

Harris, Winder Russell ^[1]

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by Charles Aycock Poe, 1988

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Winder Russell Harris, newspaperman and congressman, was born in [Raleigh](#) ^[2], one of eleven children of Raleigh attorney [John Cebern Logan](#) ^[3] and Florence Upchurch Harris. After attending the Raleigh public schools and what is now [Belmont Abbey College](#) ^[4] at Belmont, he began his newspaper career in 1908 as a sports writer for the *Raleigh Times*. He then became successively sports editor, *Charlotte News*; news editor, Spartanburg (S.C.) *Herald*; state news editor, *Charlotte Observer* ^[5]; managing editor, *Charlotte Chronicle*; telegraph editor, *Raleigh News and Observer* ^[6]; manager, United Press Bureau, Raleigh; news editor, Richmond *Virginian*; news editor, Newport News *Times-Herald*; city editor, Norfolk *Virginian-Pilot*; and reporter, *Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch*.

From 1918 to 1925 Harris was a correspondent for the Universal Service in Washington, D.C., covering the House, Senate, White House, and many other news beats. He reported on the Republican, Progressive, and Democratic National conventions in 1924. He also covered the presidential campaigns of Governor James H. Cox in 1920 and Senator Robert M. LaFollette in 1924, and traveled as a reporter with Presidents Warren G. Harding and Calvin Coolidge. In 1924 and 1925, he served as assistant secretary of the American delegation to the International Narcotics Congress at the League of Nations Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

Harris returned to Norfolk in 1925 to become managing editor of the *Virginian-Pilot*, a position he held for sixteen years. In 1934 he was honored by the Cosmopolitan Club, which designated him as "Norfolk's First Citizen." Among his many civic activities, he headed the Community Chest and Rotary Club, and he served on the board of directors of the Association of Commerce, Maritime Exchange, Norfolk General Hospital, Boy Scouts, and Red Cross. On 8 Apr. 1941, he won a special election as a Democrat to fill the vacancy in the Seventy-seventh Congress when Colgate W. Darden resigned to run for governor. Harris was reelected without opposition, but resigned on 15 Sept. 1944 to become vice-president of the Shipbuilders' Council of America and head of its Washington office. Soon afterwards he established residence in Alexandria, Va., where he remained for the rest of his life. On 31 Dec. 1958 he resigned from the Shipbuilders' Council and for the next six years was editor of the *Alexandria Journal*, the *Arlington Journal*, and the *Fairfax County Journal-Standard*. While living in Alexandria, he served from 1953 to 1961 as a member and vice-chairman of the city's Redevelopment and Housing Authority. On the occasion of his eightieth birthday, he was awarded the Medal of Good Citizenship by the Sons of the American Revolution, of which he was a member.

Harris was an Episcopalian. He died of cancer at George Washington University Hospital at age eighty-four and was buried in Oakwood Cemetery, Raleigh. He was survived by his wife, the former Charlotte Meares, and four daughters: Mrs. Anne H. Marshall of Virginia Beach, Va.; Elizabeth Lea Harris; Florence Caroline Harris; and Mrs. Charlotte H. Bill of Alexandria, Va.

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