

Oral History Number: 131-052
Interviewee: Bamford J. Dodge
Interviewer: Gladys Peterson
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Gladys Peterson: This is an interview with Bamford J. Dodge in Missoula, Montana on May 22, 1987. Our main topics will be the Depression of the 1930's and railroading and World War II and anything else that Bamford wishes to add in this interview. Bamford, I've been making these Interviews now for two to three years, largely on the Depression but other topics that the person has information on that would be interesting and even helpful in the Archives. So, knowing that you had worked on the railroad, this is something I've been looking forward to for some time because I don't believe I ever interviewed anybody who had a connection with the railroad besides riding on it. So we'll just get started here. And I do like to put these interviews into perspective. I think that's the only way to do it, and not just to start with your job or the Depression, so, if you don't mind, I'd like to go back to your early life. Were you born in Minnesota?

Bamford Dodge: No; I was born in Arkansas. The reason I was born in Arkansas was that my father was a railroad telegrapher and we moved around a lot. They called them "Boomers." And really there was a shortage of operators and they could get a job on any railroad and usually it was only relief work but once in a while they'd get a station where work was steady. I think they lived there about a year and then they transferred up to Sioux Falls, MN.

GP: Thank you. Where were they from?

BD: Well, my mother was from Mississippi. She was very sketchy about those things. Some people can give a history of their family as long as your arm. So my mother's side was from Mississippi, and my dad was from Wisconsin.

GP: So he was the northerner, and she was a southerner.

BD: (Unintelligible)

GP: You say "broken home." Did he raise you then?

BD: Well, I was in my early teens and --

GP: I see. Were you an only child?

BD: No, I have two brothers.

GP: Were you raised with them then, too?

BD: No; we all separated.

GP: I see. Well, eventually, though, you ended up in Minnesota. Is that correct?

BD: Yes.

GP: I see. Is that where you went to school?

BD: St. Paul, yes.

GP: I see. And then you probably went to high school there.

BD: Yes.

GP: Following your high school, did you get jobs right away?

BD: I ended up with a few odd jobs, but I eventually ended up with the railroad. I heard about a job in the mechanical department, so I inquired and the fellow who interviewed me was a chief draftsman. They had a huge drafting department and he asked me a number of different questions and he says, "What's your nationality?"

I says, "I'm English." He hired me right away because for some reason he had something against the Swedes, and there are a lot of Swedes in Minnesota. (laughs)

GP: Would that be Northern Pacific?

BD: Right. This was a job in (unintelligible) department. I was a junior clerk.

GP: How old were you when you went to work for them?

BD: I was in my, oh, around...in my early 20s. I can't remember just exactly when I worked for them all the time except during the Depression.

GP: Yes. Now how long did you stay in the office then?

BD: I was in the office job about a year and then I went on the road as an electrician and learned the trade. But we worked from St. Paul to Seattle and all the branch lines. I worked doing that for about four years. It involved everything that had to do with electricity on the railroad. Your (unintelligible) motors, power plants, pole lines, anything connected. In those days, why, they were building these large dams and running the [electric] lines throughout the country and many of these towns didn't have electricity, or they had only a small power plant, so that kept us going for a long time.

GP: Going back to when you started with the railroad, you say you got the job because you said you were English. Was it difficult to get on with the railroad?

BD: No, I think that there were jobs. I know they had a huge, a lot, of draftsmen in this office and, gee, I think the wages were 250 dollars a month. The chief draftsmen were making 300 dollars a month. That's a week's wages now.

GP: Yes. About when would that have been?

BD: That would've been about '22, '23.

GP: That probably was about the heyday of railroading, wasn't it?

BD: No. There's still a heyday in railroading. This is a huge system now. People think the railroads are on the way out, but this keeps expanding all the time. Like where they used to have these large extra gangs of men working on the track, usually they were a bunch of drunks, you know; we had a hard time controlling them to get work out of them. I remember they had one train going through Missoula with a solid train of [worker] cars full of them. They wouldn't even stop here, because they figured if they stopped, they'd all make for the bars and they would be another week rounding them up again. But now it's all mechanical, almost. Two or three men can do the work of about 20.

GP: Those do sound like very good wages for the '20s. Was the union involved at all at that time?

BD: They were. I didn't pay too much attention to it there. I think that they were all organized. But they had a big strike in the mechanical car department in '22.

GP: Was that a union strike?

BD: Yeah. And they lost it. They transported men in from all over the United States and I think the strikers themselves went from one city to another. They saw they weren't going to make it. But it was a disaster.

GP: Did they actually stop the railroads from operating?

BD: No.

GP: Was that because they brought other people in to work?

BD: The office I worked in, the draftsmen were out in the roundhouse keeping their locomotives maintained. That had to do with all the boxcars, the locomotives, coaches, anything.

GP: Non-union.

BD: Yeah. Well, they were probably organized. When they returned and they broke the strike, I think, if I remember right, they formed what they call a company union. And that went on for quite a while.

GP: Did you have to join that eventually?

BD: Yes. I belonged to the electricians and we had a pretty good setup, too. There was a lot of protection and the dues weren't bad but there was about a \$60-a-month pension.

GP: Oh, I see. You must have enjoyed railroading.

BD: I did. The job I had traveling and the different types of work almost every day made it interesting. And then the last 20 years I put in as (unintelligible) supervisor.

GP: Did you ever meet a man named Bill Nash in Livingston?

BD: I think your husband may have asked me that. No; there was a Nash that I worked for back in the early days.

GP: Okay; we were talking a little bit about the union. Do you recall that there was much agitation for the union to come in? There must have been some if they struck.

BD: Well, I didn't pay much attention to it, but they did organize and I don't think they organized...oh, they weren't a hard-boiled outfit.

GP: They weren't?

BD: No; you take during the war when companies were getting so they were paying big wages, we made a little extra. They gave us an hour a day extra, and we were paid time and a half for that one hour. That was a good feeling.

GP: That was because of the union they paid?

BD: They agreed to it, that's for sure. It wasn't much. But they had trouble getting men. They lost a lot of men to the army and they needed more men. I remember down at the terminal here, they hired a retarded kid. His parents were schoolteachers. He was a nice-looking kid, six foot tall, but just wasn't hardly worth having down there. You know, you have somebody like that, they would tease him and get him all worked up and make him worse. And then I remember they had a midget that came in. He'd been used in aircraft building where he could crawl in the small holes, but he was an alcoholic, so those are the things you'd end up with.

GP: I see. Well, before we get into World War II, let's back up to the '30s. When did you first notice

the Depression as it affected you and your job?

BD: I noticed it when I was laid off. I got through '29 and '30; I guess that was the last before I was laid off and then things got so tight. Then I was laid off in Tacoma, Washington and I thought, "Well, I couldn't find anything around there," they had so many organized men I knew they'd take them first.

GP: Now, could I ask you a question? You said you were laid off in Tacoma, Washington. Was that your base at the time?

BD: At the time we were working in the shop there.

GP: I see.

BD: It ended up, to begin with, the only place we wouldn't get expenses was St. Paul, Minnesota. That was how it was. Then they split it up into three sections: St. Paul, Livingston and Tacoma. And expenses were 2 dollars a day, fifty cents for each meal and fifty cents for lodging.

BP: Oh, wow. Did you get much notice when they laid you off?

BD: No, it was right now. And so I sat around there for a while and saw I wasn't going to make it; my pass ran out, so I had to turn that in. So I thought I'd head back to St. Paul. Well, I rode a freight train partway. It was in the fall when I started out and they had the refrigerator cars in for shipping apples and so forth. It was just the time of year when they didn't put the charcoal burners in there and it wasn't warm enough for ice, so I got down in one of those chambers and slept on the floor during the night, went to Livingston and one of the Nashes—in fact, that you were talking about—I stayed with him a few days. Finally he found out that they were hiring again, so I got back on and went back and worked for three or four months and they changed terminals there to Yakima and I went to Yakima—

GP: You just worked for them for three months?

BD: Yes.

GP: Now as you were riding those cars in your "private compartment" or special compartment, were you the only one?

BD: Oh, no. You know what a jungle is, don't you? It's a place where the hoboes gathered. I ended up on one of those in Spokane and I couldn't believe it. There were college people there, college men, some of them from Alaska who had come down here looking for work. They were all pretty nice fellows. In fact, one of them noticed I didn't have a blanket or anything. He had stolen a cover off a haystack, so he ripped it in two and gave it to me so I wouldn't freeze to death. Oh, it was terrible! The little money that I had been able to stash away I stuck in the toe of my shoe so I

wouldn't be flashing it.

GP: You didn't take your shoes off publicly or anything like that, obviously. How many nights did you have to spend like that on your trip?

BD: Oh, from there to Livingston there was probably three or four and then I got there. I was lucky enough to get on [job] and I had transportation to go back to St. Paul.

GP: Were these men you traveled with at that time the kind of people? You say a lot were college graduates and nice people. Were they family men doing that?

BD: Well, it seemed like, I don't know about that, but it seems that they wouldn't be traveling like that...of course, they might be going to get a job, or going home. You never got much information and some of them, they were pretty low down on the scale.

GP: You mean financially or—

BD: Hell, mentally, you know usually they were the first ones who were laid off.

GP: Oh, I see. They didn't have seniority or anything like that. I see. Were they eating? Were they using soup kitchens and things like that?

BD: Well, I never ran into anything like that. I didn't have to. But I can recall a funny thing on this trip. They didn't have any bread at this jungle so I walked over to a grocery store and brought back some bread. Before I left, this man pulled some beans out of his pocket, put them in a tin can with water and threw a chunk of butter in there and it came to a boil over this fire. He kept taking them, sampling them. He said, "The doggoned things won't get soft!" You've got to soak a bean overnight. (laughs) So that's the way it was. I didn't eat anything like that.

GP: Now I'm certain that at this time you did not have a family to support or anything like that, you weren't married at that time. Was your family affected by the Depression?

BD: No, I had a brother that took off and his family broke up. He was kind of a ne'er-do-well. Then the other brother worked for the New York Life Insurance Company and he didn't have too much wages but he worked through the whole thing. But I finally got a job in an office building doing some maintenance and running an elevator at night, and there were college people coming in there asking me about work.

GP: This is while you were waiting to get back on at the railroad.

BD: Hoping.

GP: Hoping. And where was this?

BD: St. Paul.

GP: I see. Do you remember seeing breadlines or soup lines and all that?

BD: No, I don't. You see, I don't know how -- of course they had that Roosevelt get in and then they had relief set up. But it was usually for married people with children who weren't able to make it.

GP: Like the WPA and those agencies?

BD: Well, I think before I was laid off, I had another job down at Wallace and I rode down there and there was a special train at Superior just for these kids from New York City who had shipped out there for the CCC. But that was a wonderful thing.

GP: Yes, I still think we're seeing the results of that, aren't we? Most people don't argue about that one, at least. I'd like to ask you now if, during those tough times, or going back to the not-so-tough times of the '20's, if you saw many women employed by the railroad.

BD: Well, I ran into something like that when I was working in Minnesota and they had a number of women working in offices for the big shots and I can remember those fellows just growling something awful for hiring women, "taking jobs away from us men."

GP: This is during the '20s?

BD: That's just one of the cases, of course, in a general office place like that.

GP: I suppose they were limited to the office jobs for the most part wherever they were.

BD: We had a couple down here in the roundhouse.

GP: In Missoula?

BD: Those years, yeah, working in the roundhouse wiping down engines.

GP: As early as when?

BD: That was in the '40s.

GP: That was probably due to the World War II shortage.

BD: I imagine. They had quite a bit of seniority.

GP: Oh. Well, during the Depression...I suppose this is almost a silly question, but you were short of

money? Did you have any form of entertainment at all? Did you ever go to the show?

BD: Yew. Well, we went to a lot of shows, they were only 25 cents, and they had parks that you could go to and they had amusement things there.

GP: It took less money didn't it? I remember one of the things in Chicago where I grew up. You could ride out to the end of the line on the streetcar and turn around and come back.

BD: Get off at the end of the line and then walk out in the country.

GP: I'm sure you remember the year that you went back to work for the railroad.

BD: Let's see. That was about '36 or '37. Then they had to cut down two districts and I stayed pretty well in the first district. I rode as far as Fargo or Mandan. Then I could get home for the weekend.

GP: Did you think or notice that the railroad was increasing its business and ultimately its jobs because World War II was coming along?

BD: Oh, yes. Things picked up and ran lots of specials and the boys shipped out of Seattle and --

GP: Was this in the late '30's then?

BD: That was, let's see, no, that didn't have anything to do with the war. Let's see, when did the war start?

GP: [Nineteen] forty-one.

BD: Forty-one. Well, I didn't, there wasn't much going on as far as wars, but after that it picked up, then the specials started. And they'd have solid trains of troops, enlisted men headed for the Coast. Then they would stop down at the Depot and they would have to service the train and they'd give them 20 minutes or so to get off the train and half of them would head across from the Depot. It was the Double Front Bar—now the chicken place.

GP: Was it a bar then?

BD: Yes! He made a fortune there selling them booze. They'd all come back with a quart. The MP's got onto this. They couldn't stop them from going over there but when they came back with their bottles they could take their bottles away from them and they lost their liquor that way. [They'd] smash the bottles on the railroad tracks. So there was a lot of that.

GP: What about suburban passengers? I suppose the trains were packed with those people too.

BD: There was a lot of traffic going back and forth to St. Louis and on holidays, going home for Christmas, and so many they had to stand up. The traffic increased so much, and they needed more power. They had to get those engines out in a hurry so they had to have more men for service. They'd hire almost anyone they could get. I remember we had a guy down there about 70 years old wiping down engines, and there was a pop on a steam engine got him. They had to get rid of him.

GP: He wasn't aware—

BD: Of the danger? No.

GP: He just wasn't sharp enough for it. Were you working long hours?

BD: There was a lot of overtime -- everybody was working overtime.

GP: One thing that has interested me, and I've done a little reading about it, the waiters and the black people who were working for the railroad and—

[End of Side A]

[Side B]

GP: He was a railroad porter on one of these northern lines, I'm not sure which, but he claims that there was so much discrimination against those blacks and they attempted to organize and they did, but it was a struggle for them anyhow to get much respectability in those jobs. They took a lot of insults. And I believe that. But he also claims to have been the instigator of getting Martin Luther King involved in the civil rights movement. He's the one who told Martin Luther King what to do and where to do it. Do you recall any of these race relations on the passenger trains? That's where they were, isn't it? They were all on the passenger trains? The blacks?

BD: Well, they ended up in later years a black would be a dining car waiter but we never had black cooks on a Great Northern diner. And I recall, if any silverware was missing, they were charged up for it.

GP: Simply because they were black?

BD: They were supposed to watch it at the tables and see that none of it was missing. There were good ones and bad ones. I remember when I first started out—they got used to me, then they'd recognize me. I came into the diner once and one of them yelled out, "Spotter!" Well, they figured I was a diner car (?) spotter, see, after seeing me so many times.

GP: Do you have any favorite stories about your railroad career? Anecdotes of any kind?

BD: Oh, there were a lot of them. I remember on these political campaigns I was working at the terminal here when Dewey went through campaigning, remember?

GP: Well, I wasn't here at the time.

BD: You knew about Dewey campaigning.

GP: I heard about that from Tom Haines.

BD: Well, we had a special with him coming in from the West. And when they started out with this power from Spokane, steam power, they put the wrong kind of coal on the engine. If they'd put the right kind on the engine would have steamed all up, but this coal built up honeycombs where the fire went through the flues and it got worse and worse and when they left Paradise, they just struggled along. We had a helper down at Arlee and they were losing time so bad that they had to back this helper all the way back down to get him. Well, then they managed to get over the hill. The football field (Dornblaser Field) was just jammed with people waiting. They sat out there for two hours or more waiting for Dewey to get to town. So when he got there (I think this is why he lost the election) he just raised the dickens with labor -- running down all the stupidity of the labor and press. Well, this was all over the United States they heard this. I really think this is why he lost the election.

GP: Now when you were working on the train at that time? You happened to be on that train?

BD: No, I was at the terminal as electrician there.

GP: I see.

BD: So I can remember after the election...remember how Truman held up a newspaper showing how he lost the election?

GP: Yes, the *Chicago Tribune*. Now at least one person has told me that the union people wanted that train to be late, so it was purposely delayed.

BD: No; no. I knew the foreman; he was an Englishman and he was on his way up. He was a roundhouseman at that time and was a sharp one. He was from England. If anybody ever wanted to go up the ladder it was him. His next step would have been to master mechanic. Well, that nailed him right down to the job he had and he ended up in the roundhouse just because he didn't check to see that that engine had the right kind of coal. No, they make up a lot of stories.

GP: Well, I think maybe the Republicans never forgot that.

BD: I saw those doughnuts! They were that round. Just covered the whole pipe, you know. The fire could go through the flues. Now, I remember McKay, the photographer was down there next to the Merc. Remember that McKay's? I went in there, and this Butler—he just died a little while ago. He took over, he married McKay's daughter. He was telling somebody else of the Second Avenue Gang about it and what happened. I felt like smashing him in the face with my lunch bucket, that's what happened. I was working there.

And then another special case while I was working on the railroad that kind of cooked me on a politician. We had a pipefitter working down there, he was a helper, a pipefitter's helper, by the name of Fischer. Are you a Mormon?

GP: No.

BD: He was a Mormon, and he was a hard man to get along with. I had quite a time. He finally got tangled up in some mess and they kind of eased him out. Not really fired him, but they made it tough for him. Well, he got a job—for a Mormon it didn't sound the best—he was a bartender up over a store down there on Higgins Avenue. They had a lodge up there of some kind. He worked at that and had a couple of other jobs, and finally ended up as a Commissioner of Streets of Missoula. From there he went to the Secretary of State. He says, "I'm not going to quit until I'm governor." He'd have made it if he hadn't died of pneumonia. But probably every Mormon in the state voted for him, plus his wives' relations. That's what cooked me on the party. I remember I was riding the train east. They had a bunch of these electric ones, and one of them was Mangan that had that bar

down there across from the depot—the Double Front. He was a "car toad" for the NP.

GP: What does that mean?

BD: Car toads are the ones that work on boxcars. There were more of them just like him, and they told me, those fellows, [that] there was a lawyer, a smart lawyer, that had them under control. When there was some decision to be made in Helena why, they'd all watch him and if he gave a certain signal that meant "vote yes," and if he did another signal it meant "vote no." That's how the place was run.

GP: Well, you never were extremely involved in politics, anyhow, were you? But I'm sure that both of those incidents would have had an effect on you, especially a man running for president.

BD: You knew what that Anaconda newspaper was doing to this state, sort of ran the whole thing. However, in this "roundtable" I belong to, a politician was out there and he said, "It's a little like the old days when they'd go down the hall at the Placer Hotel and throw hundred dollar bills over the transom." They don't do that anymore. They do it some other way, I think.

GP: I suppose. Yeah. Getting back now to your railroad days, I remember the talk, as coal transportation changed to diesel, of "featherbedding". Now there was some talk among the non-railroad people about that sort of thing and why we had to be paying for "featherbedding" and that. What do you have to say about that?

BD: What do you mean by "featherbedding"?

GP: Well, "featherbedding" being jobs that were eliminated by switching to diesel but keeping those people on anyhow. I don't know anything about it, but that was the talk that I remember hearing.

BD: I tell you this, you know, we had that. We had coal mined out of the coal strip out of Forsyth. They reconstructed our locomotive car boxes so they can burn that coal efficiently, and they could put that coal in the firebox for a dollar a ton. While other railroads were dieselizing engines, some of them 100 percent, we were still putting up coal docks and buying boiler shells for 10,000 dollars. Had six of them sitting around Livingston down there, bought them down in Virginia someplace. They installed a huge flue rattler to clean the flue and because of that dollar a ton into the firebox. Well, finally—

GP: A dollar a ton! Amazing.

BD: Yes. (laughs) That means it went from Forsyth all over the system. They had these special trains, coal trains, they had these coal docks every place along the main line; they had to make a coal stop every so often. But anyhow, they finally cracked down on these officials that were old steam men and they had helper districts like at Whitehall—this was a helper district. Everything

that went over Evaro Hill had to have a helper. All the passenger trains went over Evaro Hill. Now the tracks are rusty; they don't run anything. However, I was working in Minneapolis. I finally got off the old job and to the terminal in Minneapolis as electrician, and I worked on the first three diesels we bought. They were three switch engines and from then on, why, the diesels started rolling!

GP: When would this have been?

BD: Back in the middle-early '30s.

GP: That early?

BD: I think I got that job in Minneapolis about '38 and that...still running. Then Electro Motor, General Motors, put out a test diesel, four units, and they hooked it on a passenger train. I remember I rode one of them and we were going through Whitehall. They had a steam helper waiting to help us over. But we roared right through there. It wasn't long before they were pulling out the coal docks and the water tanks. We were the pioneers in water treatment on the railroads because of the water in the core every so far, so every water tank had to have the water treatment and that was a terrific expense.

GP: Now you mean water treating -- I see. Why did it have to be treated?

BD: Because of the alkali that would coat the flues so bad and build up on the flues.

GP: It was NP people who improved that? I see. So then, getting back now to this featherbedding, what did that do to employment?

BD: Well, if you were a boilermaker or a pipefitter, it worked against you because they didn't need them. And if you ran the coal dock the same; lots of jobs didn't need [workers]. And where they had switch-engines like at Butte, they'd get out there and they'd work steady for the week without—

GP: So what happened to these people?

BD: Well, retirements took a lot (unintelligible).

GP: They did? Was there such a thing, though, as people kept on just because the unions demanded it or insisted?

BD: (Unintelligible)

GP: So you're saying, then, that such a thing as "featherbedding" didn't really happen?

BD: I didn't see it.

GP: Yes. When did you move to Missoula, Bamford?

BD: Well, we came, let's see, I came out here in '39, I worked six months as general electrician and then I had to go back in my old job. I worked a year and bought a home while I was there back in Minnesota and then this job opened up here in '40, then in '50, why, this diesel supervisor job opened up. (Unintelligible)

—and the title was "Assistant Superintendent of Gas and Diesel Operations." I hated that title.

GP: That was you?

BD: Yes. And so they finally cut it down to "Diesel Supervisor." I worked on that from 1950-1970.

GP: So it was your job, then, that actually brought you to Missoula? Did you know quite a bit about Missoula before you came?

BD: Oh yes, the years I worked from St. Paul to Seattle I worked here many times and I liked it.

GP: I'm sure you've read Norman Maclean's book, *A River Runs Through It*.

BD: I can't say that I have.

GP: Well, he is the son of a former Presbyterian Missoula minister. He wrote that book about the Blackfoot—fishing in the Blackfoot—about his family, about growing up in Missoula and about railroading here at the time. I just wondered if you were familiar with it but, if not, we'll go on.

BD: I'll show you a couple of pictures here of Eisenhower. I rode the Eisenhower Special over my district, and my district at that time was from Forsyth to Spokane. I had to pick the train up at Forsyth and ride it to Spokane.

GP: Why was it called the Eisenhower Special?

BD: Well, that was the campaign special.

GP: Oh, I see.

BD: Yeah, he was on it. Now this here was 16 cars. This is going over Butte Mountain. His car's on the back end. I'm riding the front end of the diesel.

GP: What year would this have been? '52?

BD: October 5, 1952 (unintelligible)

GP: I know where I was when he was running—

BD: There were two diners on here and I was able to get back on the train through the units to get something to eat. I sat there and ate with most of the newspapermen (unintelligible).

GP: You mean the whole train?

BD: Yes. That's what most of it was made up of, and I suppose, this campaign. They started talking to me like I was a reporter. (laughs)

GP: You didn't wear a uniform, then?

BD: Now here's the front end of it and the reason...We always put the steam engine on the rear of the train because of the cinders coming out won't be sucked in the air intake of the diesel, see? But on the Eisenhower train they had to put it on the front end because they were scared that if something happened the steam engine would go through his car. That was one of the reasons the steam engine was on the front end.

Here's a picture I took when we were going through Bozeman.

GP: What a crowd! You're a good historian. You take things and identify them.

BD: Here's one I took when steam was in its glory. This was taken someplace in Dakota. Here's the engine taking on a stock of fuel and water. Here's one of the roundhouse.

GP: Quite a view. These are very historic photographs. I think that Dale Johnson might be interested in your collection. Have you ever talked to him about your collection?

BD: No.

GP: Let's see. I might have a few more questions here. So it was your job that brought you to Missoula and that was in the '40s?

BD: Late 1939.

GP: You've actually lived here quite a while then.

BD: Twenty-seven years. When we consolidated, they had my name down to be transferred to Billings but I only had 6 months to go and I explained I had my home here so the last few months I spent on a tender on a coal train.

GP: So you retired in 1970. Well, I have a few general questions here that we could wind this up with, Bamford. I know there must have been a lot of railroad people here when you came and when the roundhouse was operating and all that. Would you say that railroading was a good life?

BD: It was for me. I think that most people enjoy it. I don't know how some of them can stand the heavy work on those locomotives. Pollution was worse, working in the roundhouse with gas all the time from these locomotives being fired up and steam and water—

GP: Did you know people whose health was affected by that?

BD: I can't tell. Injuries were common. There were some toughies in there. We had a boilermaker down there (steam engines). They'd bring them in, dump the fire out of the grates. He'd crawl in there to inspect it and burn his shoes, it was so hot in there. Then in the wintertime he'd go back and open up a door and get this cold air coming in on him. It would kill an ordinary man.

GP: As far as retirement went, did most of these men "tough out" these tough jobs and end up retiring with a pension or was it negligible?

BD: I can remember when a man retired in my early days. The retirement [was so small that] all he got was 30 dollars a month, and they tried to get rid of him before he retired. That's how things were working in those days. Many cases like that.

GP: So I suppose the union changed that; is that correct? It didn't cost much, though, to belong to the union? You didn't belong to it, did you?

BD: I did in the beginning. When I belonged to Electricians, I think it was around 6 dollars a month.

GP: I mean in your later years?

BD: No, no.

GP: What would you say were your greatest rewards of being a railroad employee?

BD: Well, I don't know. Would you ask somebody else? I don't know what it would be. I just liked the job.

GP: Well, I think I've asked that question lots—of teachers, of politicians.

BD: You know, I had good times and I had tough times. Of course, I look at the good times and not so much at the bad times. There were lots of good things that happened.

GP: Sure, sure. Well, if we can change the subject a little bit, you're obviously a photographer. When did you get interested in that?

BD: I think I got my first camera, a box camera, at Christmas when I was probably eleven or twelve years old and it just kind of worked up over time. Then I got away from it. So my daughter in Seattle wanted to get into it so I went out there and set her up and got her started and I got started all over again. It's a good feeling and there are so many different things you can do. Remember 3-D photography? [When you] went to the movies you had to wear these glasses?

GP: A little.

BD: Well, what I got into was something like that. I still work with it.

GP: So you do have a family? Your daughter's in --

BD: I have a daughter in Seattle and a son in Portland. She married and the son-in-law works for the *Spokesman Review*. The boy is...he went through school in the east, in law someplace, and is running an antique store, Chinese, oriental antiques. He has two stores in Seattle and one outside of Chicago. The other boy started out with Hart Alban but they went out of business.

GP: Oh, I see. Well, I have a few questions about Missoula and Montana here. Perhaps they're not necessary but what is it that you liked about Missoula?

BD: Well, what brought me back here is the mountains and so forth. The fact is that St. Paul, Minneapolis, where I lived, one winter it was 30 below for 30 days. That's one thing that drove me out of there. One summer it was so hot that people—older people—were dying out by the thousands. Back then they didn't have the air conditioning they have now. So that's two things that brought me.

GP: Plus your job? Anything else you'd like to add?

BD: I think that's pretty good. I talked too much.

[End of Interview]