

Call number: ORAL HISTORY 02-00-64-10 CD 1

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

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Summary created by: Varpu M Lotvonen

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

Series: William Cashen Collection

Tape starts with Elizabeth talking about a house fire.

Cashen talks about the Dempsey Case: He Dempsey went to Seward and a girlfriend of the woman who was murdered in Anchorage, perhaps a coworker, notified the police that she was missing. She was last seen with this Dempsey so they [the Police] put out a call for his name and found him in Seward. The Deputy Marshal there by the name of Evans was instructed to get him for questioning and he did. As it happened, Dempsey had concealed a gun in his trousers and as he stopped to let Evans go ahead, he pulled the gun and killed Evans. Then he ran to the railroad yard and there were a dozen people eye-witnessing the happenings.

A woman says that Dempsey is still alive as far as anybody knows. "If Evans had put Dempsey down stairs first and followed him, but instead of that he made a mistake of stepping ahead." Evans let Dempsey follow him, thinking that he was unarmed. There was nobody else, but Mrs. Evans was upstairs. Evans lived about two days after the shooting. He was shot in the abdominal area.

Cashen says that the murder happened in Seward. The woman was murdered in Anchorage, the Deputy Marshal in Seward and the trial was held in Valdez. Bunnell was holding court outside of his own division, stepping in for somebody. In Alaska, district judges can hold court in any place needed. At first they tried Dempsey for the murder of Evans, and that was the first court. He was found guilty for a first-degree murder. The defense attorney was Tony Dimond, at least on one trial. Prosecuting attorney was the district attorney by the name of Money, or Monelly, or Munev –Cashen doesn't remember the name. They were careful and went through 60-something person panel to make the trial airtight and absolutely without prejudice. They didn't take anybody from Seward because they were terribly upset about the town tragedy.

A woman wonders if the murder of the Deputy Marshal really was a first-degree murder: she doesn't think there was malice or forethought, and wonders if Dempsey shot Evans with the idea of killing him or was it just means to escape. Cashen says he doesn't know if it was 1st degree murder, but there was

no recommendation for mercy. Cashen says it is serious offence to turn a gun against one's arresting officer. Some other woman says it was 1st degree for the girl. [Unclear.] Elizabeth says they didn't execute him and that as far as she knows, he is still alive. Another woman says he escaped again. Cashen says he escaped in 1940 from McNeill Island and never got him again. He's been on the FBI's wanted list for 30 years and it's such a good story because Dempsey is still presumed to be alive.

[Elizabeth is talking about something unclear, walking posse and everybody was very upset.]

Discussing Bessie Baker [?] and her husband, and their marriage. [Unclear.] She was a quiet, timid girl, mousy type. [Unclear talking. Someone robbed the Washington-Alaska Bank.] Cashen says Bessie was a trustee there. [Unclear] French brothers [sp?] and Gausted and Jim Writer, all in it together. Jim Writer was her beau and he was arrested just after her father was. Elizabeth's mother had the sad duty to be on Jim's [?] jury. [Unclear.]

9:34 Mentioning the Black Bear case. [Unclear.] Romeo Hoyt [sp?] robbed a post-office. [Unclear.] A man's voice says the Black Bear case was in 1928. [Unclear.] Cashen asks what the case was about. [Unclear.] The Black Bear case story unfolds through a discussion between Bill Cashen and the other participants of the conversation: It was gold shipment robbery between Iditarod and Nenana. A man's voice says he was in the grand jury on that case. It was in the fall of 1929. Black Bear got into the case through a man she was "mixed up with". [Unclear.] Cashen asks if she committed the robbery, but the others explain that she was an accessory to the crime and was the passenger on the mail sled.

Cashen says it was a rough and ready country up there. A woman's voice says that the story was that "you couldn't commit a crime there because it was too light in the summer to escape and in the winter you can track the snow-tracks, and it wasn't until the planes came that there was any crime [Unclear]."

Elizabeth asks if people remember the first execution and Mr. [William F.] Thompson's [editor and publisher of the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner] headline in the paper [unclear, sounds something like: Jerked his head off 6 o'clock]. [Unclear.] One of his famous headlines was [Unclear]. He was clever. Elisabeth says he was seldom sober but he did his best work half-drunk. He was a real newspaper-man.

Cashen tells about his scanning old newspapers: When they were applying for the railroad funds, at the same time President Wilson's health was failing. There were headlines about the prospects of the railroad appropriation and then another about the President's health. Then a headline comes out: "President's health is improving." And another one: "Hope he stays well enough to sign our railroad bill."

A woman's voice says she hopes Cashen keeps the old News-Miners. [Unclear] copies which Cashen puts in the machine and scans through [talking about microfiche]. He says he gets so involved in it that he forgets what he was doing. A man says he has 20 years of Alaska Weekly. [Unclear.] Cashen thinks University doesn't have that. The man says their collection is not complete but they have years of them. Elizabeth says that some of them were allowed to get wet and are more damaged, but there are great many that are not. Cashen says that the advantage of Alaska Weekly is that it summarized the Alaska newspapers from the previous week. [Unclear conversation about somebody.]

1430 Someone says if he can find his contribution for the University [of Alaska]. He has a copy of the Russian map made at the time when Eielson [?probably pilot Carl Ben Eielson] was lost in Siberia. Cashen says they would love to have that.

Elizabeth tells that it was the first summer he [Later identified as Ben Eielson.] started flying and it was either 10 minutes for \$15 dollars or 15 minutes for \$10 dollars. It was with an old Jenny and Thomas Edison's son came up as a tourist and he took him up. He took a series of pictures, Elizabeth doesn't remember if it was 2 or 3 that he took from Ben's plane. The picture of the College from the air was one that he took. Elizabeth also has a picture of Fairbanks that Edison's son took and Ben gave her the picture. [Unclear.] They saw each other every day and ran around together. Everybody loved Ben, men, women, children, young and old. [Unclear.]

Elizabeth is talking about pictures she has of famous bush pilots, Ben standing in the middle. There were Young [?], Bennett [?], Ben [Eielson]. Noel [Wien] wasn't there, and she can't remember the rest. [Unclear.] She says she would be very happy to send them to people [the University of Alaska]. Cashen says they would be very happy to have them and doesn't think they have [unclear].

Cashen tells that they [the University of Alaska, Fairbanks] have wonderful archives and an archivist who is a trained man, and assistant and secretary. Now they have place to put them.

Elizabeth says something unclear about his brother and how he died and when she tried to find them [archived objects?] she couldn't find them. [Unclear.] Cashen asks what kind of papers were they and Elizabeth says they were journals her father wrote when he first came into the country. Now they are lost. Cashen states again that they have nice archive set up.

Cashen is talking about where he is staying and that he could give some people a ride to San Francisco. Talking about his hotel.

At 21:34 starts a different recording, conducted on the next day at Jean's house, looking at some old pictures she dug out of the basement.

Cashen mentions Roland Chase [sp?] and the Bruces, Herbert Bruce. [Jean says something unclear.] Mentioning: Eva McGown, Bengie, Miss. Benjamin. Dave Adler was in the background of the picture. Looking at old stocks from Jean's father [who was Charles E. Bunnell]. Cashen says they would love to have them at the archives. Mentioned Louise and her two daughters.

Jean mentions Reynolds Alaska Development Company. Cashen says that that enters into the picture importantly. It was building the Alaska Railroad. The railroad went broke and consequently the Development Company went broke. Jean's father had just been employed for an assistant cashier, and nine days after that company ceased business. Jean says she didn't even know about this. Ed Smith was the senior partner under whom Jean's dad studied law.

Jean supposes that legally the papers are worth nothing, but perhaps they have value as memorabilia. Jean and Cashen discuss some of the papers. Jean offers the papers to Cashen who promises to take them up [to UAF] if they fit his briefcase since he got some other things to carry up with him, such as a great big album and a hockey puck. [Drinking coffee, talking about papers.] Cashen says that Jean's papers are historically interesting and they belong to the archives because lots of people don't save those things.

About Glen Burg's death in a car accident. Cashen stops the recorder when he goes onto the details.

Cashen affirms that Jean's father's things will be interesting for people who are interested in history. Cashen and Jean talk about some people in pictures. Cashen talks briefly about his book's early chapters. Mentioning picture of Jean's father and a baby moose called Ramona. John Lus [sp?] was there while taking care of reindeer in 1927 or 1928. [Unclear.]

Jean and Cashen are talking about a picture related to Bunnell who came up around 1909, according to Jean. Jean was just a child at the time and not interested in politics. Bunnell was sworn in in his birthday, January 12th 1915. According to Cashen, Jean's family came up in 1914. Her father came first and established the court, and the family followed later. Jean remembers coming by boat and walking across the street to the saw-house and sat down on the linoleum floor and started playing cards with Florence and Dorothy. She says she doesn't remember if their father was with them, but remembers what kind of a sweater Florence wore. Jean quotes Elizabeth from last night, saying that the intense things are remembered, and Cashen confirms: intensity, recency and frequency make memories.

Discussing picture circa 1926 or 1927 when Jean was still in high school. Talking about the baby moose Ramona who was named after a song. She was brought in and didn't live very long. Jean though her father was bad feeding Ramona with potato peelings that probably weren't good for her. [Unclear.]

Discussing other pictures. Wilberg and his sister. The grocery store mentioned. They weren't friends with Jean's father, Bailey and Lavery. "Little doll-baby" Lavery is mentioned. The picture was taken at the Birch Lake. Cashen says these are important for Fairbanks history, but not for his book so much. Talking about pictures of people [Later identified as Ben Eielson and Wilkins, Sir Hubert Wilkins who was a captain] who were somehow identified with the University and that aviation was the big thing. [Unclear.]

Jean mentions Helen McDonald, [unclear] Helen Franklin, herself, [unclear] Norma Clauson, Jess Dire, Letha Fisher, no College there. Cashen asks if she has a picture of her mother and mentions the house in the corner of 8th Avenue and Lacy Street. Jean says that the only thing about her mother which maybe should be in the history, and which she might think of as important, was that it was she who thought of that tomb [?]. Jean remembers the days when her father was worrying about the model and she came up with "this" and he liked it. "He approved very little of what she had to offer." Cashen and Jean talk about a competition between Jean's father and mother but she doesn't know what they were competing for. Jean says she was too close to it to understand it but that Florence might be able to help since she grew up with it. Jean remembers the happy feelings that resulted from them getting together and cooperating. With the model, he accepted it being good and that was her contribution to the

University in a direct way although she entertained thousands of people. Cashen says that everybody liked Mrs. Bunnell. She entertained students and early faculty people. Cashen's opinion is that [Mrs. Bunnell ?] was a part of Doctor Bunnell's life and makeup, and Jean interjects that it was an unfortunate part and that Doctor Bunnell should have never married. Cashen tells that Lydia said the same thing that no woman could [succeed?] with Bunnell because he was married to his job.

Cashen tells that Bunnell came up to Wood Island and that he kept a diary that is in the archives. Cashen is quoting a part of it, which deals with writing letters with May and talking about marriage arrangements. He gathered up the native children and took them back to the Carlisle Indian School. The story goes that he took about 9 or 7 or a dozen children, and brought one back. That was Jean.

Cashen has contracts that Bunnell had with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and which state that he got paid \$80 dollars a month and Jean's mother who was an assistant teacher made \$60 a month. When they came back, they taught at Kodiak. Talking about pictures of Kodiak Jean has.

Jean finds a picture of Harold Burg's first trip to Alaska and wonders if she should send it to him. Jean wonders who would want old postcards and Cashen assures her that the archives would. Talking about a picture some nice looking girl, and pictures of Jean's mother and father.

Jean finds a good picture of Bunnell, "the mushing judge," that was taken in Copper Center in September, but there's no year, when he was on his way from Fairbanks to Valdez. He is in the picture with a limousine. Discussing some other picture. There's a picture of Bunnell from 1910 in Valdez where he was affiliated with a brass band in 1910. He was playing the slide trombone. Jean recalls one of Tommy Campbell [?] stories of her father. Tony only knew him as a faculty member and a distant person until he came to the house one night to see him and there he was, laying flat on the floor in his "BVDs" [meaning underwear], playing the trombone. Jean shows a picture of his dad in college.

[End of the recording.]