

Interviewer: Gordon L. Swartz III

Date: October 30, 1995

INTERVIEW WITH MR. GILBERT KING

FORMER B & O RAILROAD ENGINEER

Gordon Swartz: My name is Gordon Swartz, and I'm the interviewer. Today's date is October 30, 1995. Tell me your name, and then go from there. Tell me some personal history.

Gilbert King: My name is Gilbert King, Sr., and I was born and raised on a truck farm down between Marietta and Belpre, Ohio, right along the Ohio River, and I was looking through some pictures here last night, and here's a picture here that was taken just before I got a job on the railroad. In 1936 my dad and I took a load of hay right across, across the river with a horse and a wagon, and that's the B & O tracks right over there, right this side of Vienna, West Virginia. I worked over there into Parkersburg.

GS: Vienna.

GK: Vienna, West Virginia.

GS: Is that what, I always called it Vienna.

GK: Vienna, we've always called Vienna.

GS: Well, if you lived there, I know that local people call names different.

GK: Yeah.

15 **GS:** Well, you were dressed up there.

GK: Yeah, that's just before I got a job on the railroad, and, well, I. First job I ever got I got a job with (Canton) Roller Bearing, Canton, Ohio. This is really how I got on the railroad. My future father-in-law, he worked there at () Roller Bearing in Canton, and he heard that, well he heard it through a rumor that they was going to hire men on the Pennsy: brakemen and firemen, and how he found out it was. He was rooming with a young fellow. He was a fireman on the

Pennsylvania Railroad out of Canton, Ohio. So he went down and put his application in for a brakeman on the Pennsy, and they called him right away. They needed men bad on these railroads along about that time, just before the war. And he said to me, he said, "That's what you ought to do. You ought to put your application in for either train service or engine service on the Pennsy. So I did. I went down and put my application in, and a couple days or so they got ahold of me and said for me to come in for an interview, and I did, and they told me to come in for a physical, give me a date. So I went home, and over the weekend I told my dad, and, by the way, my dad was a railroader. I'm from a railroad family, and my dad was. He worked on the B & O Railroad. He was in engine service, and I told him what I'd done, and he just hit the ceiling. He said, "My, my," he said, "you don't want no job with the Pennsylvania Railroad." He said, he said, "They kill them up there like flies. They have a head on collision up there every week on the Pennsylvania Railroad between () and ()." He said, he said, "If you want a job on the railroad. They're just now starting to hire men right out of Parkersburg here for the B & O." He said, "They haven't hired anybody since 1930, but," he said, "I know most I can get you a job on the railroad right here."

43 **GS:** So what year was this?

GK: That was 1942. So he went down and talked to the trainmaster's clerk. His name was Bumpy Dean, down at (Annis) Street Station, Parkersburg, and he, right now, they called me to come down for an interview and put me right to work. I had to make five student trips, and my first pay trip I made December 1, 1942, firing a shovel engine from Parkersburg to Kenova, 132 miles. Well, after I made that trip, I kind of wished I'd of never thought of the railroad, because, I'll tell you, them was mankilling jobs. Of course, I was born and raised on a farm, and I was pretty tough for a young fellow. I had to be. You had to be to stand those jobs. You shoveled fifteen ton of coal one way with a shovel. That was all with a shovel, and, buddy, when you got to Kenova, you know you done a day's work. So I got some pictures here I want to show you. It shows. I run across this picture here the other day looking through this book. When you left Parkersburg, why, you stopped at Ravenswood for coal or water and sand, and the fireman had all that to do. He had to coal the engine, sand the engine, and put water in the tank, and put sand in the sandbox, and I was looking through this book here, and it dawned on me. It shows an engine sitting there at that (pinch) stop. Well, that's the first time that I ever put water in a water tank tender on a steam engine, right there at that water station at Ravenswood, but, like I say, they were mankilling jobs, and, after I went to work, I didn't make a trip that I didn't threaten to quit. They was just, ah they was just, they was, it's unreal the work you had to do, I'll tell you, and

Interview with Gilbert King

my dad and a few other fellows in his class, they fired those engines for twenty years. I don't know how they ever stood it. I'll tell you it's just unreal, the work there was connected with it, and, just to give an example, during the Second World War, the B & O Railroad was so desperate for fireman they had to go out on the street. They'd stop people on the street and ask them if they wanted a job, and some of them, they hired a few of them that way, but a lot of them, when they got down to Ravenswood to stop for water and coal, when they got off that engine, they never got back on. They disappeared.

78 **GS:** You had student runs as you called them.

GK: Yeah, I made, I made, I think, five student runs. The first student run I made was to Kenova with, on one of those engines. That's what they called B8, and, by the way, I looked all through this book, and there's not a picture of that engine in that book no place, and I can show you one similar to it, and I'm not too sure just what class of engine it was really. The only thing, the only thing they called them, they were B8s, and they were an engine where the engineer sat up on the right side of the boiler and the fireman, or the brakeman sat up on the left side of the boiler, and the fireman was all back there on the deck by himself, and the only protection you had was two chains on both sides, the boiler and the tender. That was to protect you from falling out, and, like I say, I'd like to show you a picture of it, but I can't find it. It's not in there, but I could show you something similar to it. The first student trip I made, like I say I made was with a fellow by the name of I. L. Brown. Now he fired those engines. He fired them engines, well, from in the middle twenties, I suppose, up till the time he got promoted. He never got promoted till. Well, he got promoted, but he'd never run an engine till the Second World War broke out. That was long about 1941-42, but he could play them old engines. He just, he could just, he could just put a cigar in his mouth and sing and hum and play with them, he'd fired them for so long, and I learned a lot from him, and he was from a railroad family too. In fact, he had two boys, both them boys fired for me on different parts of the railroad, and, when I come back off of that trip, I made a trip to Benwood on a 4800 with an old engineer by the name of Doc Hammond. Well, that, that was two trips. Then I made a trip to Grafton over the short line, and, by the way, I made it with my dad. He was on a, he was on a helper. He helped this chemical train that run from Moundsville into Grafton, and my dad was on a helper, and the first trip we had we had a technical head-on collision at Hartzell. Of course, I didn't know. I was just new, but we had a new order at Hartzell, and this engineer, his name was Baker from Belpre, Ohio, and he was supposed to take siding. Well, he had about in the neighborhood about fifty or sixty cars, all tank cars. Well, he went up there, and he stopped, but when he took

Interview with Gilbert King

off, why, we, the first thing you noticed, my dad said, "Well, where in the world's he going?" and here there was a crossover from the passing side over to main track. Well, this Baker went to sleep. When he got up to the, when he got up to the east, the west, up the west switch now, when he got up to the west switch, he went to sleep and he went by the switch. Well, he woke up between the east, the west switch at Hartzell and the crossover switch. So he got stopped in time to head in over the crossover into the siding. Well, about the time he, about the time the train got up in the siding about half way, here come this fellow down the hill that we was meeting. His name was Red Hamilton. Now he seen right now what happened, but he, he just smiled. He just laughed about it. He wouldn't ever say anything about it, but, technically, it was a head-on collision.

126 **GS:** I'll be.

GK: So, my dad, when his engine got up to the crossover, he said, "Well, what in the world's he doing going over the crossover?" Well, I was a new man, I didn't know what was going on, you know. Well, the flagmen, they closed the switches up to the crossover, and this engineer we, the other side, we was meeting, he stopped. He just laughed. He never said anything. He wouldn't say. He wouldn't turn nobody in, and we went on about our business. Went through the Hartzell Tunnel and went on in to Grafton, and we got over to what they called a while ago. It was a restaurant, but we call them beaneries over at Grafton, and this, and my dad and I walked in there, and this Baker was setting there at the table, or the counter, and he said to my dad, he said, "Well," he said, "I'm going to eat a bite here," and he said, "I'm going up to the superintendent's office and turn myself in," and the old man said, "What are you going to turn yourself in for?" "Well," he said, "on account of that head-on collision I, technical head-on collision I had down there at Hartzell," and my dad said, "Oh, you're not going to do that." He said, "Red Hammels will never say a thing about that," and he said, "The trainmen on the caboose, they don't know what happened. They never seen nothing." He said, "They'll, nobody'll ever say a word about that." Well, my dad talked him out of it, and nothing come of it, but, really, if he'd had turned himself in, they'd of discharged him, see.

144 **GS:** This was one of your student trips?

GK: On my student trip, yeah.

GS: You were with your dad on the trip?

GK: On the trip, yeah.

GS: He was an engineer?

GK: He was an engineer. Oh, yeah, on the helper, on the string going east to Grafton. Well, we laid up at Grafton for about ten hours, eight or ten hours, something like that, and then I come back with him, and, when I come in to New Martinsville or Brooklyn Junction, why, we stopped there for coal and water. There's a tipple there. We had to take coal and water on her, on your engine, and, while we's a doing this, this train they call Ninety-Nine that run from Benwood to Parkersburg had just arrived at Brooklyn Junction, and my dad said to me, he said. It was a nice, pretty day. Sun was shining and real hot. It was a real hot day, really. It was in the last part, well, the last thing, about the last day, next to the last day of November 1942, and my dad said, "If you go over and get on that engine, when you get to Parkersburg," he said, "Get that engineer to sign your papers, and," he said, "you'll have your student trips in. You can mark up on the extra board to go to work." So that's what I done. I took off a running and got over and got on the engine, and the engineer's name was N. K. Wood from Belpre, Ohio, and, when I got up on the engine, here he had a brand new fireman firing for him, a fellow by the name of Crawford. That was his first trip firing, and there was another guy on there making his student trip by the name of Nixon. There were three new men on that engine. It was a 4800. Well, this old engineer. He was old and crabby, you know, and he didn't like the situation at all, but we had to stand up on that old engine all the way to Parkersburg. That was a hard job, just standing up on those things, let alone riding on them. Well, I tell you what, he was awful crabby, and I didn't figure he'd sign my papers when I got down to Parkersburg, but he did. He signed them, and I marked up on the fireman's extra board down in Parkersburg, and, like I say, my first trip was to Kenova, December 1, 1942, and I told you the story about going down there and coming back, and then I, I worked different jobs, but mostly I worked between Parkersburg and Kenova. I went to Spencer one trip. That was quite a, that was quite a experience, and I also worked between Millwood and Ripley. That was twelve miles, but I didn't do much railroading between these two points till after I come out of the service. After I come out of the service, I held a regular turn out of Ravenswood that worked into Ripley quite a bit, down to Point Pleasant and Kenova.

184 **GS:** About the service, I heard that some railroad men got deferments because they worked on the railroad, but you went in the service?

Interview with Gilbert King

GK: Well, if I had lived in West Virginia, I'd of got deferred. I'd never had to went to the Second World War, but I lived in Ohio, in Washington County in Ohio, and that county didn't give no deferments to nobody, see.

GS: Oh, okay.

GK: Now you was talking to Orville Rogerson.

GS: Yeah, that's where I got this.

GK: Now he, that's right, now he lived in West Virginia. Now he worked on the railroad, and he got deferred, see.

GS: Yeah, because he told me. He said he really wanted, he wanted to go. He even signed up, but he got talked out of it, he said.

GK: Yeah, yeah, the trainmaster caught him. The trainmaster caught what he was trying to do, and railroad men, boy were, they needed them bad. I'll tell you. Yeah, he told me about that. He tried to go to the service, and the trainmaster caught on to what he was a doing, and he stopped that in a hurry, but I, that'd been a great thing if I'd a got deferred, because I put in two years, nine months of just downright hell. I'll tell you. In the service. I don't know how, I don't know I ever made it really.

200 **GS:** What branch of service were you in?

GK: I was in the infantry. I was in the Ninety-First Division over in Italy for two years, well, over about two years. I went over there, I weighed 175 pounds, and, when the war was over with, I weighed 123, my ribs sticking out, and I was sick. I had the jaundice, and I had the jaundice for ten years after that mess over there, and I didn't really didn't think I was going to make it, but I did, and ,when I come back, of course I still held my seniority on the railroad, and when I come back on the railroad, I was an old hand. That was, 1945, my turn was in running them engines between Fairmont and Keyser on these big E1 mileys.

GS: You were an engineer by then.

GK: No, I wasn't an engineer then, but I was, I was promoted in 1947.

GS: Nineteen forty-seven.

Interview with Gilbert King

212 **GK:** I made my first trip in September 1947, but I never got my seniority date until 1949, and that's because there was some other man older than me that never. They were late getting out of the service, and they hadn't finished their promotion yet, and I couldn't get my date till they got theirs. I can show you here. I've got something I want to show you here, if you turn that, put that on pause there. I'll show you something, right here. I'll give you an example of what I was on. When I retired, I was the oldest man.

GS: Yep.

GK: All right. I've got another one here. When I hired out, of course, I was the youngest. I thought I had them all together.

GS: You've got fireman 12-1-42, engineer 6-21-49.

222 **GK:** Yeah, and that PE, that PE, that's passenger engineer there. That H stands for Halser.

GS: For what?

GK: Halser.

GS: What's Halser?

GK: Well, that's, around these shops, you got to halse these engines around, take them out of the roundhouse, put the in the roundhouses, and take them out and coal and water them.

GS: In the yards?

GK: Yeah, in the shop.

GS: Okay. Did you run a lot of passenger trains?

228 **GK:** Ran quite a bit, yeah, extra, extra, nothing regular. They all. I ran the Capitol Limited. A lot of times they'd have derailments over on Parkersburg branch between Grafton and Parkersburg, and, of course they run a lot of passenger trains over there at one time between, between Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and

Interview with Gilbert King

Cincinnati, Ohio, and, whenever they had a derailment over there on the Parkersburg branch between Grafton and Parkersburg, they'd reroute all that freight. Route it over the short line into New Martinsville. Well, we use us fellows for pilots. Of course the pilots run all those trains. I run all them Pennsy trains into Parkersburg and to Clarksburg.

GS: You were, all the time you talked about so far you were based in, out of the Parkersburg area.

GK: Well, I started out down there. Now, when I come out of the service, all those engines at Parkersburg were shovel engines, and the reason that was, the Point Pleasant Bridge wouldn't hold a heavy engine. In other words they had to keep small engines down there on account of that Point Pleasant Bridge, and about all these engines that they used down there, they were all double headers, and they couldn't use anything any bigger than a 2800, and they ran, like I say, they were all shovel engines. Well, I hurt that hand when I was in the service.

248 I got it burnt real bad with white phosphorous, and when I come out of the service, why I come up here and worked because the biggest part of the engines up here were stoker engines, but they had few shovel engines stuck here and there. Every once in a while you'd get a shovel engine.

GS: Okay, now explain the difference between a shovel and a stoker engine.

GK: Well, a stoker engine was a steam engine. A stoker engine was a steam engine that had a shaft. I can show you a picture. I've got some pictures there. It had a shaft that run back in the tender. It was a big.

GS: Like a conveyor.

GK: No, it was like a, oh, I just can't describe it. It was a big round. It was a shaft alright, but, it, they called it a screw shift.

GS: Okay.

259 **GK:** It was a screw shaft, see, and this steam engine turned that screw shaft like this. It ran all the time, see, and, of course, it would convey the coal from the tender into the firebox, see. Then you had blowers. You had five blowers right here. You had a blower for the front side, the back side, the front, and the rear, and you had to set, and now that was steam. That was steam that blowed in there, and that coal run up on a plate just inside the firebox, and that blower, that old steam

Interview with Gilbert King

blower would catch that coal and blow it all over the firebox, see. Of course you had to adjust those. You had to make sure you had them set just right, but once you got them set right, why you scarcely had to put any coal in the firebox with a shovel. Now there on certain stokers you did. There are different types of stokers. You have a duplex stoker. It was the most standard stoker, duplex, and you had the standard. You had the front end stoker. There was about five of them altogether. Now the duplex stoker you had to, you had to keep your corner, your back corners filled with coal with a shovel, because, if you didn't, why cold air would come up in around the corners over top of your fire, and it wouldn't make a good hot fire, but I can show you a picture, if that isn't plain to you.

GS: It's, yeah, and, so, you still had the fireman, but he didn't work as hard. Is that what you're saying?

279 **GK:** Well, you didn't work, no, you didn't shovel near as much coal. Well, there's no way, there's no way that you could keep one of them big engines hot with a shovel. No man could stand it, because them big EM1 engines, they held, they held twenty-five ton of coal, and a lot of times, especially coming east over the short line with a train of coal, you'd run out of coal sometime, and there was a lot of times you run out of coal going the other way, and there's been different times we've had to pull in to Western Maryland shop over at Chiefton and get coal on our tender because we run out of coal, and that's, in other words, when you got to Fairmont you burn anywhere from twenty-five to forty-five ton of coal, just one direction.

GS: No way a man could shovel that.

GK: There ain't no way you could stand that, and the same way with water. Those tenders on them big engines held, they held 20,000 gallons of water. Well, you took water about five times before you completed your trip.

GS: Before I kind of asked the question there, you were telling why you came up to Wheeling because they had.

297 **GK:** Why, I come to Wheeling for the simple reason I hurt this hand. I was in communications. I was a field lineman in the army, and I was following this tank. We was following this tank through this field, up this mountain, just getting daylight in the morning, and a German bazooka knocked this tank out, and the Germans seen the fire from this tank, and they heard these tanks coming, and they threw an awful round of art, eighty-eight, artillery fire. Well, we had a () wire,

Interview with Gilbert King

had about a mile of wire, and it had a rod went through it. What they called an RL27A. Well, we laid this wire, threw this wire down, and we got in these big deep tracks this tank was making to try to stay out of this artillery. Well, after it slacked off a little bit, we grabbed this rod. I grabbed one side, and my buddy grabbed the other side, and we took off this mountain, and a lot of them shells were white phosphorous shells, had white phosphorous in them, and that stuff landed on that handle, and I didn't know it, see. I just grabbed ahold of it, and that white phosphorous gets on you, there's no limit. It'll burn right through your hand. It'll burn right through you. It'll burn right through you. In other words, if you get it on you real bad, why the first thing you've got to do is, is there a pool of water around, jump in the water, because it'll just burn you up. Well, I got up there, him and I did, and we put this telephone in for this company commander on top of this mountain. Then we dropped back down about half way. We started digging a foxhole, and I notice this hand's bothering me. The thing's pretty hot then. I noticed that hand bothering me, and the first thing I noticed it was bleeding real bad, and it still didn't dawn on me what happened, and there was a medic walking through, walking by there. He was taking care of the wounded. I got his attention, and I said, "Hey, how about dressing my hand up." I said, "I don't know what's wrong with it." So he did. He dressed it all up for me and put something on it, and that was about the size of it. Ah, oh, here's comes trouble now. Better shut that off.

327 **GK:** That's my son-in-law. Lives right there on top the hill. He's going to put a roof on my garage. You didn't turn that back on did you?

GS: Just now turned it back on.

GK: Where was I at?

GS: You were talking about they dressed your hand there, that corpsman, or whoever he was.

GK: Oh, that medic.

GS: Yeah.

332 **GK:** Yeah, he dressed my hand up, and I had trouble with that hand for, boy, I'll tell you, for a couple of years, and I was kind of concerned about whether I'd be able to go back on the railroad or not. Anyway, I come back up here. I started out. I lived, I lived up McMechen, and I worked out of Benwood.

GS: Yeah.

GK: Worked, started, when I come back I first went on the fireman's extra board. I worked different places, Holloway, Ohio, and Clarksburg, and Fairmont, and Parkersburg, and I was doing pretty good, and one day, one day. I didn't have no telephone. If you lived, if you lived less than a mile away from your caller's office, they'd send a caller after you, a field caller after you, and one day they called me to go up the hop, go to Holloway on a coal drag, and I went out, reported to work. I went out, and here they had a shovel engine, 5100 even, and, boy, she was a coal burner. She was a hard one to keep hot. She was a beaut. Well, I knew I was in trouble then, but I didn't say anything. I kept, kind of kept it quiet about my hand, but I knew that hand was starting to heal up fairly good. Well, I shoveled all that coal in that old engine up, well, thirty-two miles both ways, and, of course, that hand was all busted open again. It looked awful. It just looked like a big piece of beef. So, I come back home, and I told my wife. I said, "I've got to get to a doctor," and, of course, she wanted to know why, and I showed her that hand, and she said, "Oh, my goodness, yes." So, I went down to Dr., young Dr. Ashworth, and I told him what took place, and I said, "I don't want to say anything to the railroad company. So, I'm afraid that I'll, I'm afraid they'll take me out of service." I like railroading. I'd have hated to lose my job. So he put some salve on it and dressed it up for me. He gave me this salve, and he said, "This is good stuff." He said, "If you keep that gauze on there and get you." Of course, you always had to wear heavy leather gloves. "But keep them gloves on all the time," he said. "That'll get better, but," he said, "you've got to baby it." Well, I got so concerned about it, I wrote to my platoon, yeah, my platoon sergeant. He lived in Michigan, and, see, I didn't have this on my record.

GS: Yeah, that's what I was wondering.

372 **GK:** I didn't have it on my record, and I just passed it off, see. I could have lost my hand over that deal. So I wrote him a letter, and I said, I asked him if he remembered the time that I got this white phosphorous on my hand. It was the last mountain range going in the Pole Valley in Italy, what they called Maldone. The last big mountain range, and, right away, just a week or so, I got a letter back from him, and he said he remembered it. He said he remembered me going around with that bandage on my hand. Well, I more or less kind of dropped it. I just, as time went on, why, I babied it as much as I could, and I dressed it. I just dressed it two or three times a day, and it finally started healing, and I finally go by with it. So I

just stayed up here. I didn't go back to Parkersburg, although I worked into Parkersburg out of here.

My first pay trip, out of Parkersburg, the old engineer's name was Dick Evans. He was a southern fellow, and, when I made my student trip, this Mr. Brown, I. O. Brown, he told me, said, "Now, when you catch these jobs, you always want to make sure you got two shovels, because a lot of time, maybe you'll throw one in the firebox, or one of them will bounce off the engine, and," he said, "you've got to have two shovels. You've got to have a spare." Well, they called me this, the turn was called for ten o'clock at night, and I went out there real early. I was out there an hour, I suppose, before it was time for me to go to work, and they only had one shovel on the engine, and it was all beat up. It was no good. So, I went and got up on every engine around there, even every engine there was in the shop, and I couldn't find another shovel. Well, about five minutes till ten or so, here the old engineer gets up on the engine, and the first thing he notices is that old beat up shovel. Of course, he was all, he was mad and disgusted, and I know why, because I was the new man, see. He knew he was going to have a rough night, because I was new, although he knew who I was and he knew my dad. He worked with my dad. That helped me some, and I told him. I said, "I looked." I said, "Mr. Evans, I looked all over around here. I got up on every engine around here. I can't find another shovel nowhere," and there was a building, a little, what they called the oil shanty, right down beside the engine there there where they kept their oil and their waste. They had that, 'stead of rags they used waste, and there was some guy showed up there. He had brand new pair of clean overalls, striped overalls on, and he had a brand new shovel, and he set that shovel down just on the outside of the door, and he went in the shanty, in the building. Well, this engineer, he just jumps off that engine right now. He grabbed that shovel and threw it up on the engine and turned the bell on and blew off a couple times on the whistle, and away he went, and we kept looking back, and that guy never did come out of that shanty, and I've still got his shovel hanging out here in the garage. It's pretty well wore out now. It was a brand new number two shovel.

429 Well, sir, those engines, those trains, that train was always a double header, always a double header. You always had two small engines on it, what they called B8s. Well, I was on a head end. I was on a head end, and, you know, I got along real good. I kept that old engine hot. I got along real good, but that engine there, that fireman on the second engine, he got a bum engine. The flue was about half stopped up in it, and I don't know how many times he had to clean that fire and shake them grates down. He had an awful time. If I'd have got that engine, I expect I'd have quit, but I got along real good. Now I know, when I got down to Kenova, I was just a young fellow. I was so tired I didn't think I'd make it to wherever they stayed. I just followed the engineer. I didn't know where I was

Interview with Gilbert King

going to go, and they stayed in an old rooming house, and it just seemed like I just laid down, and somebody was shaking me, and here it was the caller, shaking me and waking me up to go back. Well, I got along fairly good both, round trip, but, boy, I tell you, every time I'd catch one of them turns, I'd threaten to quit. I said, "The heck with this job," but I said there was something about it I liked, and I stayed with it. Well, I kind of run around there a little bit, I've went back. I should have told you that from the beginning, but you can edit that, if you can. What else you want to know now?

455 **GS:** You worked your way. You were a fireman, and then you worked your way up to be an engineer.

GK: Yeah, and you had to do all that on your own.

GS: Okay, that's what I was wondering.

GK: All this stuff here you had to know. It was about valves, gears, stoker. You had to know a steam engine from the ground to the top, from one end to the other. You had to know them.

GS: Did you take tests?

GK: I took tests. I got the test papers right here.

GS: Okay.

462 **GK:** It was equivalent to a college education was what it was equivalent to.

GS: Well, I imagine.

GK: Nobody, nobody pressed you. You was on your own. If you couldn't pass these examinations, you didn't have a job. On machinery, you had first and second series. Now the first and second series, you get two chances on that, but the third series, you only got one chance, and, if you failed that third series, you didn't have a job, and then you had the book of rules to learn, and, when I went to running engine, I was twenty-four years old, and this trainmaster, he really, he really put it to me, because he knew that I was a young fellow, and that was a big responsibility to run one of these engines under train orders.

GS: Okay, yours is stopped there I guess.

GK: Yeah.

(Pause in interview.)

483 **GK:** And it was one of the biggest B & O, one of the biggest book of rule classes they ever had here. They had more trainmen, in fact, I was the only engineer in that whole class. The rest of them were all trainmen. Well, this trainmaster knew that I'm the guy that had to know the book of rules, because I run the engine. You had to know the book of rules, and, boy, he put me through the mill, but I passed it. I passed it.

GS: Are you saying if you hadn't passed that you'd have been out of a job?

GK: I'd have been out of a job on machinery. If I'd have failed the third series one time, I wouldn't have a job, and there was people that had college educations that failed this.

GS: It seems like you could stay on as a fireman or whatever.

GK: No. There was a time. There was a time, but. There was a time when a man would become, if he was fifty years old, if he was fifty years old, and you was taking promotion and you failed it, you'd keep your job, but they changed that, see. That was changed when I went to work. In other words, if you lost out, if you flunked the third series, you was out on the street, and you had to study. You had to keep your books with you all day. Here's what I carried my books in, right in the old back pocket overalls, that thing right there. You carried your timetables and your machinery book, and your air book, and your book of rules, and you 1118D, and all that stuff in that thing right there, and, whenever you had any time, like when you pulled in a passing siding, you had to get that out and start studying, because you never had time at home, because they just liked to, they just kept you on the railroad the biggest part of the time. Then, when you was home, why, of course, you got a little bite to eat, and you went to bed to get your rest, and it was like that seven days a week, year after year.

517 **GS:** Were you a family man?

GK: Yes, sir.

GS: Was that kind of, was that rough on family life?

Interview with Gilbert King

GK: Oh, it sure was. It took a good woman to stay with a railroader. I'll tell you. When my two older children were growing up, there'd be days and days that I scarcely seen them. I might see them when they was in bed, but it was just in and out, sixteen hours a day, seven days a week, and they couldn't keep railroad men on that account. They just, they would hire men continuously, and, of course, there's other reasons too they couldn't keep them. Laying away from home, in these old beaneries was one reason. Another reason was these tunnels. A lot of these guys. I don't blame them one bit. These tunnels, these tunnels was awful.

532 **GS:** Can you tell me a little bit more about those tunnels, because I heard some other people talking about them?

GK: Well, you said you was talking to Orville Rogerson.

GS: He mentioned the Hartzell Tunnel.

GK: Well.

GS: Now he mentioned that to me.

GK: He mentioned that. Well, I had a.

GS: Yeah. It must have been a rough one.

537 **GK:** It's a wonder that somebody never got, never died in those tunnels, because they've had some, well, an awful lot of close shaves, but that was a bad one, and the Boardtree Tunnel on the old main line.

GS: I know where, exactly where. I know where that is. I've been there.

GK: I've got to tell you a few stories about that one.

GS: Okay.

GK: I've got burnt awful bad in that tunnel.

GS: That one there's a long one, isn't it?

GK: Yeah. It's uphill both ways. It's uphill either way you go, it's uphill, till you get in the middle, then it breaks. I think one of the worst experiences I ever had in the Hartzell Tunnel, I was hauling Orville. Orville was the conductor. I'll never forget the engine. I had the 7128, and this engine. The majority of those engines had a duplex stoker on them, but this engine here had a standard stoker. It was a rigged up job they come up with in shop, and this engine was hard to fire for an experienced fireman, but I had a brand new fireman, and I had a brand new brakeman. Neither one of them had ever been over the short line before. They'd never been, and they'd heard a lot of stories about these tunnels, you know, how hot they were, and to top things off with, when I got up to the Hartzell Tunnel, I had to take siding. I had a meet order right up at the top of the hill. I had to take siding right. Of course, when you got to the other end of the siding, why, right there's the tunnel, but your train was on a hillside. Your whole train was on a hillside, and that guy I was meeting, he wasn't there. So I got a gas mask out there in the garage. I don't know how come I got it, but I got one. You carried a gas mask that you put down over your head, each one of you, and you had air that blew through them masks to keep the smoke from going up, to keep from breathing that smoke, see. Well, I, when we stopped up at the other end, I opened up the lid of the seat box, and I reached down and got my gas mask out, and I went to hook it up, and this brakeman said, "Why, I don't have no mask," and that's something I always check real careful before I left, before I'll ever leave the terminal, but I'd overlooked it this trip. Here I only had two masks, so I gave him mine. The fireman and brakeman both had a mask.

582 Now I almost didn't make it this trip. I got me a great big piece of waste, about big as a bushel basket, and I took a water jug, and I put water all, poured water all through it. I'd hold it up against my nose, face, going through there. Well, I instructed this fireman how to fire that engine through there. You had to fire that thing through there lightly to keep the steam above 150 pound. If you steam fell below 150 pound, why your air compressor would stop, and that would apply your brakes on your train and hang you up in there, see. Well, we hadn't anymore than got in there till he turned the steam on to his stoker, and I heard that stoker engine running, clackety, clack, clackety, clack, and I knew it was running too fast. So I got up and went over there and got ahold of his hand and shut it off. Well, I went back over and sat down, and I hadn't any more than sat down, he done the same thing again. So I went over that time, and I shoved his hand. I hit his hand, and I told him to leave it alone. He couldn't say anything. He couldn't see nothing, and about that time, that smoke started to come in the cab, and in a little bit here come that sulphur through that waste, and in a little bit I couldn't breathe. Well, I could feel myself passing out. I could feel myself fainting. So I got my hand against the window. I was just ready to fall off my seat, and I threwed the

window open, and just as I threw the window open, we come out of the tunnel. That's all that saved me, and I had a meet order at, down at a place called Irving on the other side of the hill, and my dad was the engineer. Of course, I didn't know it, see, and I was so black and dirty that he didn't know who I was when I went by, but, anyway, this here brakeman. His name was Hill. That's the first time I ever seen the guy, and when we got to Fairmont, he quit. He never went back with us. He kept saying, "My God, that was awful in there." I says, "Awful?" I said, "What do you think about me?" I said, "I went through without any mask on." I said, "I almost kicked the bucket in there, buddy, I'll tell you." So, I went, I got. Now Orville thought I was in the tunnel. I was stopped, see. He was the conductor. He thought I was still sitting in the tunnel on account of where the caboos was back on the other side of the hill, see, and he was worried sick, because he just figured I just got stuck in that tunnel, but I just had the engine outside. That was all, and, like I say, I had this meet order down at a place called Irving that's halfway down the hill, halfway between there and Lumberport, and it was my dad. Of course, I knew who he was, but I was telling him about what happened a few days later. "Well," he said, "I didn't know that was you," he said. He said, "I didn't recognize you."

647 But we got down to Lumberport, and we stopped, had to stop there and take water, took water in the tender, and get orders to go over the MR from there to Fairmont, another railroad. That's another railroad between Heywood and Fairmont. Now this brakeman was still complaining about how hot it was in that tunnel, and this fireman, he was kind of a comical sort of a fellow. His name was Shepherd. He was the son of a B & O policeman, and he said, "Why," he said, "no wonder you got hot in there." He said, "You know what? I hooked your gas mask up, and I forgot to turn your air on your mask." There he set with that mask over his head, and there was no air going through it. All that smoke would go right underneath his mask, and he was setting there breathing it.

GS: Really. That really happened.

GK: It really happened.

GS: Well, no wonder.

GK: No wonder he got hot. It's a wonder he didn't die. It's a wonder he didn't suffocate.

669 **GS:** Yeah.

Interview with Gilbert King

GK: Of course, that fireman, you know, he thought that was real funny. He laughed about that. Well, when, the way he stated it, I had to laugh. The way he told it I had to laugh. I said, "My God, I don't know how you made it through there, if you didn't have no air going through that mask, and, by the way, I'll show you that mask. I think I've got it hanging out there in the garage.

GS: Well, no wonder. Yeah, I thought maybe. You were just saying he wasn't very strong or something maybe.

GK: Oh, he was a young fellow. He was younger than me I suppose, but, anyway, when we got to Fairmont, that's the last I ever seen that fellow. He never went back with us. That was enough for him.

GS: Can't say as I blame him.

GK: Yeah. Well, a lot of them fellows, they just wouldn't take those tunnels, and they wouldn't. Well, them fellows was young, you know, and you didn't have no private life at all. You just lived on the railroad. Like on weekends or holidays, that's when you'd be away from home, and I didn't blame them one bit, a lot of them. There was a lot of good men stayed. A lot of those fellows made good railroad men, but more of them quit than stayed, I'll tell you. Put it on pause there.

702 **GS:** You mentioned Boardtree Tunnel. Tell me about it.

GK: Well, I'll tell you about it. I want to tell you a story about that old main line that happened to me during the 1950 snow, but first I want to tell you another story.

(End of Side A)

725 **GK:** At this particular time I was firing for an old fellow by the name of Pop Clytor in the Holloway pool, and these pool turns, whenever they run this ninety-six out of Benwood to Grafton, they always had a helper, and these pool turns was, they use these pool turns for helper engines. Now this particular night, we was helping this ninety-six over the old main line through Cameron, through the Welling Tunnel, down into Denver, up on Flowers Flat, and through the Boardtree Tunnel to Glover's Gap, and when we got to Glover's Gap, we took water on the engine, and then we backed the engine back to Benwood. That was a, boy, in the cold weather that was a cold job. Well, this particular night, the engine we had had a front end stoker, and them front end stoker engines, they burn like fire, and you

didn't dare shut one of them off. If you did, it wasn't very long the fire went out, and, about the time we got to the tunnel, I don't know what happened. The engineer's name was C. A. Williams, and he lived in Cameron. That's where he lived, C. A. Williams, and the fireman's name was Endicott, Endicott. He went to California later on. That old engine, they had the 7450. It was a regular engine on that job, and I don't know what happened, but I kind of figure the old, he got bad water, they had bad water, and it got to foaming in there, and, boy, I'll tell you, we just literally crawled through that tunnel, and I had to fire that engine all the way through there, keep it hot, or we'd have hung up in there. Well, we always wore these handkerchiefs round your neck, you know, to keep the cinders, hot cinders from going down your neck, and I could feel the back of my ears burning. I knew my ears were burnt, and I had just all the hide come off the back of my ears and around my neck where that handkerchief fit up against it. Well, when I come out of the tunnel, I got the window open. I got my head out the, out in the air, and finally got my breath, and I looked over, and the old engineer was still setting there with the window closed. By God, I jumped up and went over to him, and he was passed out. He fainted in there, heat exhaustion. Couldn't get his breath. Didn't have no masks on them small engines. Didn't carry masks on them small engines. So I got the window open and got ahold of him and shook him, and I said, "You okay, Pop, you okay, Pop." In a little bit he come around, but, boy, I'll tell you, that was a close one. I thought I was going to have to.

756 **GS:** How long is a, say, the Boardtree compared to the Hartzell? They the same, or which one?

GK: They're about the same. They was about the same length, but I think the Boardtree's just a little bit longer, but what was bad about the Boardtree Tunnel was. They had about midways up that hill, they have a flat they call the Flowers Flat. Well, when you come to that, when you come to Denver at the foot of that hill, you had to have them engines wide open, and they had to be doing everything they'd do. Well, when you got up on this flat, you picked up speed, but just as soon as you come off that flat, you made a right hand turn, and, boy, just as soon as you would hit that right hand turn, them old trains, they'd just bog right down. It was a four percent grade. Now when they got to that tunnel, you made a sharp left hand turn going in that tunnel, and about the time you hit that curve them old engines would fly up, see, and when they got to slipping, why that would reduce your speed right now, see, and, of course, that put the extra strain on that helper back there, and by the time you got the whole train in there you was going, the train was all going upgrade. Like I said, the grade didn't break until you got to about the middle of it, and, boy, I'll tell you, it's a wonder somebody didn't die in

Interview with Gilbert King

those tunnels, but, this was before my time, but I heard the old timers talk about it. They used to run, they used to run the biggest part of the freight from Pittsburgh into Benwood, and, well, what they, what I was getting at was, that at one time they was going to make the, they was going to centralize, centralize traffic control of this railroad between Moundsville and Fairmont, going to make it a number one railroad. In fact, they even had the signals laying out there, and they was starting to run these 7100s, these big mileys, over that railroad, and this particular trip coming this way, well that would be west, they started in the Boardtree Tunnel, and this old engine got to slipping, and this engineer had never run a miley before, and it was all new to them. They was used to these smaller engines, and this engine got to slipping, and he thought he was moving, but he was hung up, and he set right there and cut the rail in two right down to the ties, and the road foreman of engines was riding with him, and they all almost, all almost died. They all, oh, they got, they was, it was an awful thing. They almost all died over that, and, you know, when that happened, they changed their mind about making that the main line from here to Grafton and Fairmont, and they called a work crew one day, and they went out there and picked up all those cutter position light signals and all that equipment, and they put it on the Pittsburgh division, between here and Pittsburgh. They made it the main line and run that freight right into Pittsburgh around the horn into Cumberland, round that way, see. This, this here was the best way and the shortest way, see.

794 **GS:** Except for the Boardtree Tunnel.

GK: Except for the Boardtree Tunnel, and, by that crew hanging up in the Boardtree Tunnel, that changed all that, for that's the way they was going to run all this freight. They come off the Newark division, up the river from Holloway, Ohio, Lorraine and Willard, that way. They was going to run it all over the old main line into Cumberland and Baltimore, see.

799 **GS:** That's interesting, maybe those tracks would still have been there if they would have.

GK: Yeah, probably would have, but they done away with the Pittsburgh division too.

GS: Oh, did they?

GK: Yeah, but they made a big mistake. They realize it now. They even had a staff meeting here a few years ago, because the shippers complained about so

Interview with Gilbert King

many trucks, you know, and they want to rebuild that, but the city of Wheeling, they sold that track to the city of Wheeling, and the city of Wheeling. Well, they done away with that viaduct up there at Wheeling, see, and it was going to cost too much, so they forgot about it. Hadn't been for that, if that viaduct had been there, if they had left it in there, I think maybe they'd have put that track, they'd have rebuilt that track, put it back in service.

GS: It just seems like the trucks have, the railroads have gone down hill pretty much.

810 **GK:** Well, now, now, you know, for years, the railroad companies was fighting these trucking companies for taking their business, but now it's the other way around. This last truck strike that they had. That's what that was all about. It was about these truck drivers complaining about the trucking companies shipping all their freight on the railroads on these topsy cars.

GS: Yeah, yeah.

GK: That's what it's about. That's what it was about, and it's going to get worse because these highways are just so crowded, they're not going to be able to take much more of this truck traffic. It's going to have to go by rail, and we haul a lot of those topsy cars right out of Boggs's Run. We have a regular terminal up there. We haul them over the short line, down the river, anywhere they want, over at Pittsburgh division, Newark division. That was a big business.

GS: How long a train, say, what would be the longest a train would be when you were an engineer?

822 **GK:** Well, I had a test train one time. I was working between here and Clarksburg, and, of course, these, I had diesels then, and one time the conductor come over to the head end there at Lumberport, and he just called everywhere, and the dispatcher told us to go over to Heywood and fill out with coal, and, when we got the train all together, we had, I think there was 223 cars, but I had five units. I had five general motor diesels, 1500 horsepower apiece, and I didn't know really what was going on, but I surmised what it was. It was a test, it was a test run, and that was one of the biggest trains that ever come over the short line. I'll never forget. They had radios on them engines, and I'll never forget, I had a meet order with an engine with a train at Hartzell. He was in a siding, and this engineer's name was J. R. Montgomery. He and I was about the same age. We was both, we both had about the same amount of service. He was a little bit younger in service

Interview with Gilbert King

than I am, you can see on there. Well, I never said anything about what kind of a train we had, you know, but I was listening on the radio. I knew he was going to say something. We got way down on Smithfield Hill, and finally he got on the radio, and them cars was still coming back there where he was, you know. He said, "How many Goddamn cars you got?" We had 223 cars, and we had about sixteen cars on the head end, and we had to set off at Alan passing siding for damage. Well, I'll tell you, handling that many cars is just like handling a basket of eggs, because, boy, they was, you could tear one of them in two awful easy if you didn't know your railroad real good, because you had to, you had to be able to handle those cars just like, like I say, like you're carrying a basket of eggs.

851 Well, I come down to Allen passing siding and set these sixteen cars off, and my supervisor was standing there, and he just passed away here the other day. He was ninety-four years old. He got up on the engine, and he said, he smoked a pipe. Big grin on his face, and he said. He just shook his head. He said, "Boy, if you get this train, if you get this train to New Martinsville without tearing it in two," he said, "there's going to be a lot of people lose a lot of money over this train." He said, "They've got bets all over the railroad that you'll never get this train to New Martinsville." Well, I did, and they had that (consist) hanging up on the wall for years, but there was a guy come along a few years later and broke my record, and he was my son.

GS: All right.

GK: Yeah, yeah, he come on up Weirton one time with about a hundred, about 230 cars, something like that.

863 **GS:** So your son likes the railroad, too?

GK: Yeah, he's an engineer, too. He works out of New Martinsville.

GS: Still is working?

GK: Oh, yeah, twenty-seven years.

GS: This is a real railroad family.

GK: It's a railroad family, yep. Yeah, he's got twenty-seven years service.

GS: Were you working at the same time he was?

Interview with Gilbert King

GK: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. I never wanted him to come on the railroad, because, I'll tell you, the railroad was a hard life for me, and, boy, I earned my money on the railroad, but he wanted a job on the railroad, and he just insisted on it. Well, I said, "Okay." I said, "I can get you a job on the railroad," and, of course, I did, but railroading is nothing like it was back then. Today you've got good engines, and you've got good equipment, heavy. You've got heavier equipment, and they don't know what a tonnage train is nowadays. Back when I worked every trip was a tonnage train, or usually more than tonnage, and it was a battle to get them things over the railroad, I'll tell you, especially, if you get one failing for steam, or get an old diesel that wasn't working right, or get one on a bad rail in the rain and snow, and you had to conserve on sand. It was a, it was a struggle. You had to, you had to really be on the ball to get one over the railroad.

881 **GS:** Well, we're talking right along here. I want to hear about that snowstorm.

GK: Oh, well, that's the granddaddy of all of them. I've got a lot of them I could tell you, but that's the granddaddy. I was called, 1950, pretty close to, just a day or so before Thanksgiving. I was called for ten o'clock to go to Grafton, and I had the 7450. I can show you this engine here. You want to shut it off here a minute?

GS: Yeah.

(Break in interview.)

887 **GK:** A dozen of these books, but I never had the foresight or nothing. Here, about five or ten years or so they done. I never thought I would ever see the day when there wouldn't be a steam engine. We all thought that. We never thought they'd ever do away with steam power. Nobody ever thought that.

GS: Well, what, it was a gradual change.

GK: No, not, not, no.

GS: It was pretty fast.

GK: It was pretty fast, boy, I'll tell you.

GS: Okay.

GK: It was unreal how fast it was.

893 **GS:** And what years would you say it was changing.

GK: Oh, about 1962-63, along in there. Right here's the engine I had. Turn that light on over there. Yeah. I'll get it.

GS: Yeah, it's getting dark.

GK: Yeah. At the rate we're going, we won't get through with it till after midnight.

GS: I got another tape if we need it. No problem. Have a lot to edit. Oh, well.

GK: This engine right here is what I had. Went right by your back door. I consider that engine saved my life during that 1950 snow. Here's what got me over. That big cowcatcher right there.

GS: Yeah.

904 **GK:** See that cowcatcher about four inches off the rail. Well, boy, after I got to Cameron, I had to stop there. I had to pull the caboose up to the telephone so the conductor could copy orders, they were our schedule. If you was twelve hours late on your schedule, you wasn't on the railroad. We was never on the schedule because we had all this delay here in Moundsville getting that train put together, and going down them hills like on the other side of Welling Tunnel, that cowcatcher would catch that snow. It stood thirty feet out on both sides of the road. You couldn't see anything ahead of you. The only way you could tell you was moving was look back along side the tender here. You could see there's an opening back there between the tender and the snow. That's all you could tell you was moving.

GS: Wow.

GK: Oh, that was some trip, I'll tell you, but.

GS: Did it ever snow enough to stop the train?

915 **GK:** Oh, no, it never, my goodness, no, but, I'll tell you, if you had diesels, they wouldn't have run that train. The diesels would never have got started, but, like I say, we was called at ten o'clock at night, and, what we had was was

chemicals. Companies make them, Pittsburgh, Natrium Plant down here, and Aniline Solvay, those tank cars, they come up here. They had district jobs down there, and they brought them up to Moundsville, and we picked them up and took them to Grafton, see, and they were heavy. Them cars was heavy. Them's all loads. Boy, that was dead stuff. They was really heavy. Well, I knew it was snowing, but I was setting out there beyond, on the old main line, beyond the station there, off the road crossings. Every once in a while I turned the headlight on, and, boy, it was just peppering the snow down. Well, those two district jobs, they showed up. Set their cars off there in the () siding at Moundsville, and we got our train all together. I forget now how many cars we had. We had around, right around forty cars, thirty-five or forty cars, something like that. That was a heavy train. That was tonnage train for that engine. Well, the head brakeman, his name was Joe Safford. He lived in Benwood, and he got up on the engine when we got the train all together, and he said to me, he said, "Man, that snow's getting deep." Well, he was stomping his feet on the deck. I turned around and looked, and, my God, that snow was clear over his knees. Well, I made an air test on the train and blew off and started for Cameron, and, boy, I could tell the way that old engine was working, buddy, that old snow was deep, and that snow was way up on, halfway on them wheels. Well, like I say, we was running this ninety-six. We had a schedule and our timetable, and, if you was twelve hours late on that schedule, you didn't exist out there on the railroad. You had to go to the telephone and get train orders to run extra. So, we didn't have no radios, but the conductor knew what the deal was. He knew why I pulled up to the telephone there at Cameron for him to get off to copy orders. So, I pulled way up on the hill there at Cameron and waited a little bit, and he got off, and his name was Shorty Urice, a real short fellow, and that snow was right up here on him when he got off the caboose at Cameron. Well, I pulled up there, and he, gave him enough time to get his gear together and get off. Then I backed the train down through town there till the engine stopped in front of the telephone booth, and he copied the orders for us to run extra from Cameron to Fairmont, WD tower, and I pulled up on the hill real slow, and he got back on the caboose, and, normally, normally, in that kind of weather, when it's snowing, you've got to watch these road crossings, because, if there's a lot of traffic over these crossings, it packs that snow down to ice, and it could derail you, see, but it was snowing so hard there was no traffic. My God, nobody's going nowhere, but my big concern was them blame road crossings. Like going down Welling Hill there, there was, down there at Loudenville, or where that store is there. I can't think of the name of that place.

Interview with Gilbert King

GK: No, this side.

GS: Belton?

GK: This side of Denver. There was a store right there, and there's a crossing there, and there usually is a lot of traffic.

GS: Woodruff, maybe?

GK: Woodruff, Woodruff, Woodruff, that's it, Woodruff.

GS: I know where that is.

GK: And, of course, I couldn't see the crossing. Like I say, going down that hill, you couldn't see anything ahead of you, but I was blowing for the crossing, you know, and we, we got up the hill all right, and we got through the tunnel okay, but those orders, those orders that he copied at Cameron, he also copied a meet order. I had to meet a guy at Barracksville. It was a mine run. He had empties for that temporary mine there at Barracksville, but, when I got there, he wasn't there, and I was about out of coal. I was about out of water in that old engine, about froze to death, and I was dead on the schedule. I forget, I just forget now, all the particulars about that schedule. I know he copied orders though I was to run extra. I think what he done, well, he copied orders at Cameron, but he copied this meet order. That's the way it was, and, in the mean time, we run dead on our schedule. That's the way it was. I'm pretty sure, but, anyway, I went to the telephone, and no telephone. The wires was all down. I couldn't get ahold of the dispatcher. I couldn't get ahold of the operator at Fairmont. I couldn't get ahold of nobody, and there we was about out of coal and water on that engine, and there's no way in the world they can get to us. At Barracksville snow was clear over top of automobiles. You could just see the print, the top of automobiles at Barracksville. Well, after bit, I heard that guy coming. He had, I'll never forget, he had forty-four coal hoppers, and, of course, nobody ever plowed that there passing siding. That snow was, oh, that snow was deep, and he'd start up in that siding, and he'd hang up, and he'd back up, and he'd give a run for it, and he'd hang up again. I don't know how many times he tried it, but finally he got that train in the clear, and, of course, they knew I was out there, but I was dead on the schedule, and really I didn't belong on the railroad, but I took off for Fairmont, and I was just forty-four hours getting to Grafton. Forty-four hours. (Later, Mr. King stated that the trip actually took twenty-some hours. "Forty-four")

Interview with Gilbert King

was incorrect.) That was some trip, I'll tell you, and I had a, I had a good fireman. He was an old hand, and he lived in Fairmont, and, you know, when we got to Grafton, he went home, and, when I come back out, they called me right out of my yard rest to go back, and, when I come out, I had a brand new fireman that had never been on one of them engines before, and, of course, this guy's name was Glover, and he told the caller that his car wouldn't start or something, and he couldn't make it. He couldn't get to Grafton. So, this boy here didn't want to go. He said he was broke. He didn't have no money. So the assistant road foreman gave him five dollars, and, if I didn't have some trip going back.

GS: Sounds like you had a good one going there.

1019 **GK:** Well, coming back, I had a car set off at Mannington glass house. I set that car off. I had sixteen cars now with that engine. That was a powerful engine. Then they gave me a meet order with a passenger train, this forty-four, at Littleton. I had to take siding at Littleton, up again that hillside there, and when I got that train to clear over that hillside, that snow was just even with the gang wheel of that engine. It would have been clear over top my head. I couldn't get off the engine when I stopped there. I laid there around three hours waiting on that passenger train. He was way late. Ed Holloway run that train that night. Well, after he went, after he run, after he stopped there in Littleton, after he run, I waited for him to get by the other end of the siding. I could hear him blowing for those crossings down there around this side of Hundred, I blew back three times, and they give, and I waited for the brakemen to walk back and dig that switch out of the snow. I gave him plenty of time, and I started to back up, and here that train had froze up in that snow. I couldn't go ahead. I couldn't back up. It froze up solid in that snow. Well, I don't know how many times I tried it, and finally I jarred it loose. Finally I broke the train loose, and I got the train out on the main track. Well, I had to fire and run the engine both. I had that new man. I had to do it all. Well, I finally made it here to Moundsville, right here at Twelfth Street, and every bit of coal was in the firebox, every bit. There's twenty-five ton of coal, sixteen cars, and I think there was a telephone pretty close there, and I told the brakeman to go down there on the telephone and call the operator there at Moundsville and tell the operator, tell the train dispatcher, that they're going to have to send somebody from Benwood, or somebody, to haul me in to Benwood. I'm out of coal, and he said, "I'm going to have to kill the engine, I'm afraid, because I'm going to be out of water here before long." Well, I just closed the windows, closed the curtain, and put my feet up on the windowsill, and went to sleep. After bit, why, I felt this awful jar, looked up, and there was somebody coupled in to me. Here was a guy come out of Clarksburg. His name was French Wilson. He had a, he had a 4400,

Interview with Gilbert King

and he was having engine trouble. So he set his train off down at Chestnut Hill, down below Moundsville, on the short line, on the Ohio River, and the dispatcher told him to cut his engine off and run to Moundsville, and go down the main line, and couple in to me, and hop in to Benwood. I could've wrote a book about that round trip, I'll tell you. That was a lulu, I'll tell you.

1061 **GS:** That was a lot of hours there, too.

GK: Oh, my God, and then I just got home, just got my rest. No, I never got my rest, called me right on my rest to go to Fairmont over the short line, but not with, with a miley, but not this engine here, but, you know, if I hadn't have had that engine right there.

GS: Right there.

1066 **GK:** Right there. I'd never have made it to Grafton, because no other engine would have done what that engine done. It kept the snow off the tracks, see, and it had them high drivers. If I'd had a small engine, I never'd made it, and I've often thought about it. If something would have happened out there where I'd have derailed, we'd have starved to death. We'd have froze to death, because there ain't no way in the world they'd have go to us in that country, no way. You couldn't have. It was unthinkable about driving a vehicle out in there. There was no way you could get a truck out in there, or a tank really. Yes, sir, that engine saved me. Well.

GS: Let me ask you, okay, a couple of things here that I have on my list about the unions. Were you in. They had different unions for different.

GK: We was in the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. There's the first yard engine I ever had, 1950, I think it was. They just got them. Yeah, I was connected with the unions. I was secretary and treasurer for, oh, twenty years, I suppose, of our division. I've got a picture here. I just seen it last night where I was giving a fellow, I think, his fifty-year pin. All these engines here, every one of these mileys, you can look through them time card stubs there, timebooks, and you'll find the numbers. I have them all, except, with the exception of the 5500s and the big sixes. There's the Lambert's Run bridge going into Clarksburg. Now where is that picture. Out there between Millwood and Ripley.

1097 **GS:** Kind of pretty.

GK: There's the Hartzell Tunnel.

GS: All right, yeah, I've been hearing stories about that place.

GK: Well, where's that picture at. I was going to show you a picture. I thought it was in that bunch there. There's a wreck down at Williamstown. Broken rail. Here's the last trip I worked, a district job down at Mitchell Plant. Well, I thought I had that picture in there. I wanted to show it to you. I'll go through them again. Maybe I overlooked it. Talk about that 7450. There's a picture here in this book I want to show you, if I can find it, about the 7450. When they done away with the steam engines, they had them stored in all these storage tracks all over the country, and they had a 7450 in a storage track over here at Bridgeport, Ohio. It laid there a long time in that storage track. Of course, when they took it out of there, they took them to the scrapyards and cut them up.

1122 **GS:** Yeah.

GK: Well, I've got so much junk. There's a, oh, here's one picture, but this is not what I was going to show you. There's a picture of me putting a fifty-year badge, pin, on an old engineer. He worked on the old main line into Fairmont. They had what they called a Fairmont local. His name was Griffith, but I had another picture of another fellow I was putting a badge on.

GS: Now what I was asking about the unions a little bit, because, I guess, I guess Mr. Metro was. They had different unions for different.

GK: Yeah, UTU was the firemen and trainmen, and for years and years it was the BLF and E for the firemen, but they later on merged into the UTU, that's the trainmen.

GS: Locomotives whistle Merry Christmas. What about the whistles? Did they sound different on each train?

1142 **GK:** Oh, yeah, yeah. On a steam engine, you could tell by the sound of that whistle what engine that was. There's no two steam engines alike. They're just as different as human beings, and you could tell by the way they sounded, and, especially the whistle, you could tell by the whistle what engine, if you worked them. We had, usually had, about the same engines around here, same steam engines, but, every once in a while, they'd drift and go somewhere else, and you'd get some others in, but you could tell by the sounds of them.

Interview with Gilbert King

GS: Well, we, are we about finished up here talking? Are you going to show me some pictures, or do you want to tell some more stories, since your tape ended?

1155 **GK:** Well, I want to show you some pictures here.

GS: Okay.

GK: Here's a picture of me on a diesel. Here's a picture of me on a 7600. Here's another one. It's going to Holloway, Ohio.

GS: You just forget how big those things really are. And this is the kind of smoke you got going through a tunnel.

GK: Well, I'll tell you what that was about. When we left Benwood, we met that fellow that took that picture, and he told us where he was going to be. There's a road crossing right there. He was going to be. I forget the name of that road crossing. It's just before you get to the Fairpoint Tunnel. He told me to have the fireman make a lot of black smoke when he took that picture.

GS: Okay.

GK: That's why it's making a lot of smoke.

1170 **GS:** Yeah, it seems like an awful lot.

GK: Yeah. That was, them's good engines. Them and the 4500s, or 44, was the best engines we've ever had since I've been here, but here's an awful wreck I was in one time, down at Vanadium Steel, down in Mason County.

GS: There's a car there.

GK: Yeah, it hit side of the engine.

GS: Was he drunk, or what?

GK: No, sir. It was a carload of boys, four boys in it, and they was running too fast, along about eight o'clock in the evening, just getting dark, fall of the year.

1181 **GS:** Lost control, huh.

Interview with Gilbert King

GK: Just run too fast. Hit the side of the engine.

GS: Here's another picture of you.

GK: Now here's something I want to show you.

GS: Society for the Preservation of the Memory of Steam Locomotives and the men who ran them. Very good. There's a Schwartz signed that, L. E. Schwartz.

GK: Yeah, from Newark, Ohio.

GS: That's not the way I spell my name, but.

GK: He was the local chairman of the engineers of the Newark, Ohio, division. Well, these here are all promotion papers.

1198 **GS:** I like this, engineers known as Eagle Eyes, Fogbusters, Jack Rappers, and Hogheads.

GK: You going to put that on tape?

GS: Yeah, I've still got it running here, of course, I'll probably, I can edit that in there and have it on there, yeah.

GK: Here's what I got on my airbrake examination. Now you see. You can see how many guys failed this test. This was a.

GS: I see three passed and three failed on this one.

GK: Yeah. I think there's only about two or three of us passed this one. I got ninety-five on that one.

GS: Yep. That's the highest grade on this one. Now your son's still an engineer. Did he have to take the same kind of tests and stuff.

GK: Well, anymore, they changed that altogether. Yeah.

1224 **GS:** He still has to take tests.

GK: Yeah, take tests, but now you've got to have a driver's license. Yeah, now they send you to Cumberland, Maryland, to take a test for a license to run one of these things, and what it's all about is in case you hit somebody on a crossing, these state policemen, they took exceptions of somebody running these engines that don't have a license with them. So now they got to take a license. They got to take a test to get a license. I know one time I hit a man down here at the Marx toy plant, going down the river, in a pickup truck. I knew I was going to hit him. He jumped right out in front of me, and I hit him, knocked him off the track over again a telephone pole, or telegraph pole. Well, I cut his head a little bit, never hurt him too bad, and, on my way in that night, when I was laying up, the operator down in Moundsville give me a message for me to stop at the mayor's office in Glen Dale. The mayor wanted to talk to me. So I did, and I went in there, and, boy, he proceeded to give me a lecture. He was going to put me in jail for leaving the scene of an accident. I said, "Oh, just hold on here a minute now." I just reached in that pouch there and got my timetables out, and I pulled it out, and I said, "I'd like for you to read this right here." I said, "Whenever a train hits a, hits somebody on a crossing, and an ambulance hasn't showed up here to take care of them," I said, "all I've got to do is leave a man right there with him," but I said, "This particular case, the ambulance showed up before I left there, so I'm in the clear, but, if I'd have killed that guy, all I'd had to done was left the head brakeman there, or a fireman, and took off. Now that's the rule." Well, that shut him up right now. That shut him up right now. Yeah, he was going to put me in jail, boy.

1261 **GS:** You don't stop those trains on a dime, I don't imagine.

GK: Oh, my goodness, no. No, boy, that there's a good example with that picture I showed you. I seen that car hit the engine, hit it about middle ways, right over the main reservoir. Well, I got her stopped quick as I could, and I run back there. I was the first one to the car, and, boy, if that wasn't some mess. There was a sixteen-year-old boy in the back seat, and the doors flew open, and he was a hanging out over the seat with his head down on the berm, and that blood come out of his mouth as thick as your arm almost. I got ahold of him and pulled him out on the grass, and there was three boys in the front seat, and that boy driving that car, that engine stuck right up against his leg and had him pinned in there, and you couldn't touch him. Boy, he just yelled. You could hear all over that county. Well, there was three emergency cars showed up there, and, oh, they had the awfulest time getting them boys out of there. It was an old Ford, it was a Ford, and I, oh, a big crowd around there, you know, and I could hear people saying, "They ought to sue them. They ought to sue them," you know, this and that, you know. Well, they did sue the railroad company, and I was down in federal court in

Interview with Gilbert King

Charleston for a week over that daggone thing, and, by me being the main witness, they had me up last, but the fireman and the brakeman and the conductor. That judge, them lawyers, had them so goddarned mixed up and twisted, it was pitiful, and I was really sweating it out, because I figured they'd do the same thing on me, but, when I got on the witness stand, this judge said to me, he said, he said, "Mr. King," he said, "in your opinion, what do you think happened here?" And I said, "Well, I can tell you exactly what happened." I said, "These boys were traveling at a high rate of speed, about eighty-five mile an hour, in my opinion," and I said, "They didn't have their headlights on, and they never seen us till they was right on top of us. Of course, there was no way you could stop them." And, when I said that, these boys sitting in the court right in front of me, and they just dropped their heads you know when I said that. That judge seen that, and he never cross-examined. That's all I said. He never cross-examined me or anything.

1308 **GS:** This is after dark, right.

GK: About eight o'clock in the evening in the fall of the year, just getting dark, yeah, just getting dark, just hazy like. Oh, I could go on and on here.

GS: What kind of a grade is a steep grade, five percent?

GK: Four percent.

GS: Four percent.

GK: Four percent. That was four percent up that Boardtree Hill in to Boardtree Tunnel. That was four percent. There's a flat up there they call Flowers Flat, and just about a trainlength long. When you get on a flat, why you can get them up pretty good speed, but, boy, just as soon as you went around that right hand curve, she bogged right down, right now. Let's see, there's another picture here I wanted to show you, and I can't see. I wanted to show you that little picture that I. Here's a picture of me in Fairmont Yard.

1334 **GS:** Okay. I've seen that bridge down there.

GK: About 125 loads of coal there, lake coal, going to the lakes. A lot of that coal come off of the old main line, come off out of that Farmington Mine.

Farmington Mine had a contract with the Cleveland Illuminating Power Company, and they'd get a train of coal a day out of Farmington Mine. Went over the short line, up in Holloway, up in Lorraine, up in that country, to the lakes. There's what I wrote on the back of it.

1348 **GS:** "1952 from Benwood to Lorraine, Ohio. These were the biggest engines at that time." That's like the one you were talking about, you went out.

GK: No, similar, only that's a bigger engine. That's a bigger one. Now these other engines here. This 7450, they were better on curves, that engine there was. Those engines there, you had to watch these engines, and, by the way, that reminds me. I got some pictures here someplace where one of them was turned over, and it was my turn.

GS: Railroading sounds like it would be something that you had to really love in order to do it for.

1368 **GK:** Oh, yeah, you had to be dedicated. You had to be dedicated, and this fellow right here, a while ago, that's my son-in-law. He come out of the service. He was in the Seabees for I don't know how long, about six years, I think, and he wanted a job on the railroad. So I got him a job, and one night he was firing for me. We was going to Holloway, and we went down in the Bellaire Yard and picked up some coal. He was firing for me regular, and we pulled this coal out of the yard and pulled out on the main track there at Bellaire and coupled up to our train, and he come over to me, and he said, he said, "Pap," he said, "I've got something I want to tell you." I said, "What's wrong, Doug?" He said, "Well," he said, "You're not gonna like this too well." He said, "I don't like railroading." I said, "What?" He said, "I don't like it on the railroad." He said, "It's too confining." He said, "I can't be still." He worked in construction all his life in the Seabees. He said, "It's too confining for me." "Well," I said, "I hate to hear that." I said, "About the only thing I can tell you is," I said, "if you don't like railroading," I said, "you don't want to stay around here. You want to get off of it while you're young, so you can get a job somewhere else." And, boy, he took my word for that. A few days later the phone rung. It was the road foreman in Benwood, and he said to me, he said, "Say," he said, "that son-in-law of yours just left here, and he give me a resignation. He's gonna quit. What's that all about?" I told him. So, there you are. You've got to be dedicated. There's two pictures I want to show you.

1417 **GS:** West Virginia Magazine there?

GK: Yeah. Where in the heck did I have that at? How about putting that on pause?

Interview with Gilbert King

Now this particular night why they called an extra to go to Clarksburg, and this engineer that run this turn, he wasn't qualified to Clarksburg, so they pulled me off of this job to run the turn to Clarksburg.

(End of Part I tape.)

(Interview resumes with Part II tape.)

GK: Well, he, like I say, this Joe Zig caught my turn, and he went to Fairmont, and on his way back he was going around. There's a big curve there. You go through two tunnels, Number One and Number Two Tunnels at Porters Falls, and there's a big curve there to your right. Now, what I think really happened was, he had too much water in the boiler, and them engines, they're top heavy if you put too much water in the boiler. He went around that curve and upset that engine on that curve, right in that fellow's yard, almost got his house.

7 **GS:** The whole train lifted when he did that?

GK: Ah, he was running light. He had a caboose behind him.

GS: Oh, okay. That fellow in that house was pretty lucky.

GK: Yeah.

GS: He's out there scratching his head.

GK: That's a guy that worked on the wreck train. I forget his name any more. I forget his name.

GS: I'm going to mark this tape because if I don't I'll misplace it.

GK: I know what you mean. You got this on tape?

GS: Yeah, yeah I do. I read all about the hogheads, and the.

GK: Yeah. Well, I going to, when you get that tape in there, I'm going to recite you a piece of poetry.

21 **GS:** All righty.

Interview with Gilbert King

GK: And I might play you a tune on my guitar and mouth harp, and I'll end it up that way.

GS: Sounds great.

GK: That sound great?

GS: Yes, it does. Well, maybe I better listen first before I say that.

GK: Well, here's a, oh that's, no I showed you that, but I had another picture I wanted to show you. I thought I had them all together here.

GS: Got this marked.

GK: Did you see all these pictures in here?

31 **GS:** Ah, I saw part of them.

GK: There's a.

GS: Wreck?

GK: Yeah, and here's my brother. He was in the navy. He come home on furlough, and he called me up. I was on this job regular in the wintertime firing for this engineer, his name was Red Hamilton. He called me up, and he said, he said, "You care if I go to Parkersburg with you in the morning on ninety-nine." I was on that turn regular. I said, "No, I don't care." So, the next morning I picked him up, and he had my dad's overalls on. Well, I said to him, I said, "You know," I said, "we just got a brand new road foreman of engines. I said, "It'll just be about our luck that he'll show up about the time you get on that engine." So, I took him over, and I put him on the engine and introduced him to the engineer, and, of course, that was all right with him, you know. Well, about the time I got ready to leave, he looked over at me and winked. He said, "Here comes the road foreman Mr. Jacobs." Well, this brother of mine was going to get off. I said, "No, stay right there." Well, he got up on the engine. So he got up on the engine, and I introduced my brother to him, and I told him, I said, "He's going to go to Parkersburg with us. He wants to see how this. He wanted to see what all I have to do here to keep this old engine hot." He kind of grinned. He said, "Okay, don't let him get hurt though." Here's another picture of me on a miley, right there. Here's another picture here going in the shop. I just come in from Fairmont.

53 **GS:** They call those mileys because they can pull a mile long.

GK: No, there's two engines in one there. You got two engines. Here's an engine, and here's an engine.

GS: Okay. That's what makes a miley.

GK: You got a , yeah, and they got a big, what they call, an oscillating plate there in the middle. When you go around a curve, them engines will turn like that, like you're going around a pretty bad curve when you, this engine here will disappear. You just put your heart in your mouth sometime until you see it come back around on a straight line. You won't see the thing at all on a curve.

59 **GS:** Okay.

GK: Because it turns on them oscillators.

GS: Yeah, I see what you mean.

GK: Yeah, kind of have an awful time keeping the curves on the track lined up because they knock out of line because they're so heavy, and this here's a head on collision down here at Lumberport, right here, between two diesels. The operator and the dispatcher got mixed up. That fireman jumped off and went into the Ohio River.

GS: This the same wreck here?

GK: That's the same one, yeah.

GS: Did a job on the engine.

68 **GK:** Yeah. Now this track here is between Millwood and Ripley, 1955. I hauled gravel between Millwood and here for the State Road, and we'd take off with ten loads of gravel. We had five loads of gravel ahead of the engine and five loads behind the engine, and there was a lot of hills out there, and we'd go till we'd hang up, and we'd cut the five rear ones off and shove the five ahead to the top of the hill and go back and get the five rear ones, and we'd be eight hours going twelve miles, getting that gravel to Ripley. Here's another certificate in regards to steam engines if you want to read it, but it's not as good as the other one.

Interview with Gilbert King

GS: Is that society still in operation?

GK: No, that track's all gone. Oh. Oh.

GS: This right here. Society for the Preservation.

GK: Oh, I see. I doubt it now. I doubt it now very, very much so.

GS: Well, there are groups like that still around, I think, different places. There's that same picture blowed up.

88 **GK:** Well, I'm going to. You know, back in my dad's day, my mother's day, they didn't have many automobiles. About everything, everywhere you went, you either had to walk or ride a horse, or go by buggy or horsewagon. Now, I'm going to recite you a piece of poetry that my dad, that I learned off my dad. He cut this out of the Jackson County Herald back when he was a boy. He recited this poem on the last day of school, along about 1910, 1912, along in there, and I don't know what the title of it was. I call it. It starts out:

I can't tell much about the thing. It happened so powerful quick,
But it seems to me I got a most hellish, outlandish lick.
It tore my scalp. It pulled my leg most out.
Now take a seat my friends, and I'll try and tell just how this all
came about.

I was taking a load of corn to town in my wagon. Now down there
at Martin's Hole,

Where the railroad crosses the road, I seen a great, big sign high
up on a pole.

So, I thought I'd stop and read the thing and see what it said,
And I pulled my horses up real close, and I began to read.

Now I ain't no scholar, recollect, so I had to spell.

I started out kind of cautious like with r-a-i-l-r-o-a-d spelled railroad,
And that there much I knowed.

C-r-o-double s-i-n-g to boot spelled crossing just as sure as ().

L-double o-k, look.

I was looking all the time and spelling like a book.

F-o-r, for. O-u-t, out.

Now this next word started out something like this.

Interview with Gilbert King

L-o-c, m-o-t.

I reckon I got about that far when a thousand fiery thunderbolts
hit me with an awful smack.

My horses went to Davey Jones, and my wagon went to smash,
And I was hit seven yards higher than the tallest ash.

Now, my friends, it ain't the pain, nor it ain't the loss of that there team of
mine,

But how I'd like to know the rest of that there sign.

122 **GS:** Okay.

GK: You still got that on?

GS: Yeah, oh, yeah. That was from the Jackson Herald, you say.

GK: Jackson Herald.

GS: Yeah. Okay.

GK: Jackson County, Jackson County Herald.

GS: Jackson County Herald. Okay.

GK: Jackson County Herald. Let's see. I wanted to play a song here. You can
leave that off. If you don't want to turn that on there, you can leave that off.

128 **GS:** Well, I want to leave it. I want it on. I want it on.

GK: You sure?

GS: This will be up. My boss will listen to this. It might not be on the radio now.
I don't know.

GK: Well, I've played on the radio.

GS: Have you?

GK: Oh, yeah.

Interview with Gilbert King

GS: Yeah. I'll have to come over a little closer to you if you're going to play over there.

(Mr. King performs with guitar and harmonica at this point.)

GS: Very good. Very good.

150 **GK:** () incorporated with the State of Maryland in 1827, and there was a fellow by the name of Charles Carroll. He was the last signer of the Declaration of Independence. He laid the cornerstone for the B & O Railroad in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1843, I think. I can't remember right now. How about going back on that? I've got to check. I've got to make sure.

GS: Okay.

GK: Oh, 1838.

GS: Okay.

158 **GK:** He laid the cornerstone July 4, 1838, and he, like I say, he was the only survivor that signed the Declaration of Independence, and the first train that run over the branch between Grafton and Parkersburg was May 1, 1857, a hundred and four miles, and they was called at 5:00 A.M. They arrived at Parkersburg at 7:00 P.M., fourteen hours, and this engine was a wood burner, and the engineer's name was Pifer, and his brother was firing for him, and the conductor's name was O'Donnell, and he was from Greenwood, Doddridge County, and there's a powerful lot of history. You know this railroad, this old main line right here, starts right here at Moundsville, goes down to Grafton. During the Civil War, we would never have won the Civil War if it hadn't been for this railroad right here, because they hauled the biggest part of the troops and all the supplies on this piece of track right here, and the Confederate Army, they done their best to destroy it. Boy, they just blowed up bridges, they blowed up a lot of locomotives, stole a lot of locomotives. They, I think it was about twelve or fourteen locomotives, they run up to Martinsburg, West Virginia, and loaded them on wagons hauled them by horse over these mountains down in the Carolinas where they found them. Then they didn't find all of them, and they stole all the boxcars. We never did get any of them back, but we got some of them locomotives back, but they were destroyed. They were no good. They had to completely rebuild them, and it got so bad that Lincoln had to put the Army out, had to put guards out all along this railroad from

Interview with Gilbert King

Grafton to Parkersburg to protect the bridges and the telegraph lines, and another thing I'd like to bring out in regards to this being a railroad. See, better put it on pause there for a minute.

GS: He was a signer of the Declaration of Independence?

192 **GK:** He was a signer, one of the last living., He was one of the last living.

GS: He must have been pretty old.

GK: He was. He was way up in his nineties, why close a hundred years old. He was. He was.

GS: He must have been real young when he signed the Declaration.

GK: Yeah. In other words, I think it's fifty-one years.

GS: Okay. Yeah.

GK: His name was Carroll, Charles Carroll.

GS: I never knew that. Okay.

198 **GK:** Yeah, and then there's something else here I want to tell you about the B & O. Oh, here it is. The B & O Railroad was the first railroad in the United States to carry both freight and passengers, and the engineer that built that right-of-way, and he also built Route 50 through, into Winchester, into Parkersburg, come from France. His name was Claude Corzet, C-o-r-z-e-t. He was born in France, and he was the engineer and done much of the planning and design for the B & O. The B & O Railroad was the first road to use locomotive power. It was the first to use the telegraph, the first to go through the Allegheny Mountains, the first to use electric as a motive power. The Baltimore and Ohio has done so much in the development of Doddridge County and West Virginia. Unfortunately, it is no longer here. Now, let's see, the last train that run over that track between Grafton and Parkersburg was 1988.

GS: That's the one they made in to a rails to trails.

GK: Yeah. I go over there quite often.

GS: Yeah.

Interview with Gilbert King

GK: I've got a camper out here. My grandson, him and I go over there and we camp and, well, we ride our bicycles.

219 **GS:** At North Bend.

GK: On North Bend State Park, and the last time we was over there, we rode twenty-two miles in one day. We rode clear up to Petroleum and back, and I like it. It's interesting to me because it's a lot of history connected to it, and I just can't keep from thinking every time I go over there what a shame it was to do away with all that history. I think the time will come when this country is going to really regret doing away with the railroads. The time will come when they'll see they made a big mistake doing away with these railroads in this part of the country.

GS: I'll agree with you from what I know about it.

GK: Well, I can't think of anything else. I would if I could.