

KEVIN MACKIE

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MMS - So I guess we are starting at the beginning here where you grew up, what was it like where you were growing up, what years with those have been? And then sort of work your way up into the point where you just got a set of sticks in your hand or whether you played guitar first or how that worked and then we will carry on from there.

KM - Well I grew up in Hay River. I was there for the first 15 years and I wanted to play guitar but I was never good enough. And I accidentally went to a practice one time and they needed a drummer and a guy that was trying out was way up in the arena second floor or something he had to go to the bathroom and this was way down on the first floor way at the end so I said, "I'll try, let me sit back there". Anyway I got a job. So I played in Hay River for a few years from about 1965 till '68 I came to Akaitcho Hall.

MMS- OK, I'll stop there and get you to sort of backtrack. What was Hay River like when, how big was it was the road was in there obviously the rail line, was the rail line in there? I guess I'm trying...

KM - No it wasn't there when I, it never came in till ah... oh man, when did that come in, the flood was in '63, somewhere in around '63 I guess that railroad come in there. It was small maybe 2500 may be 3000 people. Everybody knew everybody. And they had the old "Zoo" bar they had the Legion and I remember my brother and I sitting in front of the Zoo waiting for the old man to get out because he was a bartender there and anyway we started playing when we were really young. Underage playing in the Legion and of course in them years you were allowed to play if you were underage but you weren't allowed to drink. So they had to smuggle me drinks and I was 13 or whatever it was. I don't know Hay River was good, it was fairly quiet. There wasn't much to do. You played hockey, you played music and baseball of course in the summer but I don't really remember a whole lot of it because I was young. And then as I say in '68 then I came up here.

MMS - So I guess I'm gonna hold you back there a little bit. Your dad was running the bar, there was probably music, live music happening in the bar then

KM - You know, I don't even know. He was a bartender, I don't know who was running the place. It was just his night job.

MMS - Okay.

KM - Because he worked on the airport all day running snow removal equipment and everything.

MMS - So what musicians and what bands do you remember like, who were the players that were around, what kind of music was going on?

KM - When I first got in a band there was guys like *Robert Beaulieu*, a couple of *Monkman Brothers* I believe, were playing as well when I got going there was *Leo Lefebvre*, he played keyboards, *Glenn Chester* played lead, I think *Brian Kovach* had started on Bass before he came up here. We played in the old teen hall in Hay River which probably is long gone. And I don't even know how long, I think we played for a couple of years, I don't even know how often. It's a long time ago.

MMS - A long time ago yeah. So you were playing guitar and you referred to being at a practice and then sitting behind the kit...

KM - Well I was just... I had guitar at home and I was wishing you know. Every kid wants to play hockey and be in the NHL or they want to play guitar or both, I wanted to play guitar and I had one. I had one of those old "Saturn" I think they are called, I think they came from Sears. But I could never figure the damn thing out. So, but I always liked music so I guess I must've known there was a practice or something and I went to it to go listen and the guy who was trying out for drums because they were looking for a drummer had to take a little break there I don't even know why I just thought, well let me try this thing and anyway they said well you are little bit better than him so we will work on you.

MMS - So who was that with then? Do you remember?

KM - I believe that was with *Glenn Chester* and *Brian Kovach* and *Leo Lefebvre* I think. Boy it is pretty hard to nail that down for sure.

MMS - So you would've been around 13 at that time?

KM - Yeah, something like that 12 or 13 I guess.

MMS - Cool. And so once you found your place with drums how hard was it to find a set of drums?

KM - Actually, it wasn't hard at all. I borrowed 150 bucks off my dad, with a little bit of coaxing and promising, I'll pay you back and I bought a set of second hand "Sonar" drums which I play to this day.

MMS - Wow, good for you.

KM - They are in my basement. They are the ones that I used in the club whenever we played out. I got practice sets and that but none of them ever compared to that old kit.

MMS - Amazing.

KM - Yeah. So still...

MMS - Good for you. That you hung onto them.

KM - Still got them.

MMS - Hundred and fifty bucks in what year would that have been?

KM - '65.

MMS - '65. That was a chunk of money.

KM - Yeah, then it was a lot more than it is today for sure. And I believe I even did pay him back. I'm pretty darn sure I did.

MMS - And there probably wasn't any music stores or anything like that. It was just the other musicians and stuff like that or probably coming up to Yellowknife or going down south to buy instruments and stuff like that?

KM - Well, yeah, everybody I think (would) take their summer holiday and drive out over that mud highway. And if you wanted to get anything a set of sticks or a new guitar or something or of course you could order it from Sears like that was, I guess our supplier for how many years. Catalogs. I don't know, I do remember going to music stores when I was down south. I probably did more wishing than buying. I guess we still always do that. Even when I go to "Fiddles and Sticks" now I have to force myself to go out.

MMS - It's like all of us.

KM - Yeah.

MMS - Yeah, for sure.

KM - I have to put my picture on the door. Don't let this guy in here.

MMS - Don't take this guy's money.

KM - One thing I do recall from then Pat, was when we played the Teen Hall, the first dance that I played for we got two bucks each. And for some reason we got a raise, I don't know what it was but we got three bucks each at the end of the night so we certainly weren't doing it because we were making a lot of money. Well there was a lot more house parties then. We had a lot at our place actually and there was an old fiddle player, *Fred Balsillie*, worked with my dad at the airport. I think *Fred* was from (Fort) Res and another guy that used to show up all the time and play guitar was *Mickey Pittman*. I have no idea where he is and a guy named *Lud Shanley* was a drummer. And he just beat on empty beer boxes. And then there was another guy called *Singing Sam*. He was kind of a one-man little show there, he would sit around and sing songs that would make the drunks cry so he was always welcome. I can't really think of too many other or any other musicians that really come right to mind. These guys were the ones that would be in our house and playing.

MMS - Friends of your parents of an older generation that way.

KM - Yeah. And I remember in the old house we had a hardwood floor and *Mickey Pittman* had those cleats or something on his boots and the old man used to get pissed off at him, "get those goddamn boots off" or I don't know whether maybe he gave them a *Stompin Tom* board or

something but I know Mom wasn't too impressed because they started marking up that wood floor, eh.

MMS - There is quite a few of the other players they just talk about that where it's just like a house party, a whole group of people would come in, move the furniture out somewhere at the house party and then they come back the next day or at the end of it and clean it up and move all the furniture back. So those were the older guys all of those musicians that you just mentioned now. As far as you were playing the teen hall were there other young bands?

KM - I can't recall any others. But the town was small, I don't think there was a whole lot of competition there for bands at that time.

MMS - How about other travelling musicians? Any other touring musicians that would come up or touring acts or groups that you remember? That would come in and do some gigs there?

KM - No I don't. I don't know. Well of course I was young too so if they came up to play at bars I probably wouldn't even know, eh?

MMS - Yeah.

KM - And I don't know whether they actually brought bands in in those years. Mostly because of that highway, 'cause there was no pavement between Hay River and Edmonton it was just gravel all the way, eh? And when it rained like High Level was just, you would go through with a cat pulling you through.

MMS - Yeah.

KM - That was a real terrible place to go out and get stuck in.

MMS - The other players that I talk to, they talk about being in the communities and so the older kids would end up going to Akaitcho Hall and they would pick up an instrument and then they would come back for the summer and it was like, that was something. Is that a similar story to you?

KM - No. Once I got here (Yellowknife), I think I went back (to Hay River) the first summer for a couple of weeks and I came back here and I basically stayed here for the rest of the time. I didn't have any interest in going back to Hay River. So the band I was with here in Akaitcho (Hall) we would all take the summer off and then of course fire back up in September but then you know you would play the odd time with somebody else.

MMS - So your first memories, impressions when you came here were in Akaitcho Hall? I know they had a slew of instruments there that students or that the kids that stayed there could sort of pick up and play and stuff like that.

KM - Yeah the hostel paid for band equipment. But when we played anywhere and got paid we had to give the money to the hostel. So *Marc Whitford* he was thinking all the time, he said well this isn't very good, let's buy our own stuff. So he approached *Bert Boxer* who was the superintendent and he explained, he said, look, we'll save you guys all this money, if we need something we'll buy it, if we break it we'll replace it but we'll keep our own money. And *Boxer*

said sure that's fine, it was one headache less for him, eh? So we went to *Harold Glick* (YK Radio) and we made a deal there and we bought all our own equipment except for the drums of course which I already had from Hay River. So we bought a whole raft of great big friggin' speaker boxes you know, the biggest stuff you could find and turn everything to 10. One, two, three, four, see you at the end. That kind of stuff. And then we played I think every weekend for four years. I don't think we had a weekend off. Maybe one or two. Yeah, seems to me there was a couple of weekends we did get a break and we didn't know what the hell to do with ourselves so we went to a dance. Which was probably when "Stained Glass" or somebody else was playing. We were very busy and it was good for us in Akaitcho because we had a choice of study time or practice. Well what are you gonna pick? So we practised every night. Which as you know being a musician, I mean that's nothing but good. So we went from a completely unknown band to right up there with everybody within probably three months or something. It didn't take very long. But we had all that practice time under our belt. The guys who lived out in town well they would have to try to schedule at somebody's house and get everybody free at the same time. Well we're all stuck in there so let's go downstairs and practice.

MMS - And just play.

KM - Yeah.

MMS - So that would've been late '60s now we are talking right?

KM - '68 through '71, yeah we were in there together. With, well the band I was with in there was called the UM² and that was *Tom Hudson, Marc Whitford, Tony Buggins* and *Brian Kovatch* and myself and then *Tony* left the band a year or two into it and we replaced him with *Tom Dempsey*. And then in '71 you know of course I had these visions we're going to play together forever. Well, *Brian Kovatch* was smarter than the rest of us. He said no I am going home and he went to Hay River and started a business, very successful so we ended up in different bands and stuff and over the years we ended up back in the same band you know. Back and forth like that. But we always seemed to connect somewhere on the stage. It's nice because you got those lifelong friendships that we got from living in that hostel. That was the best thing that ever happened to me because if I hadn't have went to Akaitcho Hall, I would've went to jail. So as much as, you know residential schools, some of them were very, very bad, obviously, but that was a really good one and it produced a lot of good people out of there, you know. Some become premiers of the NWT and stuff like that. Lots of positives too that people don't seem to think about those. We were put there because we didn't have the facilities required in our particular community. And I'm lucky I got brought over here and they had the stuff I needed to train on you know, which was machines. I can't do math and social and science and all that stuff, that just gets me all worked up. I don't understand any of it. But they said, here go run a machine and I was okay then. I didn't have to figure out too many things. I had to know, I think in machine shop I had to know one formula and I still remember it to this day. So that's okay, one thing to remember.

MMS - That's great. I'm sorry I'm going to bounce back here a bit. When you were playing in Hay River, another question that I ask is what musics were you listening to and when you were

playing in a band and you were going to learn a song how did you get the music? Was it by the radio or was it a record, were you able to go to a record store? Borrow records and stuff like that?

KM - If I recall correctly, I think it was records. And we would sit around in somebody's house and try to figure it out. We're all new so it takes longer to figure it out but we were lucky we had *Brian Kovatch* because he is one of those gifted people that they understand how music works or whatever all the secrets that the drummers don't know, he knew them. He really, he was our anchor for learning stuff. Brian was very good at that.

MMS - Beautiful. So was there a record store in Hay River that you could go that would bring in sort of like a (*Harold*) *Glick's* was here.

KM - I don't ever recall one.

MMS - Okay.

KM - And I don't know where people would've got that stuff. I mean like Mom and Dad had records. I don't know where the hell they got them. Maybe out of Sears. And of course every year you do go down for your southern break. You go outside there and well I guess they would go to the stores. I know I remember as I say going to them stores but I did all the wishing, I don't think I did any buying.

MMS - You remember the musics? What kind of songs were you guys playing? In those early bands when you're playing in Hay River before you came to Akaitcho.

KM - Oh well it was that '50s and '60s rock there. Like "Runaway" you know. I remember learning "Wipe Out". Of course you had to play "Wipe Out", if you were a drummer you gotta learn "Wipe Out". I don't recall our song list. I do remember once I got to Yellowknife like things are still stuck in my head there I can't remember our set list. Which is unfortunate now that you bring it up. I wish I could remember half a dozen tunes. But one I do remember is "I Wonder What She's Doing Tonight". And I think it was by *Tommy Boyce* and *Bobby Hart*. Does that ring a bell?

MMS - It has a ring yeah. It rings a bell, yeah. Cool. So dance music, I mean it was dance music.

KM - Oh yeah, it was all up-tempo. A few buckle polishers you would play for guys to cuddle up to their ladies.

MMS - Oh yeah, that's a given. For sure. So you're in Akaitcho Hall and you guys ramped up like really quick. Like you say in sort of three months. So you were playing around town. Can you give me a bit of a snapshot of what kind of gigs you were playing in town? And also I guess at that time as well, the music was going through this huge sort of change and that was not lost up here. There were people moving up here from the south, musicians and hanging out locally as well so there was a whole local music scene if you could just sort of give me a bit of a snapshot of that. Like what kind of gigs you played and your interaction I guess with the other players in town.

KM - Well, when we were in Akaitcho we played school dances of course. At Mildred Hall, St. Pats and Sir John and then we would play sometimes in the dining room or the rec room in Akaitcho Hall. Then we started playing out more in the town so we would play at the Legion and

the Elks. And it was usually Friday, Saturday in the Legion and then the next weekend Friday, Saturday at the Elks.

MMS - Were you in the club room or were you in the halls?

KM - Both actually. Very seldom in the Elks club room. It was a different band I played the clubs room with. So, yeah, with the Akaitcho Hall band it was dance halls, upstairs. And the dances would start, I think they were from 9 to 1 if I recall, when we first started playing out there and if you weren't lined up at 8 o'clock, you weren't getting in the dance. This used to be a real, real music crazy town. Lots of fun. Some would be a little rough. You would get into some of the rougher dances would be the Con and Giant Rec Halls. I still remember beer bottles flying and stuff like that.

MMS - So you played out there too?

KM - Yeah.

MMS - So you are playing for pretty much the whole age demographic here in town from kids in school to full blown adults and the mining community and the mines were going full tilt.

KM - Yeah, we were lucky. And we played, of course we played the Range (Gold Range) a few times. With special permission from Akaitcho. They'd let us go out late you know to play the bars.

MMS - Were those six nighters still then or when it just became weekends?

KM - I am trying to think, if they were not. I think they were only six nights when it was like a special event going on. Like a winter carnival or those, one of those, what do you call those games that they have...

MMS - Arctic Winter Games

KM - Stuff like that. In fact *Tony (Buggins)* and I, I can't remember who was all in that band it might have been Akaitcho band but I can't swear to it but I know *Tony* was there. We played in the "Gold Range" in '68 against that CIBC wall because they never had a stage. So we just set up against that wall and I remember doing that. And I remember other bands coming up here and needing replacement players because somebody would quit and go and I got picked up to play in the Yellowknife Inn bar. I don't know what it was called then, maybe the "Trap Line". I played for an outfit from the east coast and they were going to Hay River and I went to my superintendent there *Bert Boxer* at Akaitcho Hall and I said, "well, these guys want me to go to Hay River" and I believe they spoke with each other and anyway they let me go to Hay River for a week. Give me a week off school and stuff. So that's pretty nice.

MMS - Wow! That's being pretty damn supportive. For sure. He sounds like a good man. *Mr. Boxer*.

KM - Well I guess you know you were trying to run 200 kids and a bunch of staff you gotta have a lot of rules and stuff but I wouldn't trade it, for any other place.

MMS - No, you are not alone there. Like I say a lot of the, a lot of the other players that I talk to just talk so I guess glowingly I guess is the time. You are in your teenage years, the best years of your life and you are right there and you are getting a chance to play music.

KM - Of course we had a jukebox downstairs. So that thing, when the rec room was open that jukebox never shut off. It was always going. There was some *Neil diamond* stuff. Of course *George Jones* but we all grew up on *George Jones*. I think people are still growing up on *George Jones* in the territories.

MMS - This is the truth.

KM - My daughter did.

MMS - And so the other bands that were around at that time, can you remember the other bands that would've been playing, the other players?

KM - There was "Stained Glass Illusion" with *Tony Gilcrest*, *Wayne Bertrand*, *Tees's brothers (John and Gary)*, but we hardly seen one another because they would be on one stage and we'd be on another one in another place but of course we all knew one another over the years just, I don't know from where. Just music people just seem to end up meeting each other somewhere you know playing, I don't know, maybe shared stages or I don't even really know.

MMS - Yeah. You guys would've been in school, they would've been at work and then like you say when the time to play came, you would be on different stages.

KM - Actually, I don't know. Like *Gary (Tees)* I don't think *Gary* is any older than I am. I think he was just in a different school. I think he was probably in St. Pats. Yeah I was in Sir John. But I'm pretty sure that him and *John (Tees)* were probably both still in school when I was playing in '68. Something like that. It was, it was a little weird because the town people didn't like the hostel people because there's all these guys after our women you know. That was a prevailing thought when I first got here. They didn't like all these young boys running around and we all, we were hardly ever allowed out of that place until we had our little rebellion or whatever you call it there where we all refused to go to school because we wanted the rules changed and it ended up they took it right through parliament real fast and changed the rules over there. Because we just said no, 25 minutes a day is not enough. That's all we were allowed uptown was from after school for 25 minutes and then you would be back there. For every minute you were late, you lost a day's leave. The rules, they were pretty rigid when I first got there and that was my first year there and all of a sudden everybody said, "you know what, screw this we are not going to the school now". And I believe there was either nine or twelve RCMP in town so they were called but it took all of them just to manage *Margaret Thrasher*. She was there, you know.

MMS - So *Margaret* was going to school with you at that time?

KM - Yes, she must've been in the hostel at that time because she was there but I don't know, it was all movin' real fast and then we got some of the rules changed and it was just you know it was just a little bit too much gestapo there. So we wanted to be able to go up town and have a cup of coffee. And not have to say, "oh geez I gotta to run away now because if I am late I am going to

scrub the whole service area with a toothbrush” or whatever you know. Just ridiculous. From then on it was great. You know everybody kind of relaxed a little bit. We had a bit of freedom. But you had to, you know, you still had your rules and stuff to follow because you can’t have 200 people and no rules.

MMS - That’s for sure. And schoolwork has gotta be up and all that rest of that stuff too so if you’re going to be allow those privileges so. You guys had a rebellion, eh? That’s great!

KM - Yeah that was quite a deal. I don’t remember who started it. That would’ve been ‘68 I believe. Because that is when I went there and I am sure it was in my first year. But like I say, I don’t remember who the guys were that decided we should do that but of course we all thought it was a great idea because hey, if I don’t have to go to school, sure I’m in!

MMS - Yeah get some more time to hang out up town. Any of the other older players because I remember some of the names like *Fred Henne* was blowing saxophone every once in a while. *Wilf Schidlowski*.

KM - Yeah I remember *Wilf*. I used to go over and drink whiskey with *Wilf* and we would fool around on the guitars. He was living over by St. Pats. So I never had far to go from Akaitcho Hall, just go over there, usually on a weekend.

MMS - Do you remember how you met *Wilf*?

KM - I’m not sure how, possibly from playing maybe at St. Pats or something. And then there was *Frank Wouters*. And *Frank* was a drummer but he was also a drinker. So, of course then we would all end up at *Wilf*’s. I forgot about *Frank* playing drums. *Smokey Heal* used to play drums.

MMS - Get out of here.

KM - I had his, I got his drum set. I sold it to *Norm Glowach*. So I think *Norm* kinda rebuilt them. Just a great big, great big bass drum and about, not a deep drum I remember that. I got them from his son *Jim*. *Jimmy*’s passed on too. They were living right over here by the police station.

MMS - Yeah, I remember right on the corner I can see it right out the window.

KM - Yeah. I helped *Jim* clean out the house there and so he gave me them drums. He said you’re a drummer, you should take these. I don’t believe I ever heard *Smokey* play but I do remember hearing of him play, you know.

MMS - So these would have been the older cats...

KM - That would’ve been probably early ‘60s I guess. Earlier ‘60s then. I’m sure it was before I ever got here, they were out playing and I don’t know who else would’ve been with them, like guitars or anything. Well, *Wilf*... I guess maybe *Wilf* and *Frank* probably, they probably played on stage together but I honestly don’t recall if they did or not.

MMS - Yeah, Archie was up here at that time.

KM - *Archie Loutitt*?

MMS - Yeah.

KM - Yeah, I ended up in a band with *Archie (Loutitt) Brian Lyons, Roger Regier*. Roger he was bass and vocals. He, I believe went to the Yukon. I don't know why I think that, somebody must've said that to me one time but *Archie Loutitt* was there. He was playing rhythm. *Marc (Whitford)* was in the band. And then *Tony* and I but they kicked me and *Tony* out. That was the "Northbound Freeway".

MMS - But you would've been the younger cats to those guys then, right?

KM - Yeah. *Archie* and *Roger*.

MMS - And *Wilf* and those guys. So, but I mean you got a chance to sort of hang around with them and sort of play all kinds of different music that they would've grown up on that way too. "UM²" was the band that was in Akaitcho Hall.

KM - Yeah. They started out, Pat... when I moved to Akaitcho Hall, they were called "The Mystic Monks". They had different players, they had two singers, that, not official was *Pat Burke* and *Tom Hudson* were both there and now that's a lot of singing power on stage.

MMS - Both (Fort) Smith boys too.

KM - And *Gary Laub* was their drummer, he was from Hay River. I think he's in the US now. And then after I ended up getting in the band, I don't remember somebody said we should get a name anyway. A different name I guess. And it was the "Universal Music Machine". And *Tony* must've been in chemistry or something, he said well let's call it "UM²". And it stuck. So if you ever say "Universal Music Machine" and most of these old guys they kinda wonder what, "you drinking again?" But yeah, the "UM²" name stuck.

MMS - Yeah. And so the run for that band would've been just in that, say three or four years that you were in Akaitcho or did it carry on further than that?

KM - No, '71 when we graduated and that's when *Brian Kovatch* said, "I'm outta here". So we kind of shut her down and then got into different bands. I think that's when I got into the "Northbound Freeway" was right around there too.

MMS - And that would've been with *Archie (Loutitt)*, *Archie* would've been at the helm on that one.

KM - *Archie* was there, yeah. *Archie (Loutitt)*, *Roger (Regier)*, *Marc (Whitford)*, me, *Tony (Buggins)* and then what's that guy's name that took my place, that redheaded drummer.

MMS - *Murray Grabke*.

KM - Yeah, *Murray*, he got that job off of me. And I think that's maybe when *Brian Lyons* took over from *Tony*. I can't remember, maybe *Tony* was in there with *Brian* and us to. I can't remember exactly the exact lineup but anyway they didn't suffer very long with us guys gone, that's for sure. They were playin' the next weekend and you know, they played in the Legion there for 20 some odd years, yeah.

MMS - A long time. A long time for sure. Just to sort of sit in that time a little bit more, did you guys ever travel like in any of the bands right around that time whether in Akaitcho Hall, did you go out to any of the other communities?

KM - We went to Inuvik in, I believe 1969 we went up there for the grad dance.

MMS - Oh okay.

KM - They flew us in. I think over the summer we ended up in Fort Smith in a battle of the bands. *Herb Lafferty* was down there with his band, I don't remember who they were. And they didn't have a drummer. And I remember *Herb* trying to teach me a song called "Communication Breakdown" fast enough to get onstage with it and I probably screwed it up but I don't...oh yeah we went to Hay River actually quite often with the "UM²" to play there. For different reasons I don't know whether they would be Christmas dances or I can't remember what they were for.

MMS - Would you be driving, well driving and flying to Inuvik, obviously.

KM - Yeah, I do remember driving down to Hay River and places like that and trying to get that equipment covered because the roads were of course, pretty dusty.

MMS - Yeah, for sure.

KM - Yeah. I'm trying to remember, who other guys I got hooked up... I had a good run with *Billy* and *Barry Cowsill* when they came up here. They ended up at the "Trap Line" (Yellowknife Inn Bar) with those guys.

MMS - Please tell me about that, yeah.

KM - (*Tony*) *Buggins* was with us too, *Tony*. But we'd play all night in the "Trap Line" bar and we would go down to where I was living in the old town and *Billy*, he had been doing speed and he couldn't sleep. He would play all bloody night and we would drink until we'd pass out and I passed out down there on the couch. I got up in the morning and here is this great big mural on the wall, it's me sleeping on the couch, done in tire crayon, that yellow shit that you can't wash off, eh? *Barry Cowsill*, he did a picture of me up there while *Billy* was playing and I was just snoozing away there, I had way too much to drink obviously but I got to know *Bill*, I really enjoyed playing, he's a really good guy. I liked him a lot.

MMS - How did you get the gig?

KM - I don't know. I can't remember. I guess they needed a drummer and somebody probably told them I was somewhere around. I don't even know.

MMS - Yeah, and so you were playing in the "Trap Line" then, in the six nighters there. Because there is stories I mean obviously *Billy* went on to all kinds of things, he was famous right away but then he was up here driving truck, somebody said for a while but he was also playing music up here.

KM - I didn't know whether he was driving truck or not but he ended up, he went to Hay River after here and he was going, for some reason he was leaving Hay River going to Edmonton I don't

know any of the details really but my Mom gave him a ride to Edmonton so she got to meet him and she thought very highly of him as well. You know I guess he is sorta like the rest of us if you know how to... there is a little old lady that's going to give me a ride to Edmonton, so you are going to be on your best behaviour, you are not going to be a haywire fucker, you know? But I was glad that she got to meet him because I liked him. You know and I thought that was pretty nice.

MMS - Wow, that's awesome that you got to play with him.

KM - I've got a tape of them here somewhere.

MMS - But I mean he was already, he was sort of like a child star or his family was.

KM - Yeah, well the *Cowsills* had all those big hits out there.

MMS - Yeah this is like down in the states in California back in the early to mid-60s.

KM - I don't know where the heck they came from but I do remember, I do remember listening to those songs of course growing up. That song "Hair" and all these different songs by those guys. And we thought it was such a big deal because they were a family band and I don't think that I ever really knew of a lot of family bands. Like you know, okay, a father and a daughter whatever, this was the whole damn family. So it's pretty cool. And then when they came up here it was just him and his brother. I don't know what happened to their band. I don't know why they weren't with them. If I know, if I was ever told I don't recall. But he was by that time, he was into the harder way of the life.

MMS - Yeah for sure.

KM - But I sure enjoyed getting to meet him and play you know, no pressure just give 'er!

MMS - I know so much of it now is singer-songwriter stuff and you've got to write your own material but I don't think that was the norm back then. From when I started playing, it was just cover songs. Was there ever anybody in the band that was writing a song and was there ever any recording done?

KM - We did some recording at *Harold Glick's* store. And I think for some reason I think it was 1970 and I think I have a picture of us. And I think I have a couple of those songs on my computer, right now. I do have tapes in the basement that I've never listened to. They were given to me a few years ago, of the "UM²".

MMS - Reel to reel tapes

KM - No, somebody put them on cassette.

MMS - Cassette, okay.

KM - Now I don't know whether they are originally done on a cassette. Or not. Like I say I haven't listened to them so I'm sure the quality is not going to be there but that's not, that's not that big of a deal. The idea is to... this is what we used to listen to in 1969 or whatever. It was harder to get

quality because none of us knew how to record anyway. You threw a few microphones up in the room and you start going.

MMS - You just start playing

KM - 1,2,3,4 see you at the end.

MMS - So that's what you did *at (Harold) Glick's* place? You just put up some recorders or was there somebody who sort of engineered it for you?

KM - No. I think *Marc* probably did it. I can't remember for sure but *Marc* worked there.

MMS - That's right yeah.

KM - I am sure that's the only reason we got in there, was because *Marc (Whitford)* worked there. And *Harold* was, he was supportive of the band. Like, he would let us go in and buy stuff on credit and that's pretty good when you are young bunch of wild bastards, you know? You are charging up thousands of dollars in those days that's a lot of cash but he gave us a shot at it and we bought a lot of stuff out of there.

MMS - Yeah *Harold* seemed like he was... genuinely he got satisfaction from doing that. I mean there was nobody else who was running the stereo store or bringing in records or anything like that but talk to lots of people who talk about *Glick's* and that was the place to go, right? You would grab your albums and I know it was for me as well.

KM - Then there was of course *Merlyn Williams*. He can fix anything electronic.

MMS- Yeah, that's right too, yeah yeah.

KM - You know, you screw up your amp *Merlyn* will figure it out.

MMS - Yeah, he had that little shop just beside the "Gold Range" there.

KM - I don't remember where he was but I do remember that he could fix, he could fix stuff.

MMS - Yeah, he was a wizard that way.

KM - Yeah.

MMS - Can you just sort of run me through run me through the different bands the different people that you played with.

KM - After UM², I was with a band called "Appaloosa" that was *Alan Hiatt, Brian Morgan, Brian Morton*, I played in the band with *Alex Skakum*, don't know which band that was. Geez I can't remember the names of these outfits. Then I ended up in "Northbound Freeway". I did play for a while for three jail guards, big fellas, In the Legion. "High Country" maybe I think was the name of that band?

MMS - Yes.

KM - And I left and went down south for a while and I got hooked up with a couple of bands down there just for short runs in the bars. "County Line" was one of them. And then I got a phone call from Yellowknife to come back to work so I left. I came back here and I put together the "Katt Sass" band which from high school was *Tom Hudson, Herb Lafferty*, picked those guys up again. *Tony Buggins*, me and we picked up *Ted Mildenberger* for bass. So we were together for about seven years. And then I quit. I said you know what I have had enough. Things just weren't working out. And *Donnie Mitchell* got a hold of me and he said I am going to go on the road with "The Outlaw Band" would you fill in for me?" For a few weekends or whatever and I wanted to quit but I said, "yeah I will". And I only knew *Dave and Sherry* to say hi, I didn't know them. So I went into the (Gold) Range because they were playing there and I started listening to some of their songs trying to figure it out because I didn't want to get caught too flat footed and we went to the Elks that was our first job together there. First song I got no monitor. I said *Dave*, I got no friggin' monitor. I'll fix it at the break. I don't know your stuff, you know? So we got through the first set and *Dave* said, "well you want the job it's yours". I said. "Jesus we just went through one set don't get too excited here". Don't offer me the world and then have to take it back. But at the end of the night he said no the job is yours if you want it so... So I was lucky, I stayed with *Dave*. I am still with *Dave and Sherry*, I'm still the new guy because every time we pick up a side guy then I don't know, he takes off he goes play somewhere else or whatever but I have been with them for something like 15 years and I am the new guy.

MMS - Beautiful.

KM - So... I can't think of all the other bands because they were never, there wasn't a lasting thing. I would sit in for a dance or two or whatever. So you can't really count me as a member of them anyway I was just filling in here and there.

MMS - No, all of those names I'd forgotten about.

KM - *Terry Mercer*. Played with *Terry* a lot of times and I don't know what band that was with it might have been with the "Appaloosa" band and what I remember most about *Terry*, his keyboards right over there to my front right hand side and I could see *Terry* of course and he would take 13 Scotch and he'd line them up on the top of his keyboard, do you remember that? I remember that. Yeah. We had a lot of fun with *Terry*.

MMS -Yeah, so did I. Learned a lot. He had a really good time teasing me. I was the receiving end of a lot of teases. When you are playing with those bands, were you playing more six nighters or replaying more weekends or...

KM - More weekends.

MMS - More weekends okay. So pulling the auto body job and just playing weekends as opposed to trying to do both of them which...

KM - Yeah. I couldn't do it now that's for sure.

MMS - Yeah that's for sure.

KM – Then a guy, you're young and you can do it. You would wear out after the first week and seem to get a second wind and then, the end of the three weeks, well you were ready to go another three weeks. But that would kill me now for sure.

MMS - It sounds like you had some very rich years there.

KM - Oh I've been very, very lucky. You know, considering the way I started out like nobody should've hired me to begin with. But you're the only game in town and you know thank God I got off that bottle. In fact the day my daughter was born, that changed my world for the better, obviously. And never did give up the drums, I put them away for 10 years because I was working two jobs. I was working daytime in the body shop and nighttime in a back alley body shop. And I did that for four solid years. The only days I took off was Christmas day, yeah, Christmas Day. Like my holidays would be, 16 hours in the back alley body shop but you had to work because body men don't get paid much and there is no union and I had a family. And my wife worked too but we were still just making it, eh? So the drums just stayed in their crates or whatever boxes whatever. I had cardboard boxes I think. I never got cases of any kind until I came back here and I went to "Mackenzie Music", *Vince Gauthier* and I bought those cardboard cases there which I use to this day.

MMS - Yeah that's another common story as well is where it's just sort of like, look I had to work, family, bills had to be paid and that was what had to be done and the once things kind of opened up a little bit and the opportunity came then I got back into it but it was, for some of them they just, they just, they stopped.

KM - But I don't know, music will be a part of our lives right up until we're dead. It's not something that goes away. You can't turn the switch.

MMS - No. I really appreciate this, this is awesome, thank you Kevin.

KM - Although it is nice to be able to sit and BS with somebody once in a while especially, you know we go back a long way different stages usually but music is music.

MMS - Yeah, exactly and the players that you are talking about are either people that I've talked to or had the chance to play with.

KM - We've shared the same band members over the years.

MMS - It is sort of like the torch is sort of getting passed down the line you know and different people like that. So no, this is awesome. Thanks so much.