

BIOGRAPHY OF HAROLD FON ROBERTS

I just reread a letter that Camille sent to the family in 1976 when she was on her mission in Idaho. She wanted us to read it together at Thanksgiving time. This is what she said about Fon:

"How grateful I am for Fon and his sweet nature, his kind and loving spirit, his determination to work hard in school, his big blue eyes that are so innocent."

That is a perfect description of him. Fon was born 11 December 1964 and was the best baby I ever had. We wanted to name him Alphonzo after his great grandfather on his father's side. but his grandmother said "No." Just call him "Fon." so we did. He was sweet, gentle and did not cry. He did not have a temper. When we had family night, Dad would take us all out for an ice cream cone. The kids would gobble theirs up and then ask Fon for a bite of his. He would hold out his ice cream cone and then each one would take a bite until none was left. He would just look at the empty cone, but never did complain. I Peter 3:4 says, "A meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

When I was expecting him I was quite worried because I already had five children and we were living in a little two bedroom house in Quincy, California. Sister Margrave, one of the older sisters in our Branch said:

"How wonderful you are going to have a new baby."

I replied, "Well, I am wondering where I am going to put it?"

She just looked at me for a long time and said,

"The Lord is going to provide you a bigger house."

Sure enough, we did manage to build on the house and provide more room for our expanding family. While we were building, Fon was crawling around in the building materials and fell on one of the cinder bricks. He got a bad cut on his little forehead which scar still remains to this day. We were so busy building that house that sometimes we would forget to feed him. He never cried. Finally, Jenny Fordice, came and said,

"Someone must feed this little boy!" and she would get some applesauce or a smashed banana, and feed him.

Once I made homemade candy to give away for Christmas presents. I hid it under the bed until I could get it all packaged and sent off. I noticed that the supply kept getting smaller and smaller. Finally, one day I saw two little legs sticking out from under the bed. Sure enough, Baby Fonny had found where the supply of candy was.

When he was about three, the kids took him out to go sleigh riding. It was bitter cold. We bundled him up in his little red coat, and gloves and sent him with his brothers and sisters. About two hours later, the girls came back to get warm.

"Where is Baby Fonny?"

"He is with the boys."

Then they left to go ice skating.

Soon the boys came home.

"Where is Baby Fonny?"

"Oh, he is with the girls."

We started an extensive search for Baby Fonny. The neighbors helped us. We had a lot of territory to cover. Finally one of the neighbors spotted a little red coat. When he went to investigate, here was Fon face down in the snow half frozen. It was only a miracle that we found him. He was way off the beaten path. It was very painful for him to thaw out. We were just grateful he was still alive.

He and his brother Matthew were very close. They slept together, they played together. They got along together and did not fight. It was a joy to watch their relationship. Once they decided to sell seeds and Christmas cards to earn a little money. They did very well. Somehow they did not understand that they had to turn that money in with their order. It took some intervention by their parents for them to learn that lesson.

He sucked his thumb. When he turned eight, his father told him he had to quit sucking his thumb or he could not be baptized. Fon did quit, but he started biting his fingernails as a substitute, which was not any better.

He was not perfect. He had a struggle with school, but he kept with it. In high school, he liked to sleep in. A couple of times, I wrote an excuse for him. Finally I realized this was not helping him. I told him,

"No more notes!"

Well, a couple of days later he slept in again and asked me to write him a note.

"OK, Fon, I will write you a note." It said

"Please excuse Fon for being late because he was too lazy to get out of bed!" He did not read it, just handed it to the secretary.

The secretary said,

"Fon, this will not do!"

He was suspended from the basketball team for awhile. When the other kids asked him why, he said,

"My Mom had me kicked off!"

He was very special to me mainly because he did not give me the trouble some of his siblings did. His coloring, personality and temperament were more like his sister, Camille. I told him alone when we were expecting Flora. We were watching "The Waltons." on TV. The show was where they had a new baby.

Fon said, "I wish we had a new baby."

I told him we were going to have one but don't tell yet.

He was tickled pink.

We burned wood for fuel and it was a family project to go out and gather that wood. We had cut a number of rounds and had piled them into the truck. It was loaded. We picked up the last one and gave it a mighty shove. It knocked the truck out of gear and the truck started to roll down the hill. All of us screamed, but eleven year old Fon ran in front of the moving truck, opened the door, jumped in and then stepped on the brake saving our truck, the wood, and the situation at great peril of his life.

I went to college to get my teaching credential. I left Fon at home with his father. When it was time for me to come home, Fon drove all the way to Utah to get me and bring me home. He was only 18.

Joe Smailes hired a number of young men to come and work for him for the forest service marking trees. Shortly after, the Warrens came and offered more money if these same young men would come and work for them in the asbestos removal business. Of course everyone left Joe Smailes and went to work for the better paying job. Not Fon, He said.

"My loyalty lies with Joe. I don't need the money that bad."

He worked very hard on his scouting projects. Every Tuesday night we would spend the evening working on merit badges. He never missed a meeting and his scout master Jim Boynton was very proud of him. He organized a group & cleared the seven mile trail in the back of Bucks Lake. for his Eagle Scout project.

Fon's best friend was Tommy Allen. I took care of Tommy while his mother worked as a teacher at Pioneer School. She was my best friend as well. Tommy and Fon were in Head Start together. They became very close. His teacher, Evelyn said that when they had lunch, Fon would always tell everyone to bow their head and say prayer. This friendship with Tommy lasted their whole life. Fon would go to Sacramento to stay with Tommy and Tommy stayed at our house a lot. Twice he lived with us while he went to Feather River College. Tommy was an excellent boy too. It was a joy to see their friendship.

He fell in love with Linda Hart and did not want to go on a mission because he didn't want to leave her. She talked him into going and he felt impressed that Linda would wait for him and so he went o England. Little did he realize it would be 20 years later and after much suffering and tribulation and trial before they would eventually marry. That was the happiest day of his life when he and Linda were sealed in the Nauvoo temple in 2011, and mine too.

Fon was not perfect. He struggled with issues, the same as everyone else, but he was deeply religious and has a strong testimony of the truth of Jesus Christ. He holds family night with his children and tries to teach them the Gospel.

He loved his children. He would travel 4 hours a day just so he could be with his children. When I asked him why he did this at such great personal sacrifice, he said,

"I must see my children every day!"

When Jordon was born, Fon would spend hours on the floor just looking at him. It was the same with his two girls. There was nothing he would not do for them.

Fon has great love and respect for his mother. Last weekend we went to Red Bridge. On the way back up the hill I passed out. I could not get up the hill. Fon gave me a blessing and told me by the power of the priesthood, I would be able to get to the top of the hill. I finally came to. I do not remember the blessing. I just know I got to my feet and Fon put his arms around me and helped me up that hill. If he had not been there with me, I would have fallen down that hill into the river.