

This recording is an interview with Albert Gibson, a former captain of *Samson V*. The main themes of the interview are various boats he worked on before leaving the Public Wharf, the *Samson V* itself and its various duties, and his role as a captain at the time.

Interviewer: Mark McKenzie.

Interview date: 13 November 2012

Date Range: 1940s – 2013

Sound Recording Length: 1:20:12 [From 1:03:24 – 1:06:10 McKenzie and Gibson are looking at some of Gibson's old documents and comment on various artefacts].

Albert Gibson was captain of the *Samson V* in the 1970s and worked at the Canadian Public Wharfs on Columbia St for 10 years. He started his marine career as a young boy in the post-World War II years and was given the nickname "Junior," a name that he went by for most of his career. The interview covers a description of the *Samson V*, some of the challenges of driving a boat with a steam engine, and his duties as a captain. Gibson also shares the difficulties navigating both by car and boat in the smog created by beehive burners and coal in the 1950s. Companies mentioned include are Gilley Brothers, Marpole Towing, Army & Navy, the grocery store at the Kelly Douglas Building on Columbia St and the New Westminster City Market.

Section 00:00 – 12:40

In this portion of the interview, Gibson opens the conversation by describing the crew that he worked with on the *King Edward* in the late 1940s. He moves on to talk about his work with the Canadian Public Wharfs in New Westminster. During his time at the Public Wharf, he worked on the *Sakoa*, and he describes the various parts of the boat and how he would work for Army & Navy at the Kelly Douglas building on Columbia St. when he was waiting for work at the wharf.

Section 12:41 – 17:40

In this portion of the interview, the captain talks about his shift from the *Sakoa* to the *Samson V*. As the previous captain of the *Samson V* was retiring, he recommended Gibson to take his position. Gibson describes the various ways of thinking on the ocean, how to drive a boat, and the techniques of docking a boat with a steam engine.

Section 17:41 – 24:19

In this portion of the interview, Gibson talks about the techniques for handling the *Samson* and states that it took him five years to "outthink the boat". He describes various elements of sailing with the *Samson V* and the risks involved with the paddlewheels. He tells the story of how they one day picked up a piece from a horse carriage that had sunk in 1905.

Section 24:20 – 33:43

In this portion of the interview, Gibson describes the duties of the captain, both as a master of the ship and as an administrator. He talks about his lessons from navigation school and the inspections that came with lifeboat drills. He talks about the efficient way of sailing with a sternwheeler, and that it would take the *Samson V* four hours at 8 knots an hour to sail to Mission, BC. The boat could go as fast as 10 knots, but only for a limited time.

Section 33:44 – 42:01

In this portion of the interview, Gibson talks about how he was responsible for feeding his crew with \$900 per month. He would be given \$500 for his own salary, and a cheque of \$900 to cover the food expenses. He and the cook purchased produce at Kelly Douglas on Columbia St, Dairyland delivered milk every morning and the City Market came with fish every Friday. He talks about finding the cheapest meat and laundry, as he saw himself as a “steward of public money.”

Section 42:02 – 52:16

In this portion of the interview, Gibson describes his daily routine on the *Samson V*, and the size and role of his crew.

Section 52:17 – 56:32

In this portion of the interview, Gibson talks about the time when the *Samson V* worked on the trifurcation project near the grain elevator. This was the only time the *Samson V* would work at night, because they needed to take advantage of the low water levels. There is a discussion about the sidelights on the *Samson V*, before a brief conversation about women on the waterfront is initiated.

Section 56:33 – 1:06:10

In this portion of the interview, Gibson talks about the limited ethnic diversity among the *Samson V* crew, and how he only worked with one Chinese and one First Nations man throughout his career. He describes the good years for the salmon fishermen, and how the *Samson V* would work together with a survey team from Steveston twice a year to establish range markers for the larger ships. He states that the machinery on the *Samson V* did not change in his time, and mentions multiple individuals he worked with and reported to in his time as captain.

Section 1:06:11 – 1:10:33

In this portion of the interview, Gibson talks about the different lights on the *Samson*. He also describes the changes in batteries that would power the lights, and the maintenance of these.

Section 1:10:33 – 1:20:12

In this portion of the interview, Gibson tells a story about the time when he navigated the *Samson* through the fog from Mission to New Westminster, after a small discussion of how he did not notice the changes in the type of ships arriving to the port. He talks about the air pollution from beehive burners and coal in the 1950s. He closes the interview by stating that he left the Canadian Public Wharf because a union was brought in.