

Drexel Howard Interview

Interviewed by Maury Miller, September 2, 2014

M: Can you begin by telling when and where you were born?

D: I was born in Martinsville, on May 3, 1927

M: And who were your parents?

D: My father was John Howard and my mother was Rosa Fay Harold.

M: And what was your father's occupation?

D: My father was a farmer.

M: So you were born on the farm?

D: We were all born on the farm. I have one brother and one sister.

M: When did you come to Marshall?

D: 1952

M: Why did you come to Marshall:

D: (inaudible) I had married my wife and we couldn't find any work and I finally got work in Laport Indiana on an assembly line making Allis Chambers. I worked there for four years then I had the opportunity to work for my father-in-law. He was a mechanic and car dealer.

M: And what kind of car was it?

D: It was Kaiser Frazier which was the front runner in technology and they were good cars. There were several around town.

M: Where did you live when you came to Marshall?

D: We couldn't find a place in town so we moved to the country. We found a place about three miles out then we found a place in town and moved in to town.

M: I want to go back and talk about your growing up in the country. You said you had a brother and a sister. Where there other kids around that you played with?

D: Oh, land yes, we had all kinds of people around. We always had big get togethers.

M: What kind of things did you like to do?

D: (inaudible)

M: So you had chores on the farm?

D: We had cows, chickens and pigs. We had to make sure they were fed and watered. And I had to keep the water bucket filled.

M: Did your family attend church or what type of things did you do?

D: My dad would never miss church. I remember going to church in the wagon, it was about two miles to church from our house. I don't remember ever missing church.

M: Were there other kids there?

D: Oh yes, there was always something to do.

M: And where did you go to school?

D: I went to a country school which was close to a church. And in third grade I changed to a school called Frog Barn (?). (inaudible)

M: Then where did you go to high school?

D: I went to high school in Martinsville.

M: Okay, and what types of things did you participate in in high school?

D: My folks weren't very big on football but I would stay and watch but I couldn't play.

M: Because you were busy on the farm.

M: Tell me about getting together with your wife. How did that happen?

D: Well it so happened that it was during World War II and I was seventeen years old and I begged my mother to sign me up and I served two years in the Navy and when I came home I had a friend who was dating a girl and they had a girl they wanted me to meet. And it happened to be my wife.

M: Where were you stationed in the Navy?

D: I was in the Pacific (inaudible)

M: And what was your job?

D: We were on the supply ship and I was (inaudible)

M: Did you ever go into battle?

D: No, they made sure that the supply ship was never (inaudible)

M: Yeah I'm sure. And then you said you lived in Indiana and then you moved to Marshall. And you were an auto dealer.

D: Yeah, my father-in-law and me. (inaudible) and he was one of the best auto mechanics in the area.

M: And did you stay with that job?

D: Well I did until something better came along. I got the opportunity to (inaudible) it was TRW which was then known as Formalite who had just moved to Marshall. And I thought I wanted to (inaudible).

M: Then did you stick with that?

D: Well I did until I went to work for the postal service. I was a carrier in town then I got the opportunity to work inside. I worked there until I retired.

M: And when did you retire?

D: I retired in 1989 after being postmaster.

M: And did you and your wife have children?

D: We had three boys and a girl.

M: And do they live around here now?

D: Well my three boys live around here but my daughter married and she lives in north of Springfield about twelve miles.

M: Let's talk about some of things that you remember, was there a particular event or person that you can think about now?

D: Well not really, I always hung around with older people in the neighborhood and I (inaudible)

M: Who would you say made a big influence in your life?

D: Well I suspect my mother did because when I was seven my dad got sick and passed away. She raised her family by herself and done a good job.

M: Think about your whole life, think about what historical event stands out?

D: well, the war, nothing else really stands out, I can remember some of the snow storms we had here in Marshall. I had to get to work because I was the postman.

M: When you think of all the changes you've seen in your life, what inventions or conveniences do you like the most?

D: Well, when we started out I was helping dad on the farm, and my granddad, and everything was done with horses. And we had some big teams of horses. I remember the first time they told me I could drive a team. I was in land that had stumps (inaudible)

M: What other inventions do you think about that changed your life?

D: Well, we used to feed hogs by hand, and the invention of the combine and corn tillers. Even then I still worked at the post office in addition to farming.

M: If you were to talk to people from another country, what would you tell them was the reason you lived here?

D: Marshall is a nice town and it so happened that we (inaudible). Marshall is a really clean and best-kept towns.

M: Well, Drexel, I appreciate you talking to me this afternoon.