

A JOURNEY WITH MY PAPA LARRY HARRIS

Interview Date: Mar 31, 2026

Writer: Ryder Utterback

8th grade

Heritage Hills Middle School

Today, I will be sitting down with my papa, Larry Harris, to learn about what his life was like growing up. It's easy to see him now as my papa, but he's lived through years of experiences, challenges, and memories that shaped who he is today. In this interview, I want to go back in time and hear his story—what life was like when he was young, the lessons he learned, and the moments that mattered most. This is a chance to not only understand his past, but also to connect our generation, improve his memory, and bring back good memories!

Q: First, I asked about what he thought of school and how he pursued it.

A: And actually, he said he never really thought about it too much. He said, "When I went to school, it was just mandatory, and he knew he wouldn't graduate because he was going to have to work on the farm."

And he was right; he dropped out in high school!

Q: After I asked questions about his childhood a little bit, I asked him about what he wanted to do when he grew up.

A: And he responded by saying: "Well, I didn't really get a chance to pick when I was old enough, about 15, my parents put me on the saw mill, and then when I got a little bit older before I went to the military I worked on wood crafting and a bunch of factories that I don't even remember."

After we stopped laughing, after a while, I started to ask questions about what had happened when he was a little older.

Q: First, I asked if he followed politics that much or not, and he said:

A: "My dad was a Democrat, which I followed when I got older, but now I don't care about politics at all today. It is way too confusing to me now."

Q: Then I proceeded to ask what prices were like back then, and he stated that

A: "A used car was only about 25 cents back then, and gas was a quarter a gallon. We went up to Kansas to go to my mom's farm, and it was about 10 cents a gallon up there. But now its d*amn nearly 4\$ a gallon."

Q: Then I asked another question about how many family members were in the household at that time, and he said-

A: "There were about 8 people in the house, and the girls slept upstairs, and the boys slept downstairs."

Q: And lastly, I asked him about what he thought the future was going to be like, and he said:

A: "Well, I really thought it was going to be just the same, but it changed so drastically."

Now this is when I started to talk about the military.

Q: First, before I jumped all the way in, I asked him how he got into the military, and he said

A: "I wasn't actually supposed to go to the military; my brother Mike was supposed to, but he just got married and had kids, and I didn't want him to leave his wife and kids, so I stepped up and took the job instead."

Q: Then I asked him when he was first deployed what he was first thinking, and he said:

A: "Oh boy, I was excited, I was ready for war, but now I do regret going a little bit now."

Q: Then I asked if he had any friends in the war, and he said,

A: "I really only had one friend, and his name was Sweden. He was 101st airborne with me. I really hope he is doing well right now. I'd love to see him."

Q: Then I asked what rank he was when he left the military, and he said:

A: "Well, when I left, I reached Sargent!"

And then after that, he told me a little funny side story about his papers. When he left to go back home, the people completely lost his papers, so he was still considered a Sergeant, just not on paper!

Q: And finally, I know this isn't about the military, but I had to put it in here. I asked him if he ever missed being a kid and hanging out with buddies, and he said:

A: "Well, H#ll yeah, I do. I missed being active and strong and also having a good memory."

After I was done with this interview, I felt like I sparked something in my papas' hearts. He started to talk about him and his buddies having fun after he got back from war. And what he loved doing when his parent weren't around, which I won't be saying! But it made me have a sense of pride. I unlocked so many of his memories in a matter of 15 minutes. And right before I left his house, he thanked me and gave me a hug, which I was surprised he did because he never gives out hugs willingly; he usually just shakes your hand. Well, that's the end of this journey. I hope this shows our generation that learning about older times can make us wiser and make us have more empathy towards older people.

Growing Up With Robert Dilger, Robert Dilger Looks Back at Early Life, Robert Dilger and His Childhood

Interview Date: April 5, 2026

Writer: Brenna Nicole Dilger

8th grade

Heritage Hills Middle School

I interviewed my grandpa, Robert Dilger, about his life back in his childhood growing up in Huntingburg, Indiana. He is 74 years old, and I know him through my dad's side of the family. My Interview focuses on his life on the farm, with his siblings, and what life was like in school. His story is worth reading because he expresses what life was like growing up with little money, respectively, what family does to stick together, and what his life was like back then during our age.

Q: Alright! Let's start—when and where were you born?

A: I was born on July 2nd, 1953. In Huntingburg, Indiana. Next to Stork Memorial Hospital.

Q: What were your parents' names?

A: My dad's name was Beno Dilger, and my mom was Marie. Her middle name was something like Wilhelmina, and her maiden name was Balbach. When she was a little girl, her family name was Balbach. And of course, when she married my dad, you know,

it became Dilger.

Q: That's really cool. Did your family have any traditions?

A: I mean, yes, whether you realize it or not, every family has traditions. Until you get older, and you look back and say, "Well, we used to do this".

Q: I totally agree with that. But could you say more about a tradition?

A: Oh, so, you know, one of the things we did was that we did not have much money. We would grow a bunch of food in our own garden. In respect, we would still go to the grocery store, but we raised a ton of our own vegetables. My mom would can her tomatoes and green beans. Over like 100 to 150 cans. We also lived on a farm. In the winter, a bunch of our family members would get together and kill several pigs. We would make sausage, bacon, and ham, including pork shoulder and pork loin. We rarely ever bought meat from the grocery store because of how expensive it was.

Q: That was very interesting. On to the next question, do you remember any stories about your brothers and sisters?

A: Let's just say that, well, I'm the oldest. I

have three siblings, and all of our birthdays are on the same day in the same year. My brothers are Cam and Ralph, and my sister is Linda.

Q: About that, do you remember any funny stories about your siblings?

A: Yes, my youngest brother, Ralph, liked to skip school. He would do that a couple of times.

Q: That is pretty funny. So, did you listen to any music back then?

A: Well, we did not have any television back then, till I was in the seventh grade. There was a show called The Grand Ole Opry.

Q: Could you say more about that? What artists would you listen to?

A: I would listen to Porter Wagner, Johnny Cash, Hank Williams, and as I grew older, I listened to Glenn Campbell. I liked his music the best.

Q: That's really cool. So, can you say what school was like for you back then?

A: Well, for me, school was pretty easy; I always had good grades. I actually liked doing my school work; I loved math, spelling, and especially history. I loved hearing about things from the past, like you know, the Revolutionary War. I always tried picturing

myself in those moments.

Q: I sort of feel that way too! Next question, what was the first vehicle you drove?

A: I think it was a Chevy Bel Air 1957. It was my dad's; my mom did not drive, but I learned how to by the age of nine. I was always driving our tractor on the farm.

Q: That's interesting. What was a major event that changed life for your family?

A: For my family, it would probably be after I graduated from high school. My mom always encouraged me to go to college, and well, I went off to Purdue University.

Q: Yeah. Alright, last question. Is there anything you wish people would understand about your time generation compared to our time today?

A: Oh yeah. People nowadays, I feel like, don't understand how bad it is to be so wasteful. When our lives get harder, you'll need to learn to conserve. I think if you don't, life will get harder for you. It's important to learn the value of things. How to get by with less and save your money.

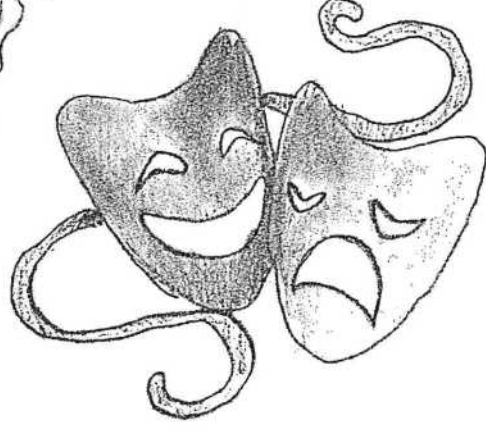
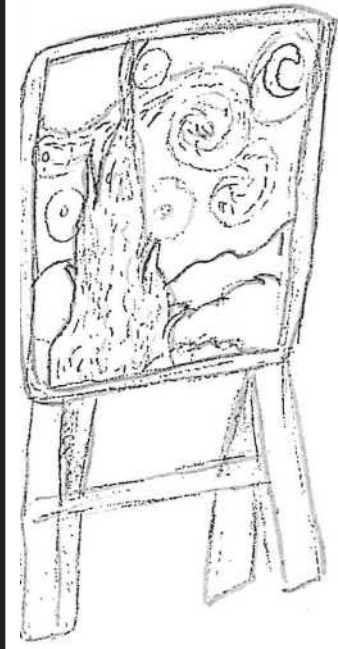
B.D.: That is a really good point. Alright, that's it! Thank you for this interview!

R.D.: No problem.

NAME: Eva Jull

GRADE: 6

SCHOOL: Lina (GA) Trail



NAME: Abbey Cole Eureka

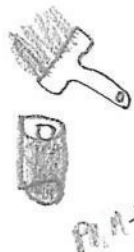
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