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Patrick Durand, Martin Gutoski, and Steve Hormann talk about Patrick's role in founding the Tanana Valley Railroad Museum

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Martin Gutoski introduces everyone. He said Patrick Durand talked last night about the Engine 557 restoration and will be talking about Friends of the Tanana Valley Railroad and rehabbing Engine no. 1 which was the first steam engine to arrive in the area. Gutoski asked Pat Durand to describe his involvement in the project. Durand said he was involved with doing in-service programs and selling audiovisual materials to schools. Dan Gullickson was the director of audiovisual materials for BIA schools in Alaska at that time. They became friends. Gullickson told him he was going to be the guest speaker at the Lion's Club and he was going to talk about the restoration of Engine no. 1. Durand said Engine no. 1 was the first locomotive engine in Interior Alaska. It was painted in 1967 and displayed at Alaskaland. Any machine like that that has historical significance realized it was going to melt away. They convinced people it was necessary to restore it and it was restored over a ten year period. His involvement was to do an initial mechanical survey. He had never worked on a full sized steam engine but had built operating steam models. They did about a 12 page survey. He said no. 1 is basically an off the shelf model of a ten ton porter. Locating original sketches was important to the project. He built a model of the locomotive which is in a display case at the museum. There is a copper clad roof on the machine as well as the model. Over the years Gullickson and he would get together and worked with the crew. He said it was an engaging opportunity for the volunteer. Gutoski asked about the model. Durand said it was started with a kit and then modified to match the prototype. He talked about the changes he made on the model. It is a large scale train. The scale of the train is simulating a 36 inch track. They discussed different model scales. Gutoski said the original train did not have a hopper for the wood. Durand said it never had a tender except for an adaptation of a scraper car. He said they were hoppers that could drop on either side of the track. Gutoski said the Tanana Valley Railroad didn't have hoppers. Durand said they had gravity dumps and it was tricky. Durand said the Tanana Valley Railroad had a little tender of sorts. Gutoski said they had to go about three miles before they added water. The original engine was coal fired. Gutoski said he understood that most of the rolling stock came from the White Pass and Yukon Railroad. They were brought in in 1905. The engine was brought in by barge to Chena.

Gutoski said Durand's involvement also involved the bell. Durand said the bell on the Engine no. 1 was a unique shape. At the Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry they had a bell that matched the contours of the porter drawings for the bell. The bell had been donated from someone from Skagway. It had been used in Juneau for a tram. He didn't believe that it was cast in Juneau and thought it had been taken from another Porter locomotive. He had it de-accessioned and presented it to the Friends of the Tanana Valley Railroad. Gutoski talked about ringing the bell. Durand said they also provided an injector for engine no. 1. No. 1 was pretty complete. He talked about obtaining brass components. He talked about some of the components they needed for 557. Both of the manufacture boiler plates for the

Engine no. 1 were still connected. Gutoski talked about Engine no. 1 being brought over to Alaskaland in 1967 and was outside for another 25 years before it was restored. He said the cab on the engine was the third or fourth cab on the engine since it was wood. He said they had some old letters from the Alaska Railroad superintendent about the donation of the engine to Fairbanks because it was too expensive to ship it out for scrap.

Gutoski asked Durand about Porter. Durand said they were in the production of smaller equipment used for short lines and plantation locomotives. They started doing internal combustion switchers. They also built some small diesel switchers. Several other companies were doing the same thing at the same time. He wasn't sure what they evolved into after the 1940s. Each Porter engine had a unique serial number and came with a catalog of parts. He explained how parts were ordered. Gutoski said they were more or less switch engines. Durand said you might think about the construction industry in those days and how they were used to move materials. They were used primarily by contractors for moving materials. He talked about the Davenport locomotive. They were used to move the big locomotives in and out. They were called the yard goat. It is on display at the depot in Anchorage. The Alaska Railroad has had a number of number ones through the years. Gutoski explained what the wheel numbers mean such as the 040. Durand said the classification of wheels is universal. He said as engines go larger they needed more wheels in the back for support. They discussed the size of wheels on trains. Durand said 557 wasn't very large. They were built to be used in Europe. Gutoski said the 557 was the last steam engine on the Alaska Railroad. Durand said in 1954 they retired all the rest of them and they converted 557 from coal to burning oil. Its last revenue runs were in 1959. Several of the steam engines were kept around for strategic reserve. 557 was in Whittier in the engine house. They kept them full all ready for service. During 1964 when the Tanana River flooded Nenana they could use a steam engine over the flooded tracks. They could drag the diesel trains through the high water. Steve Hormann talked about his father working as a fireman on 556 and 557. Durand talked about the people who shoveled the coal into the firebox. He talked about a typical trip to Fairbanks in 1938 and 1939. It would be a four day trip. Everything was built around the ship arrival in Seward. Mudhole Smith would fly people out of Cordova to Fairbanks.

Gutoski asked if there was any evidence that Engine no. 1 left Fairbanks when the Alaska Railroad bought it in 1917. Durand said it never left the Fairbanks area in his understanding. This was where the three foot track was. Some of the other equipment found its way down to Moose Creek area at the mines. Keith Christensen found a box car there at Moose Creek at the old coal mine above Palmer. Gutoski talked about Christensen. Gutoski asked about what happened to the rolling stock. Durand said everything ended up in the hands of the Alaska Engineering Commission until 1923 when the transfer took place to the Alaska Railroad. Christensen kept telling him about a box car above Moose Creek which eventually they did with some trouble. They can still see the numbers on the side of the box car. Gutoski said the box car is on the Parks Highway. Gutoski said he thought it was a flat car frame when it was being used for the Tanana Valley Railroad. The box car was probably built in Chena since they had a saw mill there. He said they hope to move it to Fairbanks. Durand and Gutoski talked about the boiler associated with the box car. Gutoski said he has research old railroad alignment maps and he has found some maps from the 1920s in that area. Durand talked about access into the site when they went up

there. He talked about Christensen's fascination with railroads and his collection. Durand and Gutoski talked about other Porter engines in the Alaska and Yukon region.