

**Call number: ORAL HISTORY 02-00-64-08 PART 1**

**Narrator: William Cashen in Bill and Jean Kennedy's party**

**Date: 10/19/1970**

**Place: San Rafael, CA**

**Summary created by: Varpu M Lotvonen**

**Date of summary created: 7/26/13**

**Notes: Originals on cassette tapes. Master copies on CD.**

**Series: William Cashen Collection**

Bill Cashen starts the recording by stating the time and place and that they have a gathering of people associated with Alaska. Elizabeth Daily, Mrs. and Mr. Tommy Thompson whose first name is Charles but everybody calls him Tommy, Florence Roth and her sister is Dorothy Roth Loftus. Also present is Florence's aunt, Mrs. Hastings, who is her mother's brother's widow. She never lived in Alaska. Several of her mother's brothers were Hastings. One of them had a no. 1 Discovery Claim in Ferry.

Cashen tells about his book project to Florence: Regents put him to work and he wrote about 20 chapter titles so far and now he has to write the chapters. He has never written a book but it sounded like a sensible start. He has first 2-3 chapters done and he is getting into politics. Florence Roth's father was a district attorney while Bunnell was a judge. He went campaigning for him for delegate. Cashen says he made quite a good nominating speech in Skagway, which was noted in headlines because more people knew him than Bunnell at the time. Florence says he didn't get very far [unclear] Wickersham. Cashen says he didn't do too badly, and the ratio was 3-2 so it wasn't 2-1. Florence says she will be interested in Cashen's book because of the history she didn't know about. Cashen tells about his striving for factuality, using newspaper sources for verification. He also talks about his interview with Bob Bloom who still apologizes that he couldn't get rid of Bunnell right at the second meeting. Cashen talks more about his tape recording project. [Break in the recording.]

Cashen shows people his subject headings for 20 chapters. [Break in the recording.] Cashen talks about his book's early chapters and the politics during the time when Wickersham was still around. It was Wickersham and anti-Wickersham those days. The reason why Bunnell was a candidate for the residency was because Wickersham held off his re-appointment as judge. [Break in the recording.]

[Unclear talking about various subjects. Only Cashen is clearly audible.]

Cashen discusses his trip with a man who talks about his life in Klondike. They have their roots in Alaska and also they lived in Klondike for many years when there were still many old-timers left. They are well-rooted on the Canadian side of the picture and they know more Canadians than Americans. He was there in 17 years. He started in Fairbanks with U.S. Mining and Fairbanks Exploration Company. Then they moved to Dawson in 1935 and lived there for 7 years. During that time there were old-time

Klondikers still alive. He was assistant general manager for Yukon Consolit [sp? Consolidated?]. They were well planted in Klondike and very few people anymore have lived in both places long enough to know a lot of people. Liz [?] hasn't been back to Alaska since [unclear] left Klondike in 1942 but the speaker has been there great many times. This is the first time in 8 years he hasn't been to Alaska. He has been back to Alaska and the Yukon many times. The speaker is talking about visiting the University whenever he goes to Fairbanks. [Unclear about Bunnell and Patty.] Cashen says he surely knew all the old-timers from the University and the miners. He was in Fairbanks in 1926 to 1935 during the gold boom. They didn't feel the Depression Era. Cashen says he is right and that the Depression was cushioned and the mines were "catching their stride." That's what made the FE-Company [unclear]. The speaker was in Fairbanks in 1962 when they shut down the last dredge and the Elizabeth was christened that day. He was the engineer in charge of constructing [the ship]. He talked to somebody at the News-Miner and they didn't even know what gold was and had no idea "what made that town". Since the war up to a few years ago, 80% of the gross income of Alaska came from tax money and it was bureaucratic taxes that supported Alaska, which ruined the country. The speaker was the first acting project manager for Naval Petroleum Reserve no. 4, Point Barrow back when the war ended. He went up in 1946 and he had been there before but had been away for many years. He used to go to see Patty when he was there [in Point Barrow?] just to say hello and Patty was kind enough to invite them for dinner a few times.

When Patty left the University, he went to work for a Canadian by the name of General McRae. It was a perfect setup: Patty had the know-how, McRae had the money, and the economic situation was right. Patty knew where to go look for things. It started from Canada, but Patty encouraged McRae to come to Alaska and developed two fine properties: Woodchopper and Coal Creeks. It was a happy relationship. Then the WW2 came along and by this time the properties were approaching exhaustion but weren't exhausted already. Patty was one of the few operators who were able to resume operations after the war. It was a world-wide trend that most placer miners didn't. His Canadian ventures were not as good but quite a few survived after war. He started one after the war and it did moderately well. After General McRae got old and died, Patty was anxious to get into politics and wanted to be the governor of Alaska. The opportunity came for him to become the president of the University [of Alaska], he accepted it, and did a fine job. Glen [unclear] who lives in Seattle would be very knowledgeable about this history. Cashen doesn't know him in person. He retired from being the head of Carrington Company a number of years ago. "He's a walking encyclopedia of information" and since Volney Richmond, Sr. died, Glen probably has most comprehensive knowledge of factors behind the scenes. He told the speaker that Patty wanted to be the governor and has been intimately connected with the business and politics of Alaska, not actively but behind the scenes. He was astute observer. He is now retired and only active as a director of the National Bank of Commerce in Seattle where he lives. He is in full command of his faculties and Cashen could record him. That would be well worth it because he could tell many things going back to 1906. He could tell about development of Alaska and the interrelationship of business and politics, as well as people.

In Dawson the speaker had Glen Carrington [sp?], Volney Richmond Sr and an old timer named Hiller, who was there with the customs service [they were visiting]. They sat down and reminisced for an entire night. It was a shame it wasn't recorded. They had lots of knowledge about names, times, places and

why things happened. Volney was the head of the NC-Company; Glenn was a behind-the-scenes operator as the principal financier of the miners in Alaska. Cashen explains grubstaking and that Glen had to know the value of the ground and who was a reliable man. The speaker continues that Glen would know the politics from early 1930s until today. He's the last one of "these people" who is still alive, of the ones who operated behind the scenes. Back then Alaska was based on gold and then it became based on construction of defense and after the war it was based on pure bureaucracy. It started around 1946 when the speaker went to Point Barrow. Cashen agrees that there is lots of government. Now they have oil money and they don't know what to do with it.

Cashen asks if the speaker knew Archie Shields but he says he doesn't. Cashen says Archie is interested in Alaska history, and gets interested in photographs that someone is displaying. [Unclear talking.] The previous speaker continues by saying that he knows yet another person who has a good knowledge of Alaska's background: Arnold Nordale. Cashen says Beistline said the same thing. The speaker says Nordale shows his age with white hair and all that, but that he is still mentally sharp. His dealings were not concerning Fairbanks so much, but he might be of help.

Cashen says that if the regents hadn't assigned this project about early days of the University, he would have written a little book about early Fairbanks history and he is still planning on doing it. Cashen says the time is very ripe for doing this work, to which the speaker says it's almost too late since Glen Carrington is the only one alive. Volney Richmond and Ed Walken [sp?] who was [unclear] have died. Ed was the court reporter for the great trials of the Klondike and all of Alaska for many years, his whole life. He lived in Fairbanks but started out in Dawson and has lived in many other places, like Valdez. He used to come over to play [unclear] every afternoon for 5 years before he died and he had a photographic memory. [Break in the recording.]

Cashen says Charles O'Thompson is one of the early names [at the College]. Charles says he started there in fall of 1926. He already had studied journalism in Montana but he got something called post-World War 1 depression and he ran out of funds. There were not enough jobs to go around. He was born and raised in Montana. He was a drop-out for 2-3 years and then he decided to go to Alaska and make his fortune and come back to finish college and set the world on fire. In June, 1925 he took a boat out of Seattle to Seward and landed up with a roommate called Charles E. Bunnell. At the time the trip took 7-8 days. Charles and Bunnell became fairly well acquainted after entertaining the old ladies on board. Bunnell encouraged Charles to enter the College but he had other ideas. He avoided Bunnell on a train from Seward to Fairbanks because he wanted, at the time, to return to the University of Montana. After a year in Alaska, Charles went to Livengood where his older brother had found a place that pleased him. His name was George [O'Thompson]. He was working at the placer mines in Livengood and tipped Charles that Livengood was the place to make a big stake and go back outside. Charles had a wonderful year there with dog teams, prospecting and placer mining. At the end of the year Charles had no interest at all to go back to Montana.

In July 1926 he went to see the Judge [Bunnell]. Cashen confirms that he was called the Judge for years and years. Charles walked over the trail from Livengood to Chatanika and there was no road at that time. It was a 52-mile trail to the railway that was running to Chatanika. It was in 1926. Then it was

another 4 miles to Chatanika, which was a little town at that time. Charles walked straight through 56 miles. He stopped once to boil up some tea. He arrived at the College and met the Judge who was quite interested in having Charles enrolled at fall. Bunnell also introduced Charles to his acting secretary. Mrs. [LaVerne] Keys who used to be the secretary had married George and resigned. During the summer, Bunnell was without a permanent secretary so he had hired a young lady [who is present at the party?]. Florence was a student at the time and was a secretary only for the summer in 1926. Later during the summer Bunnell employed Eunice Collins. Talking about Eunice's marriages to McIntosh. Charles enrolled in fall of 1926 and since his credits in Montana were rather skimpy and in a field that was not taught at the College, he did four full years. He started all over.

Cashen talks about the Collegium that had already had a couple of issues come out in 1923 and in 1924. It was still in magazine-form when Charles took over. During his freshman year, John McCombe was the editor of the Farthest North Collegium and Leslie Marshan. After being there for a few weeks or months, they asked Charles if he also would take a position at the Collegium. He became the assistant editor or something like that during his freshman year. He doesn't remember if he edited 1 or 2 years, but he thinks it was 2. Cashen talks about the Collegium that they have on file and that he uses as sources for his history writing since that was what Bunnell wanted. Bunnell had a great sense of history and he knew exactly what he wanted get recorded so he prompted people to write down things as they happened. One of the great sufferings that Bunnell went through was the discontinuation of the Collegium in competition with the student paper and the Alumnus. There is no monthly record of what is going on at the institution and who is doing what. Charles was sad it was converted into a newspaper. It seemed to him that something had been lost in the process. More discussion about the differences between the Collegium and the Polar Star and their competition for advertisers. Cashen resurrected the paper as a non-advertising magazine in 1954 to 1956 but then it discontinued completely. The last issue has a story about Dr. Bunnell's death in 1956.

Cashen talks about his role as a biographer: he won't write about times after Bunnell's presidency since he would be at loss with sources. It's going to be about the man and his ideals, about Bunnell himself and the early history of the University. He wants to be a friendly biographer.

Charles tells that he "is a little bitter about the old boy" [Bunnell]. He was the man who married the Judge's secretary and fell out of favor. He didn't marry before graduation. He had been lined up with a job with Lathrop interests [?] after graduation and had assumed he would be in Alaska for the rest of his life. Ben Eielson was killed at the time and Bunnell persuaded him to give up the job and take over the stewardship of a memorial committee to raise funds for a memorial building, a library. Then he had the misfortune of marrying the boss' secretary which displeased him very much. Charles told him that they were getting married and told him the date and persuaded him to come along [to the ceremony]. He wasn't the pater familias, giving the bride away and maybe that's what bothered him. Anyway, later the same day he said some things to Fonse [Florence] who has a temper of her own and as a result Bunnell didn't come to the wedding. Charles didn't know about it until he was looking around at the wedding and noticed that the Judge wasn't there. Bunnell didn't get over that and shortly after that, by mutual consent, the committee was disbanded and Charles went back to Lathrop to ask for a job but Lathrop

said he couldn't have it because he had fell out of favor of the Judge. Charles went to Washington and started quite another career. In retrospect, Bunnell did Charles a favor since Charles has had a great life.

Cashen says Bunnell had the propensity to unexpectedly do something like that to people. Anyone who knew him well was slapped down by him. Lavern Keys married his janitor [unclear] but later on he got over it and she filled in [the secretary] at times. [End of recording.]