

Phil Mariluch

I was born on March 7th 1919 there in Elko. Elko was a small town at that time and like a lot of others my age I did a lot of fishing and hunting. About the time I started High School, some buddies and I ran away from home. My friend had Model T Ford. We got down south of Jiggs and turned the Model T over on its side. The Model T's were not very heavy – we just lifted it back on its wheels and away we went. When we got to the Warm Creek Ranch, the Goicocheas put us to work riding and doing other things. It was a couple of weeks before our folks found out where we were.

I'd guess I probably fished nearly every creek in Elko County at one time or another. Fished Boulder Creek - caught a lot of browns, rainbow and brook trout in Boulder Creek. Started fishing the South Fork when I was 12, if I remember right. There was a lot of big fish in the South Fork at that time. Fished Pole Creek, Dawley Creek, Overland, Mayhue - Thomas Canyon. Fished Star Creek and Bolder Creek. Fished the Humboldt. They were all good fishing. Fished the Owyhee River. There used to be a lot of nice trout in the Owyhee.

The hatchery at Cave Creek, was a county hatchery for a long time. Every year they'd plant nearly all the creeks - rainbow mostly - sometimes they'd plant browns or cutthroat. It made it nice - because then, there would be rainbow trout and brook trout both in most of the creeks.

It seemed like you would always see people out fishing someplace or another. The people at the Hatchery; Skeet Moore, Johnny Circle and Don Griffith before them - they would always stop there in Harrison Pass at the beaver ponds and unload a few fish – it made it great for kids. You hardly ever went over Harrison that you didn't see a family camped there with their kids out doing a little fishing.

I can remember, one year when our kids were small - during the summer we moved our camp trailer out to South Fork – parked it next to the store. Jay and Charlotte Kump had the store at that time. Every evening I'd do a little fishing. Get up in the morning, drive into work and then drive back to South Fork again after work. It was nothing to catch 3, 4, 5 pound trout in the South Fork at that time. Even when we were at home in Elko, I'd get off work sometimes and go fishing. Seemed like we'd always get our limit. We'd keep the big ones and throw the rest back.

It's not that way, anymore. Not since the State took over. They had to get control of everything, the hatchery, and management of our deer herd. Soon as they did, everything started going to hell. Now days, they blame it on the drought or hard winters. Fewer and fewer deer, poorer and poorer fishing. According to them its never their fault. But who quite planting the creeks? And who's been issuing too many deer tags and discouraging predator control.

At one time you couldn't go anywhere without seeing people fishing the creeks, now you can drive for days and never see anyone fishing. Deer hunting is the same way. In the 1950's Larene and I and Johnny Circle used to camp in the Mavericks every chance we'd get. Before that, we used to help Slim (Slim Saxton) guide some. You couldn't believe the deer at that time. It seemed everyone would get their deer back then. The Game department didn't create those deer. They came about because of ranching and predator control.

I never saw a deer until I was 12 or 14 years old. Someone killed a 4 point buck – they had it there in the cooler at People's Market, there on Idaho Street. Everyone in town went to see it - kids and everyone. There were no deer in the country at that time - not enough to speak of anyway. It was not until the early 1940's that the deer became plentiful – where people began hunting them. Sage hens were the same way. The Fish and Game people didn't create the abundance of game that there was at that time. All the Fish and Game people did, was glom onto the management of them so that they could create an industry for themselves.

You've got to remember, long before there was a Nevada Department of Wildlife, the game department was managed by representatives from each of the counties. Then the State took it over. It wasn't that the local people that gave up the management of wildlife. It was more like the Fish and Game people took the management away from the local people. And everything has been going downhill ever since.

Visits with Phil Mariluch

Phil Mariluch served under General Patten during World War II, fighting in the famed Battle of the Bulge in Germany.

Phil's wife, LaRene was a Coe. The Coes had been early settlers in Ruby Valley, taking up land at what is now, the old Vaughn place. LaRene's Grandfather was a freighter as well as a farmer and rancher. Each year he would freight grain and produce from Ruby Valley to Eureka and other mining camps.

After retiring, Phil and LaRene moved to Ruby Valley's Shanty Town where he and LaRene built a home, doing nearly all the work themselves. Phil loved Ruby Valley and he loved hunting and fishing - but Phil did a lot of work during his retirement as well. He often worked during the summer months, swathing hay for different ranchers in the Valley. Phil also pumped stock-water during the winter on the white sage flats on the East side of Ruby Lake for the 7H Ranch.

During the last few years of his life, Phil would often stop for a visit. Sometimes, during these visits I would scratch down some of what he was telling me. The attached summary of Phil's life was taken from those notes. Like so many of his generation, Phil did not like the way the country was changing. Phil did not like government, and he didn't like the way that the government was managing things. And too of course, Phil was missing the old days - when there was a lot more freedom and less government. And he was right of course - about everything going to hell. Modern America's quest for more and more government has screwed things up considerably.

And too I suppose, Phil was missing the folks that had gone before him. Those folks that had lived during those times when there was more freedom and independence, and everyone was on their own - - for that generation did have a different attitude and air about them.

It was the freedom and forced self reliance that made them the way they were I suppose. They lived hard scrabble lives. No one ever gave them anything - they had to work and they had to work hard for everything they had. Non of them were beholden to anyone - and it showed. They were happy go lucky, hardy people - always glad to see you - always ready to help you out in any way.

It's damn hard not to miss Phil and his kind.

