

Oral-History:Floyd Hayhurst

About Floyd Hayhurst

Floyd Hayhurst was purchasing agent and assistant to Ed Tudor (/Oral-History:Edward_Tudor) at Regency while the TR1 radio (/Radio) was being developed. He began at Regency when it was still a small operation and stayed until 1958. When the interview took place, Hayhurst was working for a manufacturer's representative in Indianapolis.

In this brief interview, Hayhurst discusses the difficulty in finding components for the TR1 since few companies made or were willing to make parts that small. He gives the electrolytic capacitors (/Capacitors) as an example of the ways he went about acquiring components. Hayhurst also talks about the spirit of cooperation at Regency to get the job done as quickly as possible, as well as the impact and problems of radio production at Regency. He discusses Richard Koch (/Oral-History:Richard_Koch) and the atmosphere at Regency during TR1 production as well.

About the Interview

FLOYD HAYHURST: An Interview Conducted by Michael Wolff, IEEE History Center, 11 December 1984

Interview #468 for the IEEE History Center, The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc.

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Floyd Hayhurst, Electrical Engineer, an oral history conducted in 1984 by Michael Wolff, IEEE History Center, Hoboken, NJ, USA.

Interview

Interview: Floyd Hayhurst

Interviewer: Michael Wolff

Date: 11 December 1984

Location: Indianapolis, Indiana

Purchasing Agent

Wolff:

You were at Regency when the radio (/Radio) was being developed. What was your position there?

Hayhurst:

During that period I had a couple of different positions. I was PA for part of the period, and I was assistant to Ed Tudor (/Oral-History:Edward_Tudor).

Wolff:

What is a PA?

Hayhurst:

Purchasing agent.

Wolff:

Okay. When did you leave Regency?

Hayhurst:

I left them in '58 I think.

Wolff:

What are you doing now?

Hayhurst:

I am now working for a manufacturer's representative.

Wolff:

You are working in Indianapolis, right?

Hayhurst:

Yes.

Wolff:

I guess you were purchasing agent during the time that he (Richard Koch (/Oral-History:Richard_Koch)) had to built that TR1.

Hayhurst:

Right.

Wolff:

As I understand it from our discussion yesterday, your secretary became his (Koch's) wife.

Hayhurst:

That's correct. I started with the company that became Regency when they were just a small operation.

Wolff:

I see. In terms of the work on the TR1, do I understand correctly that it was your job to try to find all those components that didn't really exist?

Hayhurst:

Yes, it was my job and the buyers that we had working at the company. We all had to jump in and search and find people that would do things that had never been done before. Most of the components had never been manufactured because no one had ever dreamed of making anything that small. Therefore we had to locate companies that were in the business or would tackle the items and develop them.

Electrolytic Capacitors

Wolff:

Can you give me an example? Do any one of those components stand out as a particularly difficult case?

Hayhurst:

Probably the one that was the most difficult was the electrolytic capacitors (/Capacitors). We had to get a company for that.

Wolff:

Was the company Cornell Dubilier?

Hayhurst:

No. They wouldn't tackle it.

Wolff:

They had supplied a low-voltage electrolytics in a design for the original prototype, but when production quantities were needed they had not set up a way to produce them?

Hayhurst:

No, they wouldn't get into it. We had to go to a little outfit down in Nashville, Tennessee that would tackle making it as a production item. It was actually a college professor that set up that company.

Wolff:

Do you remember the name of the company?

Hayhurst:

It kind of bounced around for a little bit while they were trying to get organized, but I believe the name of the company was IEI.

Wolff:

First you got some paper capacitors.

Hayhurst:

Yes.

Wolff:

They didn't work too well, and then you got ceramic packages from the IEI Company. That's all the same company, right?

Hayhurst:

Well, they had some of the same personnel. It was not totally the same personnel because of changes going on within the company, but [unintelligible] was the one man that was spearheading the thing.

Wolff:

That was the college professor?

Hayhurst:

Yes.

Wolff:

Is there anything particularly colorful to say about the story of finding them and getting them to develop the low-voltage electrolytics?

Hayhurst:

No. We had a rep that knew someone that knew someone else who was interested in conveying our interest, and the word got around to this man and he said, "I think it can be done." He set up a little organization. He was already dabbling in the electrolytic area, and he decided to tackle it.

Delivering Molding Dies

Wolff:

Audio File

MP3 Audio

(468 - hayhurst - clip 1.mp3)

Dick Koch told me a story about the molding dies for the case being delivered to him at 2 o'clock in the morning by the purchasing agent. Was that you?

Hayhurst:

Yes.

Wolff:

Tell me about that.

Hayhurst:

We had to have the mold for that as rapidly as possible. We selected a mold maker up in Chicago to make them. He was a good mold maker, and we kept stressing the need for delivery and finally got him to set a date. I was up there and waited around and finally got him to finish the die. Then they were loaded into the back of my car and I drove home with my [unintelligible] pointing halfway up into the sky because my springs wouldn't hold that weight in the back end, but there was no other way to get down there that quick at the time. I drove back to Indianapolis very carefully and got to the people that were going to do the molding for us. They had the equipment to lift it out of my trunk, and they started installing it into a press right then.

Wolff:

At 2 in the morning?

Hayhurst:

Right.

Wolff:

I guess that sort of captures the spirit of the whole project, right?

Hayhurst:

It was a spirit of total cooperation from everybody. Everybody would jump in, and hours didn't mean anything. We went anyplace and every place to get done what needed to be done.

Impact and Difficulties of Radio Production

Wolff:

What impact did the radio have on the company when you finally built it and went into production? Did it make a lot of money for Regency?

Hayhurst:

It didn't make as much money in the beginning, because there were many production problems in the start up of that major a product. When you start a project that new and that different from standard there are going to be a lot of production and manufacturing problems due to all the brand new techniques all the way through.

Wolff:

And they did have them.

Hayhurst:

We had lots of things to iron out and debug and so forth. It wasn't all peaches and cream.

Wolff:

What I didn't ask Dick was how long the company produced the radio.

Hayhurst:

We produced the radio for several years.

Wolff:

What would you say was the impact of it on the company's fortunes?

Hayhurst:

Excellent. We made money off of the radio, and it was our livelihood for quite some time.

Wolff:

By that you mean it was the big moneymaker for the company?

Hayhurst:

Certainly. It was our bread and butter for quite some time.

Wolff:

That's interesting.

Hayhurst:

It still required a lot of tender loving care.

Wolff:

When you say it was your bread and butter I guess you mean not just the TR-1 but also the successor – the portable – and the whole line?

Hayhurst:

Right.

Wolff:

Do you remember when the company stopped making them?

Hayhurst:

No, I really don't, because they made versions of that for quite some time. I think even after I left they were still making versions of it.

Richard Koch and Regency Atmosphere

Wolff:

That's interesting. Is there anything you want to tell me about Koch?

Hayhurst:

As far as I'm concerned, he is one fantastic engineer. Dick is the type of a fellow that if you assign him to a project, time means nothing to him. He gets into that project with both feet and obstacles mean nothing. He is going to find a way to solve all problems. He is an unusual man.

Wolff:

That was my reaction, and that's a very nice quote to have from someone who knew him because it means more than my saying it. Thank you very much. You have given me some nice tidbits here. Is there anything else you would like to say?

Hayhurst:

It was a great time to be with that company, because during that period of time there was cooperation between all parties. It was just a fun time to work because of that spirit of cooperation between all the departments and managers and so forth. We had a lot of fun.

Wolff:

It certainly sounds like it. I felt envious when he was telling me about it. Thank you very much for your help. This has been very useful.

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