

Interviewed by Alyson Thompson; transcribed by Katelyn Rhoads; edited by Gary Strohm.

Darrell Harlow was born on April 2, 1925 in Martinsville, the son of Walter and Martha Harlow. He has two brothers, Floyd and Lloyd and two sisters, Marie (Hills) and Zola (Wolfe).

Harlow grew up on a farm during the Great Depression. "Everyone was really poor," he explained. "We had chickens and a couple of cows to milk. There weren't too many chores to do since Dad was in the produce business. We cut wood and would have to carry in wood. He had a smokehouse. We would butcher our own hogs, and they would smoke the meat in the smokehouse. My mother didn't enjoy this, but when we had family down, she would kill a chicken by getting it by the head and - crack!"

Though they were poor, the family ate well. "Dad smoked his own hams, and we would butcher a hog every year. We would always build a big mound in the garden and bury all of our produce. You put straw and dirt in there and that was your refrigerator. You cut a hole in the side and took your food out in the winter. We had a pump with our well in the backyard, and mother would put butter and things like that on a string and would bring it up when we needed it."

Back then everyone used a party line telephone. "It was quite interesting," said Darrell. "A lot of people got on there and listened to everyone else's business."

"I rode a bicycle to high school my freshman and sophomore years - four miles every morning and four miles every night. I got a job working on a railroad. I was fifteen and told them

I was sixteen. I worked that summer and bought me my Model A Ford."

Darrell said that he and Rogene Morgan fell in love during his sophomore year of high school. "After high school, I asked her to marry me. I had a Model A Ford, and we drove to St. Louis and got married. She was 18. We asked two of our high school friends to go along as our witnesses. We were married by the justice of the peace in St. Charles, Missouri. Our friends had to drive back the same day because they weren't married. We stayed at my sister's house our first night, and that was the start of it."

"I think my parents took it much better than hers did," said Mr. Harlow. "I don't know what they said, because I didn't get involved in that."

Darrell's family had a farm. "My dad was heavy in the produce business," said Harlow. "And we put out what you call a truck garden full of cucumbers and tomatoes. He would take them to market in Terre Haute and he and mother would stay over there. When I came home out of the service, I worked with them. We put out ten acres that first year of produce and hauled it to Terre Haute at the market. Mother and Dad had a little trailer, and they stayed over there. We shipped it over to them to sell."

Mr. Harlow was drafted at age 18. "I went to Chicago for the induction physicals, and I was going into the Army, but when I was in line, they stamped Navy on my paper. That was the best thing that ever happened to me. I spent time in Pearl Harbor and never saw any action at all. I got really lucky."

Darrell said that he worked in an office at Pearl Harbor. His boss was a wom-

an. "We didn't like that very well, but we tolerated it. It got so bad that I asked to be transferred. I went down into a warehouse, and they gave me a crew and we unloaded ships as they came in. It was quite a job, because the crew would run off and hide on you. I liked it better than working in the office."

Harlow said that one of the best experiences was running into Lee Greenwell. "I was in the barracks in Honolulu, and I looked out and there were two or three guys sitting on the honey wagon, picking up garbage, and he was one of the guys."

While he was off in the Navy, Darrell said, "My wife went to Chicago with a friend of hers. She got a job at the plant up there. She was Rogene the Riveter, and she made good money. One of the proudest things, when I came out of the Navy, she saved up money, and we went to Goekler's Chevrolet and bought a new Chevrolet - red four-door - and paid cash."

Darrell received some sad news when he arrived home. "I had a brother I just loved... He passed away the day before I got home. I came off the train in Terre Haute, and that was the first message I got. He was only 38. He had emphysema, and he couldn't breathe. The doctor told him to move to Arizona, and his wife wouldn't do it."

When Darrell returned from the Navy, he and Rogene moved to Marshall. Rogene worked in Terre Haute. "I started delivering meat," said Harlow. "And I was with them for 16 years. I got promoted to supervisor."

Darrell and Rogene had a market, Harlow's Market at 1002 S. 6th Street, where Tatum's Place is now located. "All I remember is Dara-lea going to the checkout line and flirting with the old men!"

They later turned the market into a coin laundry. "There were even heated dryers in there for your hair," said Mr. Harlow. "Ray Murphy took care of our machines." Ray (who is now 89) is the only long time friend I have in Marshall."

"I finally got smart and got the chance to buy the IGA in Marshall (in the 1960s). I went to a good friend of mine in Martinsville, and I borrowed \$100,000. Then we went into business for ourselves."

"It worked out well. We worked hard, and it was a seven-day-a-week operation. We were very successful in the store, but we worked it hard. We stayed right with it all the time. We got an assistant manager, and it gave us the opportunity to go to Florida while the assistant manager took over. We sold it in the mid-nineties." Darrell said that when they had to get new computerized cash registers, it was time to sell. "At the computer age," said Harlow. "I knew I was done."

The Harlows also ran the Dog 'n Suds just down the street for over twenty years. "That was wonderful," said Darrell. "We had car hops, and we did very well."

"They put one in Robinson. It was a very unique building. I called Champaign and got some information on how it all started. We bought the building. We had new employees every year. They were high school girls. Our daughters even worked there."

The Harlows later put a Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise into the Dog 'n Suds location. "It was never profitable," said Darrell. "I had problems at the KFC. A lot of chicken going through the window. The manager was a very generous guy." The Harlows were in a partnership, and they built a new

KFC in Casey. "I worked the noon hour in Marshall and got home at midnight from the one in Casey. Rogene ran the one in Marshall."

The Harlows had three daughters, Daralea, Jeannie and Sherry. Daralea married George Smith and have three daughters. Jeanne married Larry Strohm, and they have two daughters and a son. Sherry married Bob Crocker, and they have one son. They have grandchildren from each couple.

The Harlows purchased the barracks building of the Handy Writers Colony, located on what is now Holly Lane. They hired Warren Arbuckle to turn it into a home. They doubled the size.

Darrell said that he and Rogene would take an 8-10 day trip to another country through IGA every 18 months. His favorite country was Portugal. "It was so clean and had nice people. Beautiful country. I had a good friend from Danville. We bought a lot of beer and iced it in his bath tub. My friend's wife had to go to another room to take a bath."

Hawaii was another favorite destination. They were able to see the barracks where he had served during World War II. "The whole downtown had changed," said Harlow.

"We were both working so much, but when we got to go on those IGA trips, it made it worth it. I can't think of too much I would change. It wasn't an easy life, but it was a great life. We worked well together, and we worked hard to play hard."

Darrell's wife and partner died in 2003. He sold their home a year later and moved to Florida to live full-time.

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Life and times of Darrell
Harlow
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