

ALLEN PARK

February, 1975

Interview by Ivan Donaldson

Today on the 17th of February, 1975, we will have an interview with Mr. Allen Park who has had an interesting career on the Columbia River and on the Bailey Gatzert.

Ivan: Mr. Park, when did you come to this country?

Allen: I came across the line about the fall of 1908 and with another young fellow named, his name was Poolie Bacon. We cross the line and at Portland we, we was just a couple of hobos. We got to the Albina Yards and down by the yards we jumped a freight and this freight was just pulling out and we didn't know exactly where we were going. But we ended up, it happened to be an S.P. & S. freight, we ended up getting on the freight pulling out and going to, up across the bridge at Vancouver and we were in Washington. We skipped along there from place to place. I was passing coal for the engineer and both of us were passing coal. Finally we arrived at a place; Course we didn't know it at the time, but it happened to be now what it's called (shut it off for a second)

Ivan: You stopped at Skamania then from the freight?

Allen: The freight pulled into Skamania to get coal, I mean to oil up. So we pulled into (are we on?), we sat there and all of us got off and about that time, we saw a light coming down the, coming down from Portland and we heard a shot. We saw the light fall and I said to this kid, course, we were all together, the engineer, the fireman and this fellow I was with, and we said, heard a shot. Saw a lantern fall, a brakeman had been walking up the track looking at the . . .

Ivan: Switch?

Allen: No, at the boxcars, locks on the boxcars. I found out there had been a lot of breaking in, stealing stuff. I said, Poolie let's get out of here before we get in trouble. He said to the engineer, you know we were right here when that shot was fired and we had nothing to do with it. He says, I'll vouch for you. So the two of us beat it on down the track towards

Stevenson. We'd never been to Stevenson and didn't know nothing about it. We camped a little way up, lit a fire, a posse came. I don't know whether they came, they came by horses, but from what direction, I don't know. The store was still there. So we slept out that night but by early morning a posse had been sent out from Stevenson by Sheriff Knox and his son. They were searching and they picked us up and took us on to Stevenson. Just a few minutes before that they said, I wish we could start again. Can you start all over? (break in tape)

Ivan: So the posse came and took you up to Stevenson?

Allen: The posse came and took us up to Stevenson on a train that had just pulled in. There was a bunch of old ladies on the train and as I went through the passageway there on this train, a woman screamed and said that's the man that done it, I can tell by his looks! And she pointed at me. I went on to Stevenson and we got off at the depot that's still there and there was quite a crowd there, a dozen or so. They walked us up on the left hand side of the wooden sidewalk, across the street was that old grocery store

Ivan: Ash's store.

Allen: Ash's store.

Ivan: E. P. Ash.

Allen: They took us up the old road jail, wooden jail. There was a lot of Indians in the jail and it was just like old country jails would be. They booked us I guess, what you would call booking and the deputy was very nice to me and happened to be Knox's son. He gave me a blanket and a small mattress, There was a lot of Indians in there and they got mad and had a fight over the whole thing. We got a mattress and they didn't, these mattresses were for visiting judges that came to try people. Finally this same young fellow, Sheriff Knox, young Knox, they finally caught the man that done the shooting and the whole thing.

Ivan: Was it the brakeman that had been shot?

Allen: It was the brakeman that had been shot, but he survived.

Ivan: And this was about 1908?

Allen: 1908, Sheriff Knox.

Ivan: About how old were you?

Allen: I was about 19.

Ivan: So they let you out of jail?

Allen: Oh yeah. They released us right away. We was just held for witnesses.

Ivan: Did you stay around Stevenson then?

Allen: No the next day, we went out on a passenger train and we went further on and got off at the Grand Dalles. All that was there of the Grand Dalles was, happened to be a man down there he caught a ferry, just a rowboat, and he looked up and he said, "Oh another couple of bums. You're going to have to row yourself across, I'm not going to row you!" He knew we had no money. We went on across the river and I went to work at the, for a few days at the old hotel there.

Ivan: The old Umatilla House?

Allen: The old Umatilla House. I worked around there picking up and barboy and all that for about a week. Then this Poolie Bacon, he was with me. They called him "Poolie" because he was a pool shark and he could always get into a game and make enough money to feed us. We both started off for The Dalles and I got to The Dalles and I had gone originally from Portland, my destination was to be Dufur and we were going to dig holes for apple trees for \$1 a day.

Ivan: The largest apple orchard in the world at that time.

Allen: Yes, and I happened to know the owner in Portland who is the one that suggested I go out there. It took us two days walking to get there. I went to work but instead of digging holes for apple trees, I went to work at the Dufur Hotel.

I worked there for two or three weeks. The commercial travelers, Traveling Salesmen in those days, and they'd all come in there and they'd have a big long table and they'd always stay the whole winter.

I, naturally wanted to do other things. I used to go to the old drug store, Dr. Dodd, and I used to sit around the drug store of a Sunday and the druggist, Sweetheart used to come in there, a beautiful girl her name was Baker and the drug store would turn me over to her he said, amuse her for awhile while I wait on these Indians. They were trying to get liquor. He had fixed up some sort of, I remember him telling me about it, he says we're going to have some fun. Fixed up a deal where he could put two white powders together and these two powders when they was in the cup by themselves, half put in dry and then half put in when they poured the water on it and these Indians would drink it, it'd go up their nose and they'd feel a gasp of what we used to call it, "fire water".

Mr. Baker was a wonderful carpenter down there and finally they all moved to Portland and this fellow that was in the drug store finally ended up having the Bower Buick Agency in The Dalles and finally marrying this Baker girl.

Ivan: And your job had been to keep her interested there in the drug store?

Allen: Yeah.

Ivan: What, in conversation or dancing or

Allen: No, more conversation. I was the only person that he felt that was good enough to associate with this girl, you see. She was a beautiful thing. I met her lots of times, I met her even 5 years ago, she was at that time all crippled up something terrible. Emily Baker her name was. They were well known in Dufur.

Ivan: Meanwhile were they planting this giant orchard in Dufur?

Allen: Yeah, on horses. They kept on and they were all eating in this hotel and this hotel was owned and built at that time for this company. Dufur Orchard Company, I guess they called it.

Ivan: And this was still in 1908?

Allen: Yeah, the fall of 1908.

Ivan: And did they finish planting the orchard at that time?

Allen: No, I was gone then, I went to Portland. I went down on the Bailey Gatzert. That was the first time I'd been on the Bailey up there, going downstream. From then on, I worked down there every summer.

Ivan: How did you happen to get on the Bailey? How did you become employed on the Bailey Gatzert?

Allen: Well, first of all I got on her and I liked her and it was in my line, I'd always handled food, I was a good bartender.

Ivan: And you then worked on the Bailey each summer, thereafter?

Allen: Each summer thereafter. I was on her in July 27th when the Columbia was at a heights that the boats could go over.

Ivan: Downstream?

Allen: Downstream.

Ivan: And did they do that frequently?

Allen: Well that was real notable. Even that fellow at the store there doesn't recollect it. What's his name there? That fellow that runs the hardware store in Stevenson?

Ivan: Lee Kelson?

Allen: Ash.

Ivan: Ash, young Ash. Lowell Ash.

Allen: Yeah, he remembers a lot of those things that we had.

Ivan: And you went down over the rapids on the Bailey?

Allen: Yeah.

Ivan: How many times did you do this?

Allen: I done that every year from . . .

Ivan: No, I mean going down over.

Allen: Well, we didn't go over the rapids every time, just went at one time, I think it was July of 1927.

Ivan: How many years did you work on the Bailey?

Allen: I worked on the Bailey from 1908, practically every year from 1908 to 1916.

Ivan: Tell us the story of how you gained the bell, got the bell of the Bailey.

Allen: The bell, I was walking up Burnside, driving . . .

Ivan: About what year?

Allen: Well, I believe it was about (cut in tape)

Ivan: So this year is 1975

Allen: It was about 64. I was driving down burnside and I saw this, it looked to me like the old chief, the old pilot walking up Burnside, walking along just as if it was the end of the world, Lou. So I was in the car and he was walking so I drove up ahead a little bit and got out and waited. I come by him and I said, "Hello Lou," and he looked as if he'd spent his last penny. I asked him what was the matter? Well, he told his story.

I said, get in with me and we'll go back and have a nice steak. He got in and I went across and came back, went up to John's Steak House and we both had a steak. I said, "Where are you staying?" He said he was staying over on the east side of the river. He was just bumming around. He had a, he'd got, this old bell, used as a hospital ship up around Puget Sound. He got this old bell

Ivan: From the Bailey?

Allen: Yeah, it was up at Seattle in the sands. It was all dirty and he got it down. He was shacking up at a place up the Columbia River, somewhere where Bridal Falls would be on the river. I said, "I'd sure like to see it and I'd like to get it." So we took it over to my place and

cleaned it up and washed it up. I think the ring was silver and I hung it up there. That's the same dang thing.

Ivan: And he was living near Bridal Veil where you found the bell?

Allen: I think it was Bridal Veil, on the other side of the river where he had got it and dumped it.

Ivan: On the Oregon side.

Allen: Yeah, where he had got it and dumped it and then finally I think somebody before that time, some iron outfit was mixed up in it and had it.

Ivan: Had the bell?

Allen: Yeah, that's what I gave them \$50 for.

Ivan: I see, even though he had possession of it, you gave the Iron Co. some money for it.

Allen: Yeah, well they claimed it, it was some iron. I paid \$50 for it and that's about all I can tell you about it.

Ivan: And what was Mr. Lou's name, what was his last name?

Allen: I don't know.

Ivan: No matter. But he told you it came from the Bailey Gatzert?

Allen: Yeah, he thought it came from the Bailey Gatzert.

Ivan: You told me there one time when we were down on the beach there, you pointed to this road and said that the people would get off there at landing, at the Carson Landing and meet a wagon.

Allen: I was working on the Bailey as a waiter and would pick up all these drunks, drunks with money and they'd all get off there and they'd we used to call them "democrats" (wagons) with lots of seats in them, not comfortable. We'd put them in there and they'd go up and get boiled out up there at

Ivan: At the St. Martin's Hot Springs?

Allen: Yeah. They weren't exactly bums, you know, they were businessmen. They'd go up there and then they'd go down and do it all over again.

Ivan: That was the Carson Landing Road?

Allen: They called it the Carson Landing, yeah.

Ivan: Did the Bailey carry a great many passengers?

Allen: Oh boy! The Bailey ran out of Portland every day except Monday and that was the clean up day. On Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, they'd leave the foot of Alder Street at 7:00 and their signal to leave was (signal sounds). On Sundays we'd just run from Alder Street to Cascade Locks and we'd go through the Locks and have a salmon dinner above the Locks, turn around and go back to Portland, and that's on a Sunday.

Ivan: How many people would be on board on one of these excursions?

Allen: Didn't I show you those pictures?

Ivan: We would like to copy those pictures for the Historical Society if you can find them.

Allen: I don't know where any of this stuff is. Ivan: Did they have good food on the Bailey?

Allen: Absolutely. Captain Alden was the Captain and Jerry Butler was the Steward. I was the bartender.

Ivan: How much did they pay you per day?

Allen: Oh, \$30 a month but there was lots of tips. We'd always leave at 7:00.

Ivan: What time would you get into The Dalles?

Allen: We'd get there approximately 2:00. About 2:00 we'd leave. We'd get there between 7:90 in the morning and stay noon. Then the passengers

went up to look around and go up to the old Umatilla House. I got pictures of all of that somewhere.

Ivan: Do you remember the name of this photographer? He would take pictures on each trip and he worked on the boat?

Allen: He'd take pictures on any trips where it was loaded with passengers but I can't think of his name.

Ivan: When did the Bailey stop running on the river, on the Columbia?

Allen: About the time starting into World War I.

Ivan: And then she went up to Seattle?

Allen: And then she went up to Seattle and was on the flats, there was a hospital ship.

Ivan: Can you describe her engine to me, the steam engine at all, 2 cylinders or . . .

Allen: Well, just like these big old round things, I don't think it was a sternwheeler.

Ivan: The boiler you say 4 feet high by

Allen: No, that's just as you face it. I don't know how long it was.

Ivan: And they burned wood?

Allen: No, yes, yes, they did. They used to pull into my place where we used to live there at Fisher's Landing.

Ivan: Oh, you used to live at Fisher's Landing?

Allen: Yeah, they used to pull in there to push the wood in.

Ivan: Did you live at Fisher's Landing for a time?

Allen: Not long enough to make any difference in this, I don't think.

Ivan: You knew the old doctor at Dufur, Oregon. Would you tell us about his automobile and his fear of it?

Allen: Well, he didn't know how to handle it, he didn't even know how to start it and that's the morning that we got there and we cranked of course and got it through and then from then on, he'd take me with him. I'd lay off from the hotel and go out amongst those little bergs up there with him. We even carried hot water to have the babies born. We got there that very morning, I can just see him now trying to get that thing started.

Ivan: Was it a Ford?

Allen: No, it was a Buick.

Ivan: A roadster?

Allen: Yeah.

Ivan: And you had to crank it?

Allen: Yeah, oh yeah, pull a wire on the side to choke it.

Ivan: And did you help him deliver the babies?

Allen: Yeah, I carried water from the kitchen to wherever I had to go. This Lou, the fellow in the drug store, that was the fellow that was jealous of me; Lou stuttered something awful and I was after his girl. There was two or three Indians in there trying to get liquor from him and he fixed them up. Effervest only, he give them both a glass then he poured the thing on them and then he give them another and the stuff would come out of their nose. Course they figured it was fire water.

Allen: He wanted to get rid of them.

Ivan: In 1927 at Maupin, Oregon when I worked in the grocery store there, the Indians would come in seeking vanilla to drink and the store stocked these large bottles of imitation vanilla. No alcohol in it. So we'd sell them this imitation vanilla and they were exceedingly sober, deadpan, they wouldn't give any indication they were trying to get drunk they were just getting some seasoning material from the vanilla.

(This is the 18th of February. Yesterday, Mr. Park grew tired and I considered that I should not continue the interview. He and Mrs. White, who is aiding him through his troubles, will be out sometime this spring to see how the bell, the Bailey Gatzert Bell is displayed and as he improves in health, I'll try to get more interviews with him, more flashes of memory as you can see and after we stopped the interview yesterday there were even more, which I did not catch.)