

Interveiw with Rod Martin.

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R- Well it was when Maitland and I and Toby (Marshall) were up the Kispiox river, we were actually going up to Swede Inn. And we were grouse hunting and of course the competition that goes along ~~with~~ between these people, myself, Toby, and Maitland. It was to see who was the best shot you see. I was sitting in the middle cuase they would always bully me into sitting in the middle, But anyway. Here is this grouse sitting in the middle of the road. So Toby gets out, you see, and he had a sawed off twelve guage shotgun. And he blasted a hole in the sky, in the road, and the grouse he didn't do a thing. So Maitland got out and he had a twelve guage pump gun. He took a shot, and then another one. So I got out and I had a twenty guage and I let fly with this thing and that grouse was still standing there. Pretty soon the grouse flew up and there was this lone poplar tree way over by the river. One single poplar tree in the whole area. And he flew higher and higher and higher and he hit that poplar tree right in the middle and then fell down to the ground. I think the Idea was that the grouse felt sorry for us. We couldn't shoot him so he committed suicide for us. And thats exactaly what happened to this poor grouse.

J- Thats almost beleiveable.

R- Toby Marshall, Bill Maitland and I ussually mooched around together.

J- Did you go to school with those guys, ....or Maitland wouldn't have been around then.

R- No not Maitland, .....ToBy. I went to school with Toby.

J- Where?

R- In Hazelton as a matter of fact, we took all our schooling in Hazelton.

J- The old school down by Rosie Morrison's.

R- Yes, that was the first, that was grade one, thats where I took my grade one. And in those days as you know they used to have many grades in one school, do you remember how many they had. They had five or six in one school. Then I recall moving over to the secondary school.

J- The new one?

R- No the school I went to was right across from where Tribal Council is now. It was right on the street of course. And as I recall the rest of the grades were in there, from grade six to twelve. Becuase there was only a few people in the upper grades.

J- Who else did you go to school with?

R- Oh there was Billy Panter, and the Senden boys, Natchel and Rollie, the Falkner

the falkner boys, Freddy and Buck and Bob Blackstock, of course those are the ones that are around here. The Halverson boys, Alec Halverson and Harry halverson.

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J- Where did they live?

R- Well there father, there parents owned the place out there just past Bill ludwigs, down on the flats. He had cattle and potatoes, you could go and pick potatoes every fall, sold cord wood in the winter. Who else did we go to school with? Micheal Myros and Charlie Myros and Lida and Barbra and Carol \_\_\_\_\_  
.....but they were younger than dick and I.

J- What years?

R- I started school when I was six years old, so that would have been in 1936. so it would have been 1947 when I finished up

J- Did you go right through to grade twelve?

R- Oh yes, 13, 14, and 15 too. Dick, my brother was with me, he was only 18 months older than me so we went through school to gether. Becuase we were so close together in our ages.

J- What kind of teachers did you have?

R- What kind! Well they were human beings. I don't know what kind you mean.

J- Well where were they from were they city boys?

R- Well Miss Flick was my first teacher, I don't know where she came from. I know that in the later times in the uper grades in high school. people like Mr. Huwer and people like that. And Mrs. Labelle I remember. But the one I remember the most was Mitchell Newman. That was a brother of Ward and Tom Marshall. And we of course didn't call him Mitchell or Mickey as he was more commonly known as. Of course it was Mr. Newman. I guess I remember him the most because he was one of the better teachers. that I met.

J- Did you ~~guys~~ have respect for your teachers?

R- Very much so.

J- Even the bad ones?

R- I don't know what you mean the bad ones. I don't know what would classify as a bad teacher. I believe that the thing was that the discipline the schools was some what different than it is today and the respect that we showed these people was not only in the school room itself. But that also applied out of school as well. It was not something that you turned on and off though out the day. It was expected by them. But really it was some of the teaching that we receive from our parents that brought that about.

J- You were told to.

R- We were taught. We were taught by our parents. But that same respect that was afforded by the teacher was exactly the same as any senior person that you came in contact with. For examples. The butcher in town, his name was Lou Powell. But I don't think I ever called him Lou Powell in all my life, it was always Mr. Powell. Because it just happened that when I was a youngster I went down to the butcher shop my mother always indicated that we had to address him as Mr. Powell. She never heard us calling him butch as everybdy else did. I'm afraid if we did we would have been, let us say chastized.

✓-What about discipline ?

X- --I was told that when I went to school if I ever got the strap at school, i would get it again when I got home. And the one time I did get the strap at school, I didn't get it when i got home but i might as well have.

R- It was an accepted thing.

J- What form of punishment?

R- a strap a leather strap on the palm of the hand. I never did get the strap.

X- ---This was Mr. Newman form of punishment. Was to pull your hair.

R- Oh that wasn't punishment that was a reminder that you were goofing around. The thing there was that it. We're talking about two different things discipline and punishment. The punishment that they got was the strap and this was administered right in front of the schoolroom where everyone could see. At times Charlie Myros, he would get giggling and he couldn't stop giggling and he'd be still giggling when a little frail old lady teacher was trying to flog him on his hands and the harder she would flog him the more it would tickle and the more he would laugh. Oh there were other things to when discipline and respect goes out the window. The greatest thing in the world was when they would come down hard on your hand you pulled it away and they would come down hard on their lap. So that wasn't very good because that would double up your punishment then.

J- Sometimes it would almost be worth the laugh.

R- Well that was showing disrespect

J- What would constitute getting a strap, what would you have to do to get one ?

Well as I recall there was one time there was some people; Something had gone missing from the school and I recall the teacher threatening to strap everyone in the school until she found the thing. Well it didn't come off, because who ever it was shaking so hard and we were quivering so bad that it worked and what ever it was that was stolen was returned. The other time that I saw the strap, David Carey and Charlie Myros, were acting up while Miss Flick was tutoring at their desk and they happen to be sitting together. Now Charlie was a very very big young boy. They just goofed around and they just weren't listening to her or anything. And I think she might have had a bit of a fiery temper because that was the first time that I ever saw a teacher throw a book, literally throw a book at a student, she did, she through it right at them. And so they were then to be punished. That was another reason was for horseplay and fooling around. And she though the book at them and that wasn't enough and then she strapped them both. That was when Charlie couldn't quit giggling. I don't recall any thing of a violent nature that caused discipline to be brought down, I don't recall anything like that.

J- Mostly the break down of respect.

R- I would imagine that would be enough, the break down of respect and lack of, and not conforming to the disciplines that were laid down

J- The teachers, were they as human inside the school as they were outside, would you find yourself making a joke of you teachers.

R- Not of your teacher. However I imagine that there were times when you would joke with them. We did have that

N- ----At the same time nobody had more fun with the students than Micky Newman used to. and the kids all loved him but nobody ever lost respect for him and they never ever went over the boundry that was laid down.

J- These boundries how were they laid down. Were you told these are the things you have to do: you cannot make fun of the teacher, you can not talk in class. Or was it more along the lines of as you got to know your teacher you got to know where the boundries are.

R- Well in the main of course, I have to take you back to the teaching of or parents. Which of course was that if we got disciplined at school, we got another punishment at home. So that those boundries, for a large part were set down by your parents in how you would conduct yourself at school and if there was anything that went arey. Then you were about to answer to your parents as well as your teacher. So the boundries were set in the early years, before you started school and as we were being told that due respect were being afforded the teacher Within this classroom itself I do know that there were certain ground rules that were verbally put down. But in all my years in school I don't ever remember reading a set of rules or

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guidelines pointed on the wall or posted or anything like that. They think it was something that was imparted by the teacher at the beginning in some fashion. But not in some autocratic manner that you made you afraid of them. They were just something that happened and the way the teacher came on.

N---But in the by the same token your teachers were always your good friends..Your teachers were not somebody that ignored you when school was out. They always new you and treated you with respect.

J-Did the education go beyond the school room. Was the able to see you on the street and say Rodie I have a book you should read, you would probably enjoy it.

R-It could have . As you know they didn't have complete classes back then. And so therefore the teachers would take on night classes outside of the classroom of youngsters that were trying to ....Well I can recall one time that we used to go at night. We didn't have a french class in the school at that time it just was not there. And we didn't have a french teacher, she was teaching everything. So she took it upon herself to teach us french at her place. Four or five of us used to go to her place and we took our french. That was out side the school entirely there was nothing in the school. I recall that one time that one year, but that might not have been so other years.

J-What kind of subjects. Basically just math reading, writing?

R-Oh yes, english, science

N---Science cause I hated it.

R-Geography, biology, history, algebra, geometry. And the earliest part was latin.

You wouldn't find any woodworking, home economics or any of that kind?

N---No in grade eight we had what you called citizenship. It was a combination of learning about parliment and other things.

R-There were no I.A. classes.

N---In the school I went to there wasn't room for anything. we took our french class at the back of the room. We had this stove in the middle of the room. In the winter time you would sit beside it and get so hot you could n't move and if you moved three feet away you froze to death

R-The chemistry, there was a little room at the back that was the chemistry room. It was at the back end, it was very very small I don't think it was any more than ten feet wide and twenty feet long. And there we had various things and we did experiments, we did a fair amount of chemistry. And that was always a very interesting part. As I say we didn't have any I.A. but they did teach the rudiments of it. One teacher Chester Larsen taught us how to knit and we weren't young people at the time. We were just interested in it and he taught us how to knit. He knitted the loviest pairs of his own sweaters. So I recall sitting there at one point knitting.

J-What about tests and stuff like that were you tested?

R-Yes.

N---test were frightful

R-Government exams. and over the school term we had a series of tests.

N---Do they have such things as school inspector anymore? Cause we used to have days when the inspectors would come around. What every couple of months or so. And everybody shook in their boots. When we went to school the teachers were as afraid of them as we were the days the inspector was coming. Everybody dressed up and we didn't say boo. When we went to school there was one inspector for the entire district. The one inspector would have a lot of schools todo.

R-That's not unusual even in the business world today, but it would be your boss that would be doing that task and at other times it would be the auditors who carried out that function. In our business they would have once a years performance and development reports. Or we would prefer to call them developments reports. It included all of the functions of managment,

administraion and operation and managment.

When did you start with B.C.Hydro?

In 1955, well actually before 1955. I frist got into electricity after I been in a small logging company that we had set up. After that I worked at the hospital where I operated the desil generator and also the electric distribution system in Hazelton, that would include south HAZELTON, Old Town, Kispiox and all the others. From generators that were first located at the Wrinch Memorial Hospital up until 1955 and in that year the new station was built across from tyhe Hospital and that as how we produced the power here abd distributed it to the local area. That was up to 1955 when at that time I was appointed supervisor to the B.C. Power commission And then following that I was appointed sub district manager in Hazelton untill 1964. At which time I was then transfered as distrtict Manager in Port Hardy. I had a gloriuos three and a half years in northern Vancouver Island

I had the oportnity at least of starting with that station from the time it was just a bush plant to the time it was built to an operating station in October of 1955, when we started that station. And then the other station at the hospital was closed down at that time. The engines were taken out and sent to Bulla Colla. They were what was called, they were Catcapillar deseils, they were V-8, D 17000 V-8 That was in the Hospital generating staion and we had one Buda engine there too. So that was basically the history of when the B.C. Power Commission came in to the area in 1949.

What about before that what was used in the area for electricity?

In Hazelton the Gitamax Water and Power company had a desiel generator, and it was owned by R.S. Sargent LTD had a desiel generating station down across from where the village works yard is now. They had a series of engines in there I think the earliest ones were farbanks. I think they were very small ones. And I do know that they had International desiel electric set.

Who did he supply power to?

He supplied power to all of Hazelton, that was Hazelton proper and it was D.C, properly known as direct current system. He also supplied power to, a fairly good supply of power to the goveremnt telegraph office, which was in Hazelton at that time.

Along the telegraph line or just directly to the office?

Just directly to the office. THE line itself was not powered up. It was a single line telephone ground. The office itself used a fair amount of power because there was a fairly heavey circut going from tyhe station up to that office. At that time as you know Hazelton was a central place for the telegraph system and there was a number of operators in there and people. And the telegraph system gave service along the telegraph line from Ashcroft to up to the Yukon telegraph line through to Fairbanks Alaska to Prince Rupert. At that time it would ahve been communications center I guess in the earliest times the only communications center up in this area. and I think the next most important ceneter would ahve been Ashcroft, who was connected up to the rest of Canada. But that was the electric generation of that day. And I understand that, and I haven't done any resaerch on it, that there were other, that there were was electric generation in hazelton for quite a number of years. Know there might have been people befoe that, But I recall the first one in 1939, or 1936, I think it was 1939 the operator of that one was Jasper Stanyear, I don't think you would know who the stanyear were. But Jasper ran the generator for Gitamax power and water.

He had quite a monopoly at that time then didn't he?

Well I don't think you would call it a monopoly becuase he was the only availbe think. I don't think you would call it a monopoly when it was the only availbe thing and it was an absolutely essential service.

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And as I recall they would not operate the station on a full twenty four hour shift. They would shut it down at twelve mid-night. But it was an effective reasonable way of providing power to the people of Hazelton.

It carried out its responsibility very well.

I- What was life like at that time

R- Well of course there was no T.V. at that time. And the earliest shows I seen were called latern size. It was a little projector with a cola light behind it and it project a picture. It was very dim on the screen but you put a little slide in it. And then my earliest recollection of entertainment out side the home was the movie that came into town about once a week or about once a month. Mr Steel and Mrs Steel would come down and set his projector up in the hall down where Bertema 's store is now, that was the theatre. So we as youngsters used to go down there. When we saved up enough money.

I- How much was it?

R- I don't recall how much it was. It was twenty five cents I think. But anyway we got around that. Because Mrs. Steel used to love lilacs. So we would go and raid peoples lilac bushes. You see there was lots of lilac bushes in Hazelton at that time. We used to raid them and we would bring her these great bouquets of lilac bushes. And she would let us in for free. So we knew how to get in if we didn't have any money. The shows of course; he didn't have two projectors he only had one. So you always had to wait while he rewound the machine to put on another reel. He rewound it and we had to wait, there was a little break there. So that was entertainment on that side. Other things that brought entertainment to the youngsters were evening sports. Badminton was one thing that was very big in Hazelton. I recall playing a lot of badminton even in my young adult years. A lot of things were carried on outside, you made your own entertainment. In the later years of course as youngsters there had the dances in town every so often. They had some main ones like the Armistist dance and the Flower show dance, because every year these great, what they called the horticultural hall, a big flower show that was part of the entertainment.

N- -----It was a known fact that on certain holidays the dances on those days were held in New Hazelton and on other days they were held in Hazelton and you would never tread on the other persons toes. For instance the May twenty fourth dance was held in New town and the Flower show dance was held in old Town

R- Outdoor sports in the wintertime of course meant hockey and skiing. Cross country partly, but there were no down hill runs like you know them today. There were no tows or anything so that you packed your skis on your back up the hill then you skied down.

N- ----There was the hill behind Sendens and the Mowhawk run and then there was the run in Seeley Gulch. I can remember night skiing on Parents hill. One thing that was very big in this country was jumping, ski jumping. They had a big tessel up behind the council hall, up here behind the ball park. They had a big trees up there and they would just whoop off there and boy I'm telling you those boys could jump. Then they had another jump over here by Seeley and everybody would go to that. That was fantastic these people would just.

R- Who would be doing it?

R- Well they had a little ad-hoc ski club. And they volunteered to build these tresssles on top of these steep hills.

N- ---Anybody that wasn't afraid to go over it. They had a japanese family from Smithers that were very good.

R- Joe Eda and his brother Pat, Pat Eda. I didn't know Pat but I knew Joe. they were very good skiers. Really good. One of these people that really worked hard and really spearheaded this thing was Alan Benson. Allan Benson he was responsible for a lot of the skiing that went on in this country



And he included everybody.

N----Then we used to come back to Hazelton after those Sunday ski thing and they would hold, in the old garage that Allen Benson had a big hall type room up there they used to hold parties and dances up there we danced to the gramophone then.

R- Oh we must say that though that during those years we did have an orchestra and a very good one too. Up in Kispiox it was Roy Wilson and his Wild Wood orchestra. We all danced to the music of Roy Wilson for years and years and years.

N----When we couldn't get them we would get Skeena Crossing they were equally as good.

The Wesley boys. If you got Roy Wilson and one of the Wesley boys together, Douglas Wesley, they both played saxophone. You get the two saxophones working together and the rest of the musical instruments. You had music really good music. I just love to hear Roy with the two of them. The Wildwood orchestra. They would play all night till five or six o'clock in the morning. Roy would be just pooped right out.

N----They always served a lunch at midnight.

R- When they were held in Hazelton, like the Armistice dance they used to have quite a frivolous event.

J- Where did they have them?

R- They used to have them at Bertemas, the theater, prior to that there used to be other halls away hall and Gitamax hall. Those were the three main places. That's in Hazelton, now in New Hazelton where did they have them?

N----Just in the hall down by where Francis Willan lived.

R- But reflecting back on your original question. As to what life was like? I rather imagine they had a similar life style. You know like when you're in school you do your home work at night, and that was very important. And then at various times we had these entertainments of formal dances and these ski things and all of that. In some respect it was different because now in mid week if somebody decides to whip off to the theater, or something, like that. That didn't happen in those days. So generally speaking you did what ever you find yourself to do. I don't think it was that much different. We of course had in later years, cars were very mobile. I remember the first car that Dick and I drove around was my mother's little model A Ford it was an American roadster with a rumble seat in back and she wanted it painted canary yellow. So he bought this little roadster, it was a 1928 American built car. And put the top down and the kids in the back and we would cruise the belt line which was Hazelton to New Hazelton to South Hazelton and across the bridge that washed out to Hazelton. I think I found in later years that it was the most boring trip I ever took because we had done it so many times. When Dick and I drove we took the little roadster and bash all around the country. We took the tires off another car that had had which was a 1936 Ford sedan. It was what they called in those days balloon tires. It was bigger tires than the model A. I'll tell you one story about that roadster. We had been to the Kispiox rodeo. The kids all hooked rides by various means to get out there. And while everybody was coming back in well they had missed their rides coming back in so they came along to Dick and I and said can I have a ride. Sure jump in and the next thing you know somebody else came along and said can I have a ride. Well jump in. And then after a while it didn't become jump in it became jump on. They were on the running boards and on the hood and on the front bumper and on the back bumper. It was just a mass of humanity going down the road with four little wheels under it and Dick peering out between all these bodies trying to steer down the road.

It was literally a moving mass of humanity down the road, not very fast mind you. They talk about stuffing people into telephone booths and volkswagens, I'd like to see them challenge us with a 1928 ford roadster and see how many you could get on that and in that and around that. It was literally loaded, I don't know how many youngsters, kids.

N---Do I dare tell John the story about going to New Town one night. The boys weren't very healthy and of course all those that raod in the car paid for gas. One time a bunch of us went to New Town with Dick in this roadster. And he ran out of gas just where the turn off to Hazelton is now. We pulled the car home. Five miles on the end of a rope.

J- How many of you?

N---There was about six of us. And we got to the top of tyhe hill and he was afriad to drive down. Because that was the big hill then and with the machine not running we didn't know how the brakes were going to work or how we were going to stear, becuae up to that point we had to work pretty hard to get the thing moving. But once we got to the top of the hill we didn't know if any of us were brave enough to go down in it or not.

R- My father supplied all the gaspoline as fathers usally do and sometimes we were on rations, of course during the war we were on rations anyhow, gasoline was rationed and there was a limit to how much we could run around. As you can see there were alot of similarities to how thing were in those days to how they were today. Its just that they go faster and they go further and of course they have more money. There are more oppuetunities today than there were then but I don't think that we were deprived of anything. I think we probably lived a full a life as anyone could of.

J- maybe fuller?

R- Yes I think so, in some respects maybe fuller because one of the things we did do was enjoy the outdoors alot more, than they do today. We used to go on a lot of picnics and things like that and travelling around tyhe country

N- I can remember going on picnics, family picnics with Rod's parents and us and our kids. We would bring the whole family and get out to a fishing spot. Rod's mother used to bring such fantastic lunches and all the children in town new that Anna always had a pretty big lunch and a good lunch. We would always end up with six or seven young people that were out fishing and would just happen to join us at meal time.

R- Other things for entertainment. THE Kispiox valley crowd, once a year would get together and invite everybody out for a picnic. Just having this food and ice cream and every thing, imagine a youngster getting in to all of that. It was usally on the first of July and every summer you loked forward to this picnic. It was absolutely great. I don't think my father or mother ever paid anything. Absolutely free and there was literally tones of food, just tones of food, good food. I remember that just like you wouldn't beleive. I remember one time I was out there and they had the ball games. They set up these bases and we were all teying to show off to these beautiful girls. I remember hitting this ball, I really got this ball, I really hit this thing, I was trying to get this thing in the river. And I rna like the devil I wqas just a little guy, I was just a little guy at the time. And I was running and I was going to make it, a home run, and I could see that I wasn't going to make it but I was going to make it to third base and I made a bueatiful slide into third base. but, just short of third base was a big juicy cow pie and I slid right through that. Oh I was embarsased, I had to go down to the river and wash off my clothes



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I was to embarassed to go back to the picnic, of course I imagine that eventually we did. But John that was what our impressions ~~was like~~ that we have of what life was like over a range of years. Things were difficult during the hungry thirties as they called it for all concerned. But I don't ever remember being deprived of anything. We lived a solid living, good wholesome food, clothes to wear and all that. Without feeling any problems with being like that. So life was no horror story. It just took all the resources of our parents to insure that in our very young lives that we were provided for and that we were brought by that that we were brought a wholesome life.

J- Brought to value more those things that were of value?

R- Yes. WE enjoyed what we did and not in any way did we feel that things should be any different. I think at that time we had quite a sense of family and community, if you know what I'm trying to say here. Families were together a lot and the communities were together a lot.