The Hartman Sawmill

The Hartman Sawmill was set up in the mid-1950s by Roy Hartman. Roy would have been in his mid-forties at the time the sawmill was set up and operating. His son Allan ("Stub") worked with his father at the sawmill, which was located in Putnamville behind Boesen's Store and a bit to the northwest of the store on the north side of U.S. 40. About five years after starting his business, Roy moved it to the western edge of Putnamville from its previous location to the south side of U.S. 40 where the closed sawmill is still presently located. Information about the Hartman Sawmill was provided by Darrell Minor who has been logging since the late 1970s, almost all of it at the Hartman Sawmill.

When the mill was first set up, Roy had it operating with diesel power. Darrell related that Roy switched to an electric sawmill in the late 1960s. He remembers that the sawmill made and delivered huge wooden skids to the company that made the large blue silos that were a common sight in the 1960s and 1970s, made by a company that was located in northern Illinois. In addition, the Pike Lumber Company was one of the Hartman Sawmill's major customers for years. Pike's website claims it is the largest sawmill in Indiana, and it has three mills in the state. Using the Monon Railroad, the Hartman Sawmill moved its lumber from Putnamville to the Pike Company's mill at Akron.

In the late 1970s Darrell worked for a few years at the Hartman Sawmill, and he remembers helping Roy Hartman saw railroad ties in the 1970s. After a decade working for the Pike Lumber Company mills, he returned to Hartman. Despite the mill eventually closing, he has been logging ever since. Darrell's wife Cathy is the daughter of Stub and Sara Hartman, making Darrell the grandson-in-law of Roy.

In the 1980s the mill made two important quality improvements: It upgraded and purchased a Meadows circular sawmill, providing the mill with faster production capability. It also acquired some pallet saws, giving Hartman the ability to produce different length pallets. Later, in 1997, a Helle circular sawmill was acquired by Hartman's. All of the Hartman sawmills, including the current one, have had circular sawmills through the years.

The sawmill continued to thrive, but lost its founder in 1995.The following was published on July 12 of that year, a day after Roy Hartman's death.

Roy S. Hartman Obituary

Roy S. Hartman, 82, Plainfield, formerly of Putnamville, died Tuesday at Plainfield Health Care Center.

Born April 5, 1913 at Bridgeton in Parke County, he was the son of Tone and May (Miller) Hartman. On February 17, 1934, he married the former Mary Ann Allbright, and she preceded him in death April 23, 1986. A 1931 graduate of Bridgeton High School, he was the founder and retired owner–operator of the Hartman Sawmill at Putnamville.

Mr. Hartman was a charter member of the Route 40 Club, and a member of the Bainbridge Horse Club and the IOOF at Rosedale.

Survivors include three daughters, Dodie Collins and husband Jerry, Route 2, Greencastle, Ruth Jackman and husband John, Route 1, Fillmore, and Marjorie Ann Barr Huffman, Texas; three sons, Allan ("Stub") Hartman and wife Sara, Route 2, Greencastle, Rufus Hartman and wife Marsha, Route 4, Greencastle, and Roy Lee Hartman, St. Petersburg, Fla.; two sisters, Mildred Hartman, Fort Wayne, and Carol Meyers, Clinton; 17 grandchildren and 13 greatgrandchildren. In addition to his wife and parents, he was preceded in death by three brothers and two sisters.

Services will be conducted at 2 p.m. Saturday from the Whitaker Funeral Home, Cloverdale, where friends may call after noon Saturday. Rev. Phillip Badger will officiate. Burial will be in the Putnamville Cemetery. *Courtesy of the Putnam County Public Library*

Although Stub Hartman had taken over the business after his father died, he only survived Roy by seven years. After Stub's death in 2002, Darrell Minor was the sole Hartman family member operating the sawmill and full-time operations continued until 2008. Because of the serious recession, Darrell shut the mill down and it is still closed. He now works full time at logging, buying and felling trees, and selling the lumber.

Sign at the entrance to the closed Hartman Sawmill.

Over the years, the expertise Darrell acquired working for Hartman was acknowledged in the field. In 1995, he won a National Paul Bunyan Contest, a competition that involves four different skills: speed of felling a tree; speed of climbing a tree; rail splitting; and in a river, being able to stand upright and roll a log longer than the opponent next to you (who falls into the water). Darrell won the speed of tree felling portion of the state contest and again, at the national competition in Nelsonville, Ohio, went on to win in that area.

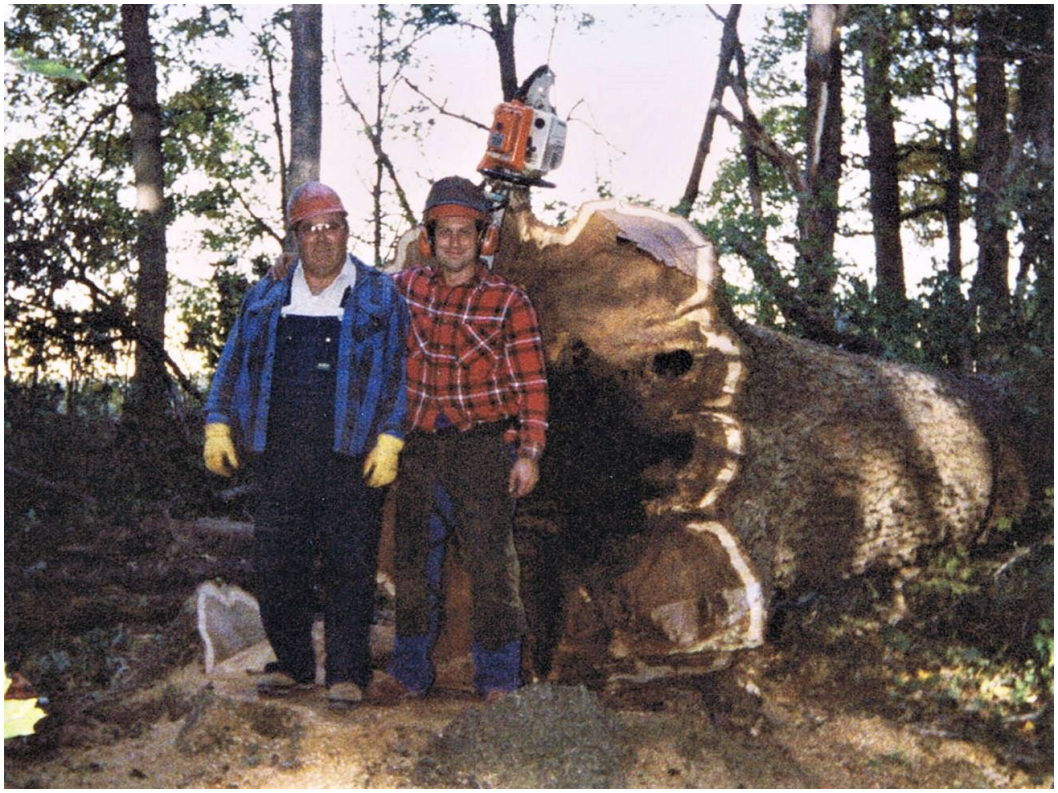
Darrell was honored with the 2018 Indiana Logger of the Year Award. The prestigious award, presented annually by the Indiana Hardwood Lumberman's Association, is based on quality of logging skills and how the entrant takes care of the woods while logging. Darrell's honors at the state and national level attest to both his talents and the attention to high standards that the Hartman Sawmill adhered to over the decades.

Roy Hartman, second from the right, with Stub as a young boy, right, and two others.

Stacking logs, the adult Stub is at left, Steve Terry at right.

With the first Hartman Sawmill in the background, Hartman sisters Cathy (fourth from the right) and Lisa (second from the right) sit with their cousins.

Darrell Minor, left, and Stub in June 1998, in front of Clyde Stringer's new barn. Darrell had felled timber growing on Clyde's farm, then processed the lumber for the barn.



Stub, at left, and Darrell.