

Tape 1 (2) - Side 1

Q: I think this will be a much shorter interview than the last one.

A: Oh, yes.

Q: The first few questions I want to ask you are questions about the general strike, and they're mainly questions that I haven't asked in the last interview...

A: You can bring that chair there.

Q: Good idea.

A: That's better.

Q: The first question I wanted to ask you is, if you remember who called the strike, the general strike?

A: Well, it must have been the city employees, I couldn't tell you which union, or who was responsible.

Q: Do you remember if it was the unions, or whether it was the IWW people, or...

A: Well, I couldn't say that. Probably, it was an all-over strike, it was the city.

Q: Do you remember before the strike started, what you expected from it? Did people talk about it beforehand, what it was going to be like?

A: No. No, not as far as I know.

Q: So it wasn't discussed, you didn't...

A: No, I was not very active then. Later I was more in the public and in politics. In the democratic districts around here. I heard more about it. At that time, I had young children and I was not very active.

Q: What did you think of the strike when it was going on?

A: Well, it wasn't very, it seemed to me, it wasn't clear to me what the trouble was. And being so far away from it and having no occasion, we were living in this end of the city, we had really no need of street cars or the services, so we didn't feel it. And it was very little to speak of out here, that we heard about it. Except, as I told you, I think that there was a young fellow that, well he'd make a little money and run a five cent ( ) and he was disgusted. There were people who weren't interested, they didn't want to ride on his stupid train.

Q: Would you say you were sympathetic to one side or the other? To labor or to management?

A: Well, I think that as far as I'm concerned, that the strike was very short and didn't have much success, evidently, Olie Hansen fixed it so quickly that it was over very quickly and people weren't a bit worried, as far as I know. And my husband, he had nothing to do with the, he must have belong to the pharmacists's union as far as I know, but I don't think they took any part in it.

Q: You told me last time that most of your friends were working people...

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Did they feel strongly about the strike, one way or the other?

A: Well, I really can't say. I really couldn't say who, they were so many of my friends ( ), you know, there were, let's see, in 1918 there was a time here that, you know, our Icelandic group was quite a population that lived here, from different Icelandic communities back in Canada and the U.S., but then the depression had come, in the meantime, and many of them had gone back to Canada, so there was really much less activity among our group. That was about the time that, you know, things were very slow here. So I can't say.

Q: M-hmm. It was a small group, then.

A: I was a very small group that I was with.

Q: Do you have any idea why it ended?

A: I beg your pardon?

Q: Do you have any idea why the general strike ended?

A: Why? Well, I imagine that they must have given into their demands.

Q: Do you think it was worth it for labor?

A: Worth it? I imagine it must have helped them, although there, it had some aftermath by the street car system being, you know, bought by the city.

Q: When you think about the strike, someone said to you, well, I've heard that you were living in Seattle during the general strike, what's your biggest impression of the strike?

A: Well, of course it's like all strikes, it's going to hurt, you know, hurt some people. If people are afraid to cross the lines, the, it's going to hurt the businessmen, and

and also they're going to lose time, and in some ways, if they're not paid what they're worth, you know, asking for or seem to be, you know, entitled to, it has to be done that way. But I have no recollection of any feeling about the settlement or what was really the object of it. It was, you know, the war was just over. That was one thing, and the young men hadn't really come back that were in the war. So many of them. Now my brother, he was in Europe, he was still in Europe in 1919. The war was over in November, but he still hadn't come back from the war. It took him some time to get, you know, and everybody was happy about the war being ended. There was great rejoicing. We had a kind of a false report, and everybody was out blowing whistles, and then they found out that it wasn't settled. Then it came out again that it was settled about the, I think about the 11th of November. 1918.

Q: After the strike, did you all your life stay home? Did you ever work outside of your home?

A: No, I never did. I always, I had five children to look after.

Q: Five children? And what did they do?

A: What, my children?

Q: I mean what did they go on to do?

A: Well, this is my son, and he became a, he was graduated from the university of Washington, and then he became a, did social work for a short time, and then he went to the employment services. And he has just retired now. And my daughter, one of my daughters, she took a course at the university, in social work, and she worked at it for a few years or so, and married, and has a family,

Q: And they raised families?

A: Both of them. One of them worked in a school uniform shop.

Q: Have you been a politically active person?

A: Well, I did. During the democratic party, oh, it was after, I think shortly before he retired, he retired in 1946. Sold the drugstore, he was over 70 by then. And he was interested in the democratic party, so we used to go to their meetings, and so I was

asked to run for a precinct woman, and I got in, and I was elected for 26 years.

Q: So you were very active then?

A: So I was very active in those years, and I was very interested in it. We had a very good district. They changed the district in some ways, but it was mostly around here, in my own neighborhood, and I met alot of nice people. And I have good friends. And I only retired about five years ago.

Q: So, that was a big change in the days of the general strike, when you weren't...

A: Oh, yes.

Q: In the days of the general strike, was that before women had the vote?

A: Oh, yes. We didn't get the vote until I think, about 1920, or 21. I don't remember. We couldn't vote, even. We had only school elections. I don't remember just when, but I know that, oh, it must have been about 20. But I remember, I read about it, a great deal about the English woman and all the others here. I read about them. I think that it was nice, that women are getting their rights, in some ways, that they didn't have. I know I have no complaints to make about my life.

Q: That's nice.

A: I think that, you know, men and women are, ( ) women can't expect to come up to men in every way. I'm sure they can't do it, they haven't got physical or the mental ability, in some ways. Their minds don't run that way. And to be taking part in physical labor and hard labor and taking part in you know, these things, I don't think that they're very successful. I kind of laugh at this woman that lost, Bundy, ( ), did you read about it? It's no wonder that it can get pretty rough.

Q: Do you feel that there's been a political leader in recent years that spoke for you?

A: Here in Seattle?

Q: Or nationally.

A: Well, I have had an acquaintance with senator Jackson, he's been in and out of the district for many years. And he was very friendly, and he used to come up to our gatherings.

Q: Do you feel he speaks for you?

A: Well, I used to, but I don't now, because I don't go anywhere.

Q: I see. So, but you thought that he represented your point of view?

A: Well, yes. He represented the people very well, I think. People were very happy with him, and that was in his earlier years, you know. And he seemed to have a very good repore with the people. And I imagine that he has, still, in his own district.

Q: What do you think of as the most important events of the last 50 years or so?

A: The last events for 50 years. Well, I, probably both good and bad things have come out. I really, in a few minutes I just can't think of what I would say, but of course one is the rights of black people. I feel that that's the thing that should have come, is coming slowly, and I don't know about the politics, it seems to me it's getting to be a kind of a complicated game for officers or officials to be elected. It takes so much money. And it's getting out of bounds. How can they limit it, I don't know. Well, I have no suggestions, but it seems to me that when a man has to spend thousands and thousands of dollars, that it isn't the right thing for a beginning of any elected official.

Q: What do you think is the most important issue facing the country today?

A: Well, one is the desegregation, and I think, too, that this racing of, you know, salaries all around is not going to be very good if it keeps on, it's going to get the country into too deep of trouble, and people are not going to be, you know, willing to work, unless they get these high salaries. I think it's a bad condition when money is the only thing that talks. The will of the people doesn't count.

Q: What do you like most about this country?

A: Well, I've never known any other country, so, but I think that when I talk to people that have gone, come from other countries, and have visited there and come back, they all seem to think that the U.S. are very good. I just talked to a party that went through, a couple that came from Norway, and they had been here, and he says that I certainly wouldn't take any country ahead of the U.S. to live in, except, perhaps Norway. And of course he was a Norwegian. But he said that they were very, very free people and very individual and had their good ideas. But I guess socialism is very strong in the other countries. I have a

cousin here that just came back from a visit in England, and of course the conditions are different there, and yet he says that people, they don't seem to have work. They don't seem to be working. He doesn't know how they're being supported, the government, I noticed in a magazine that the government really owns most of the buildings, and runs the country. They call it the National Trust, in England. And I have a relative there that she lost her husband, and it's taken her years now, and they still don't know how they're going to pay the death taxes, they're so high.

Q: So, you said that you can't think of a country that would be better to live in. Do you know what it is about this country that makes you like it?

A: Well, it's a, the country itself is beautiful, and you know, it has many things. And it has good, you know, land and trees and water. And if it wasn't misused, it would keep on being a very good place. They can only keep on being plundered by a few, like the forests. When I first came, you had acres and acres of stumps instead of trees. You don't see that anymore. Now they have supermarkets.

Q: What do you like least about the country?

A: Well, of course that's pretty hard to say about the country, it's the people, probably. I'd say the people that, you don't like what they do. I'm hoping that Carter will make good in his promises and his ideas. That they'll be carried out, he has good ideas. And maybe there will be a change in what has been done.

Q: What is it that people do, that you don't like?

A: Well, I don't like this, you know, people cheating. Going on welfare when they don't need it. And in other ways, you know, trying to get a living for little or nothing. I think that people should, if they need to work, they should work for it, and not try to cheat the government. And of course, that carries out for politicians, too, if they are, I hope we have honest officials, which of course isn't always, ( ) change people that way.

Q: Have you seen or heard or read anything in the news lately that made you feel good?

A: Well, I feel, in a way I feel quite worried at this present time about these criminals. How they're going to keep on adding criminals to the jails and keeping them for years

and have to hire many people to take care of, or watch them. They'll have more people watching the jails than working in employment. I think the system should change somewhat. I don't know just what they can do about it, but it seems to me that the jails are getting fuller and more criminals being taken care of and kept in for life.

Q: So that's something that you've seen that's made you unhappy?

A: Well, it makes me unhappy to see these murders, especially young children. Women and children.

Q: Is there anything you've seen lately that's made you feel good?

A: Well, I think that things are looking a little bit better, it seems to me that people are getting a little more, and it seems to me there's a kind of, you know, inflation seems to be not really slacking off, but it's more settled, anyway.

Q: What great people, living or dead, do you admire most?

A: What people, you mean in office?

Q: Anywhere. Living or dead.

A: Well, I admire our mayor. I think he's a good mayor. And I have hopes for our governor, he doesn't seem to be very popular yet, but I have hopes that he'll show us that he is responsible and a really ( ) person.

Q: Do you think that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful with people?

A: Well, I think that there's, of course you have to be careful because there are so many around in a big city like this, it seems ( ) that are really bent on just, you know, cheating, and getting things their way without working for it, and that isn't a very good thing. But if the young people who are now growing up, if they'll learn that you have to earn what they really want, then they should be more responsible, because that's what people learn, in my ( ) they were responsible. If they had no work, they worked. They didn't, you know, expect somebody else to help them. They were really working, those young people. They had to struggle to get their education, and they had very little help to do it.

Q: Do you think that most of the time people try to be helpful, or do you think they're just looking out for themselves?

A: Most people?

Q: Do you think that most people are trying to be helpful, or mostly looking out for themselves?

A: Well, I think there's a lot of people that are helpful. I can see that. There are many that are very helpful and are really trying to, you know, do some good. And I know in my own circle of friends, they are so busy, just doing things for the community and trying to help. Besides their own work.

Q: Do you think that most people would try to take advantage of you, or would they try to be fair?

A: Well, I don't know of anybody that I know that would do that, because I really feel that we have a responsible group in Ballard. The Ballard people are very honest in many ways. There are Scandinavians, mostly Norwegians and Swedish and Icelandic and Danish. And I think if you deal with the older people, that they're very responsible.

Q: Do you think what most young people need most of all is strict discipline by their parents?

A: Well I think so, by the reports that I hear from the schools. That the younger parents are not strict. For what reason, I don't know. That the children are very ( ), you know, in school and that they disobey the teacher and don't care, and can't be disciplined when they misbehave. That's what I hear, but of course I have no experience in that, because my grandchildren are through with school. And my great-grandchildren aren't old enough.

Q: Do you think that most people who don't get ahead, don't have enough will power?

A: Well, I can't say much about that, but I think that if they have to work for themselves, they will do that. I think most of them will do that, if you can get work. Of course there are not very many that I know that have been inheriting any fortunes or materials for living.

Q: How about the ones who don't get ahead, is that because of circumstances, or because they don't have enough will power?

A: Well, I don't know that group. I can't say that I know that group. The young people that

( ) my age when I came here, they were, they're very few of them left. So I guess I'm very, you know. But their children are doing well. Many of them, of course, are gone, too. We are losing too many young men.

Q: Do you think a few strong leaders could make the country better than all the laws and talking?

A: Than lords?

Q: Than all the laws.

A: Oh, the laws. Oh, yes.

Q: Do you think a few strong leaders would make a country better than all the laws and the talk?

A: Well, I think that a strong leader is good, because they have to at least set the example, and as long as they're in office, what they're doing, what they're doing is going to be an example. But they can't do that, for you know, usually you have to retire at a certain age. But we should have more, you know, influence if the leaders are good, and so on.

Q: People sometimes say, an insult to your honor should not be forgotten. Do you agree with that?

A: Well, I don't know just what that means.

Tape 1 (2) - Side 2

Q: How do you feel about the school desegregation issue in Seattle?

A: Well, I hope it's going on, I mean it's getting straightened slowly, because I'm for it.

Q: Do you think it's possible that a general strike could happen today?

A: Oh, I imagine it could.

Q: What could cause one?

A: Well, dissatisfaction of the people with what they're having. Getting.

Q: Would you support one under the right conditions?

A: No, I was not in favor of the school strike.

Q: There's no conditions which you can think of where you would support a general strike?

A: Well, it seems to me that they didn't really have a reason. You know, people don't have much money anymore. They have to earn it, if they have it. And according to what I've

heard, teachers were getting fair wages. But of course they say they weren't, so I don't know what to really believe.

Q: How necessary are employers to running a business? Could workers run businesses without employers?

A: No, I don't believe so. I think you have to have a strong leader in any business. Well, especially if it's a big concern, like the schools, for instance, you have to have leaders.

Q: How about these cooperative industries, where the workers run it themselves and they split the profits, can those work?

A: Well, that may be a good thing in one way. I think they can make their own crafts. But that can go out of hand, too, because they're going to give themselves favoritism, rather than the public. They're going to favor themselves a little more, and if it gets too strong, they might become just as big as big business.

Q: Have you read anything about the general strike?

A: In Seattle?

Q: The Seattle general strike?

A: No, not since then. I don't remember that I ever read much about it.

Q: Have you discussed it with your son? I know that he's read some about it.

A: Well he has to read his own news now. I let my children make their own, you know. Decisions. And have, ever since they grew up. I feel that they have their right to their own opinions.

Q: That's all the questions that I have for now.

END OF INTERVIEW.