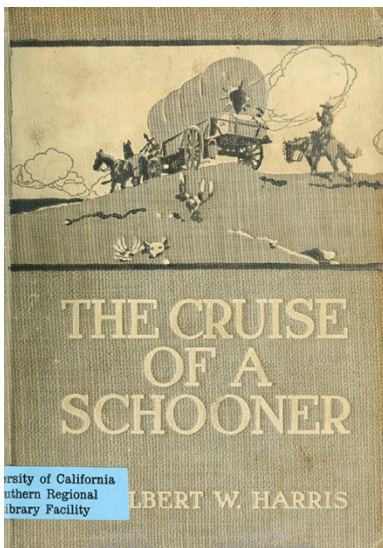
The horse facilities were moved to the remaining acreage located beside Lake Como. After Albert Harris' death in 1958, his son Norman would continue breeding horses at the farm until he passed away in 1965.

Harriet Amelia Harris died in 1950, at the age of 82. Albert Wadsworth Harris died on November 9, 1958 at the age of 91. They are both interred at the Harris Family Mausoleum at Rosehill Cemetery, Chicago, Illinois.

Albert Harris was so protective of his horses that he left a provision that stipulated that his buried horses must be left in perpetuity in their cemetery on his farm.

Today, the remains of the Harris estate may be seen on the southern border of Geneva National along highway 50. Across from Calvary Community Church and Harris Road, two beige stucco gate posts announce the entrance of the former Kemah Farm..

As evidenced by the titles of many of his books, Albert W. Harris was a great lover of animals.



The Cruise of a Schooner	1911
Cracker Tales	1912
The Arabian Horse of Kemah	1922
The Yellow Dog	1939
The Blood of the Arab: the World's Greatest War Horse	1941
Our Forty Dollar Horse and Other Reminiscences	1952
The First Seventy-Five Years of The Harris Organization	1957