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If you could tell me your background, when and where you were born and how you came to Seattle.

A: Well, I was born in Sweden, 1901, and came as a baby, four years old, to Pennsylvania. And came out to Seattle in 1909, when they had the Alaskan Yukon Pacific Exposition, and I was raised, went through the grammar school there. And I got into the newspaper game as a young fellow, and quit that and went on too many street cars for five years, and then quit that and went back into the newspaper business again.

Q: So you came out with your parents?

A: Yeah.

Q: What did they do?

A: My dad, in the old country, was an insurance inspector. And he had no real trade, and when he came to ( <sup>McKees Port</sup> ), he worked, tried to get work in the tin mills, that's what the <sup>(McKees Port)</sup> board is, and couldn't get work, and then, finally, got a job helping build <sup>(exactly)</sup> that used to load coal in McKeesport and Pittsburgh.

Q: What are "scows"?

A: Scows are barges. Yeah. And these, they loaded with coal and floated down the Ohio River and the Mississippi, down to New Orleans, where they unloaded them and then broke them up for firewood, so this is a, he didn't care for that, so this Exposition was being, they were laying the foundation for it, and alot of Scandanavian friends went out here and they liked it, so they wrote back, and so my dad came out to look for work there. But he saw this was only a temporary deal, so finally he went into the gardening business. And so this is what he wound up doing the rest of his life.

Q: Did your mother work outside of the home?

A: No. Never.

Q: Do you remember when you were growing up, did they discuss politics much?

A: My mother wasn't interested in politics. And my dad was a little bit up on everything. But he just loved discussions. Like, as far as I was concerned, I thought one opinion, why, he'd take the opposite side. Then maybe a few weeks later, I'd take the side that

he was on, and first thing you know, he switched around. He just loved discussions.

Q: Did he have a particular political stand? Did he...

A: No, if anything he was just anti everything.

Q: Then, when you got here, do you remember what papers he read, or they read?

A: Well, he subscribed to a Swedish-American paper from Chicago, which alot of the Scandanavians, there was a Scandanavian press at that time, and this was sent all over the country, where ever the Scandanavian communities where. And then there was also in New York, there was a Scandanavian press. And then each little town, like Seattle and Spokane, where they had the, even in Tacoma here, would have their own local little Scandanavian, but that only came out once a week.

Q: Did he read any English papers...

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: Or did your mother?

A: Well, my mother read the society and my dad read everything.

Q: Do you remember what papers they read?

A: Well, there was the Seattle Times.

Q: The Times. Did they ever read the Union Record? Do you remember?

A: They had to, because I worked on it for part of the time.

Q: Is that later when you were in your 20's?

A: I went to work on the Record in, oh, I think around 24 or 25, and I worked on it until it folded.

Q: When you were growing up, do you remember what they read? Or what you read?

A: Just the local papers.

Q: The Times?

A: The Times. There were others. There were quite a few papers at that time.

Q: You didn't have one steady paper...

A: Yeah, the Times.

Q: So you didn't read the Record, growing up?

A: Well, of course the Record was a weekly for a long time. And then it went into a daily,

in fact, at one time it had the biggest circulation in Seattle. And then the federal government, federal marshall closed it down for a couple of days, and from then on it went downhill. See, when I, at the finish of the Record, we only had 11,000 circulation.

Q: Wow. Was that...

A: It was, well, I guess it was over 100,000. In fact, it took two persons to get out the production.

Q: Maybe when we're finished here, you could tell me about that period when Alt was ( ) fire...

A: I was a good friend of Alt. In fact, when I came to Tacoma, the second house we bought in Tacoma, I looked out the back door, and here Harry Alt was, his lot abutted our lot. And he was then, I don't know if he was retired then or was a deputy U.S. marshall. He used to work on the record. And later on he went into politics, and he had some kind of government position, and he gave Harry his little job. He was a wonderful fellow, this Harry Alt.

Q: That must have been a hard time, the last couple of years of the Record with all those charges going back and forth.

A: Well, this I don't know. We weren't in on any of that. The Union Record was not controlled by labor at that time. It was a, it turned into a private deal, some fellows that tried to save it.

Q: So, how far did you go with schooling, before you started working?

A: Well, I'll tell you I have a, the minimum of high school credits you can have. One half a credit. I took a subject which was wood-working, and it was divided in two. So one of it was drawing and the other was the actual shop work. And I only finished one half of it and went to work.

Q: You had gone through 8th grade...

A: Yeah.

Q: And then you went to work, first, at the paper?

A: Well, of course, I carried papers ever since I was a little kid, and at that time, I made pretty good money. It had just gone through the transition period where you worked on salary, and started being your own merchant. So there was an incentive there, and you'd

build up your routes. And I don't know, I was making \$60 a month. And the papers were only 2¢ and a nickel on Sundays.

Q: So at the time the general strike started, though, you weren't working at the...

A: Well, see, I went to work in the press room, and I worked there about 2 years. And then the ship yards were running, so, I started too young anyhow, so anyhow I couldn't see working for the small wages on the paper, I went to the ship yard and worked in several of those, and that was too dangerous. There was no "safety first" in those days. No helmets. I was catching rivets all over my body. So that didn't look good, so then I went, they were advertising for a street car conductor, and the Electric Company owned the lines then, so I went and applied for work, and they grabbed anybody. Of course I lied about my age. I was actually 16. I said I was 18. So, and then, of course I belonged to a union before in the newspaper as a pressman. That is what they called fly <sup>boys</sup> boards. They were the fellows that took the papers from the press. They registered them. You weren't really a member, but you were registered with the union. So I don't think (      ). But the street car men were unorganized at this time. And so the way you got in was the fellows would explain unionism to you and plead with you, and also this is how you got in then. You didn't have to be a member to get a job. You had to have a job and then try it. I imagine they were maybe only 60% organized. In my time then. Lots of them didn't belong.

Q: Do you remember what year that was?

A: Well, that must have been 1918, was when I started on street cars.

Q: So, the next year when the strike broke out, do you remember why it was called, or who called it?

A: Well, now this is where I get a little foggy. It seems to me that the ship yard deal was almost over with. And these unions that worked in the ship, that had control of the ship yard, there were unions that, ordinary times were very small, like boiler makers. This was one of the ( *big ones* ). I think most of us that worked there belonged to that. And as you got so many stamps after so many months, then you automatically became promoted so that in a year and a half, well, you were tops. And I really think they just

got a little big too big for their britches, some of these leaders. You know, they were used to making ( ), because all the work in the ship yards, the government paid, footed the bill, no matter how much it cost. Everything was 10% plus costs, so the more they paid out, the more money the ship yards made. And I know lots of times when, why I'd finish a ship and then be held on duty for several hours, maybe another ship, and doing nothing. And this is what cost the government. It was terrifically phoney.

Q: So it started in the ship yards, then.

A: Oh, yeah. Those were the unions that fomented this general strike. I don't think hardly anybody was in favor of it, but...

Q: But how did it spread, then, to the other unions?

A: Well, the other, of course they worked through the Central Labor Council, they appeared down there and they'd get all these other unions to, it was a strike of the ship yard workers first. And then they didn't get what they wanted, so they had to try to start a general strike. They figured this way they could get whatever they wanted, and I don't know to this day, if they won. And so the thing that I particularly remember, like I was on street cars then, and we met with, our union met at the press club auditorium, which was a little theatre on, I think 5th or 6th avenue. And the president of the electric company asked permission to address us. And this sticks in my mind, because I'll never forget, he made this speech, he says you fellows know what you have to do. And I can't tell you what to do and what not to do. But, he says, the only thing that I ask, is that if the strike is broken, that you immediately all come back to work if you vote to join this general strike. And he says, we won't attempt to break this strike. But ( ) he wanted us to return, and our jobs would be secure. And I thought that was pretty white.

Q: Really. Why did he do that? Do you have any idea?

A: Well, no. I don't think there was any ulterior motives. His name was Leonard, I remember that. Seattle Electric Company, which was a Stone and Webster outfit.

Q: Did the union men vote to join...

A: Yeah, they voted. And my part of it was I stayed home.

Q: Were you in favor of the strike at that time?

A: It, don't forget I was only 18 years old, and it didn't make a bit of difference to me. I wasn't indoctrinated too much into unionism, and I knew what we did, we did it because we thought that we had to do something like this, but there was no enthusiasm.

Q: You say no enthusiasm for you, or for everyone in general?

A: No, I don't think anybody was really enthused. I can't recall if there, there were just these few leaders of the, of course don't forget at that time there was also the IWW's and there were lots of radicals who really were just radicals and were interested in the labor movement. They were agitators.

Q: Was the strike run or called by the unions, or by the IWW?

A: Oh, no. No, I don't think the IWW had anything to do with it. Of course there were lots of union members that also carried IWW cards. But the IWW always, they did alot of good but they were never satisfied. They would, whatever they got the next day, they were liable to go out for something else.

Q: You say they did alot of good. Did you have specific things in mind, or generally?

A: Well, in the logging camps, for example. There's no question about it that they improved conditions way over 100%. Those fellows were treated like rif raf. They were dirty and lousy and carried all their own stuff on their backs. And of course, they weren't organized at all. The IWW tried to organize them.

Q: Before the, when it became obvious that the general strike was going to happen, but before it actually did happen, do you remember what people expected? Did they expect it to be a big strike, or did they think it was going to be a revolution?

A: I don't know. I think the thing was that most people said, well, we'll wait and see what happens. There was no, it was poorly organized. I think they did have a <sup>small bit of</sup> suspicion. I'm not too sure, but people took it pretty much on that. I don't recall that there was any, there was no enthusiasm ( ). I know like, at that time in Seattle, had a little muni-

cipal railway of it's own. That just started. And they ran one line from Seattle to Ballard, and another one from Seattle to ( ). And the funny part of it was as far as the street cars were concerned, the one that broke the strike on the street cars was the Seattle Municipal Railway. And the conductor on the first car out of the barns, was the, was from a socialist family. And this was the funniest thing to watch, you know.

Q: You don't remember his name, do you?

A: Windsor. Because later on I worked with him, a few years later, why Seattle bought the private company, and of course all these fellows, they were included into the, they could choose which ever car barn they wanted to work in.

Q: Did you ask him why he had done that?

A: No, no. He was a funny looking, he was an old, old fellow, too. But this was a strange thing.

Q: You say there was no enthusiasm, but people did think it was necessary? Why did they vote in favor of going out on strike if there was no enthusiasm?

A: Well, it's so easy, I've been in a couple of strikes since then, and it's so easy for a few people to get up and shout, and get you all enthused. Instead of thinking it over. It's awful easy to say yes to a strike. But it's awful hard to settle afterwards. It, to my notion, there's, strikes evidently were necessary when unions were first started. When they were oppressed. But this stuff, and here I used to be a negotiator, myself, but here the, to me, the strike means to obtain certain benefits. This shows either your negotiators aren't very able to sell it, or maybe you don't have a good case. Then you have to resort to striking to get something.

Q: What was the general strike like? You said you stayed home...

A: That's just about what I did. And...

Q: Do you remember anything about the strike?

A: Not too much. Just everything more or less closed down. The newspapers closed down. I think the Seattle Star was the one that broke the strike as far as newspapers were concerned, they decided, I think some of the printing trades unions didn't vote to strike.

But they, of course enough did, so that the others wouldn't function. But I know the Seattle Star did. Oh, that was recognized as a pretty liberal paper<sup>but</sup> after that, it went down, down, down.

Q: Is that where it got the name "shooting star"?

A: It could be, yeah. This I just faintly remember, the shooting star. It, that could be very well.

Q: Do you remember if there was any violence?

A: That I don't recall. I don't think there was.

Q: Was the army, did the army come in, the national guard at any point?

A: No, no, not to my knowledge. They might have been called in for, by the different companies, to protect their property. This I don't know. But that's the only thing. There was no violence that I can recall.

Q: How did you get information about the strike at this time, during the strike?

A: I don't recall. It didn't last too long, did it?

Q: Well, I was going to ask you...

A: I don't know. It couldn't have been too long. A week, two weeks, or that much. I don't know.

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

A: No. It worked just the opposite. It's just the same right now. People are not too sympathetic to labor now, on account of strike for this, strike for that.

Q: So public opinion turned against labor, as a result of that strike?

A: Well, the ones that were against labor, of course, turned more against labor. But I think that's all. But no, I can't recall that there was any violent anti-labor amongst the general public. Of course your industries, your manufacturers and like that, they ( ) to discredit.

Q: Then in what way would you say, when I asked you if the strike was worth it, you said no. In what way was it harmful to labor?



A: Yeah, he was secretary of the Labor Council. And there was another grandstander. Wavey haired, and...

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A: And I think his union was the machinist's, and...

Q: In what way did he abuse people?

A: Well, I mean, sarcastic and nasty and if someone would get up in the Central Labor Council and give voice to things that Jimmy didn't approve of, instead of answering him in the right way, why he would abuse the other man.

Q: Did he have a role in the strike.

A: I suppose so, but I don't know what. I imagine that if he was the secretary of the Labor Council, he had to have some sort of <sup>a role in it.</sup> ( ).

Q: Did you know any of the IWW's?

A: Well, I knew the people who had them, the IWW's, but I don't know at that particular time.

Q: There weren't friends of yours who were...

A: ( ) friends of the family, and in fact, what I get a kick out of, some of those were IWW's as long as things were tough. And later on one of them that died just recently, became a millionaire. And another one, I think he became chief of police up in Nome. And they, they're all changed as they got older.

Q: What did you do after the strike, you said you went back...

A: ( ) back on street cars, and then after a few years went back on the newspaper.

Q: And have you been working on the press with the newspapers since then?

A: Until I retired, yeah.

Q: During all that, did you have time to raise a family?

A: One daughter.

Q: What does she do?

A: Well, she's married in Ashland, Oregon. We put her through college, and then she was an official, in a way, in the, what's that big department store in San Francisco? Well, anyhow, she was also in the training course, you know, that they have. And she met her prospective husband there. In fact she was his boss. And they married and then he decided he

A: No, not really. I've been in the newspaper game most of my life, and I don't believe much of what I read.

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

A: Judge Douglas is one.

Q: You mean from the supreme court?

A: Yeah. Well, I can't, there are no real leaders.

Q: M-hmm. Living or dead.

A: Just about right.

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

A: I've always been too trusting and found out that sometimes it doesn't pay off. But it's still a heck of alot nicer to trust people.

Q: Do you think most of the time people try to be helpful, or are they mostly looking out for themselves?

A: Well, I would say, you find lots of nice people ( ), then you find others that well, just don't want to get involved.

Q: Would most people try to take advantage of you if they had the chance, or would they try to be fair?

A: I think most would try to be fair.

Q: What did you think of the civil rights movement?

A: Well, I think this is something that should have been going on all the time. I think if we live up to our constitution, why this should never even been a question. We're supposed to believe it. I'll tell you one thing now, like down at the shop where I was working one time. We were sitting around, they were talking about the colored people and I didn't have much to say, but I said, well, we're supposed to all be created equal. One of the fellows said, well, Swede, how would you like it if some nigger moved next door to you? This was when I first moved out here. And I says, well, truthfully, I don't know. It all depends upon what kind of a person he was. And I says I'll tell you one thing, if some of the fellows I worked with moved next door to me, I'd put my place up for sale. This is true.

Q: How did you feel about the student anti-war movement?

want to be, is it generally because they don't have enough will power?

A: It's just the way the ball bounces. Some people have got it, and some haven't.

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

A: When you get into leaders, then you're practically getting into the same thing as well, maybe there should be a dictator. I'd rather see a turn-over in elections. People don't get in and stay in. And keep new blood coming in all the time. And maybe not leaders, but committees.

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

A: I don't, I can agree and I don't think it's anything to make a fuss about. It all depends who does it, and why, and I don't know about this insult to your honor bit.

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

A: Well this, I'm not too conversant with this, all I'll say is I went to school in Seattle, to the Madrona School, and there was one colored girl in the whole school. And now this same school, the Madrona School, is about 99% colored. By the way, she was the smartest one in my class.

Q: Could anything cause a general strike today?

A: Oh, I, of course labor is too divided, so I don't think it could.

Q: Are there any conditions under which you would support a general strike?

A: Oh, I think so.

Q: What are the conditions?

A: Well, if some group tried to take over our government. I think a fellow like Nixon could very well cause a general strike.

Q: How necessary are employers for running businesses. Could you run businesses without employers?

A: There are so many businesses run by hired men. Who do you think ran Howard Hughes?

Q: Have you read anything about the general strike?

A: I have a few books and I have read, but I can't recall where I read these. I thought I

had, I looked one up, I have a book here called "Wobblie" by Chaplain, and ...

Q: By ~~Robert~~<sup>Ralph</sup> Chaplain?

A: Yeah. You've heard of him?

Q: I've heard of him, but I've...

A: There'd be some mention of the general strike in there. But it very fleetingly mentions it. It says he was in Seattle on a speaking engagement, and this general strike was on, and that's about all it said.

Q: Uh-huh, so he was there, then?

A: Well, maybe just for a day or something.

Q: Is this written after he had renounced socialism, or before?

A: Well, you have to ( ), yeah. Emporium was the name of that store I was talking about. It's too much, Chaplain. But I think you'll find Anna Luise Strong and others mentioned in here, too.

Q: But this is the only thing that you've read on the general strike since those days that you can remember?

A: No, this is so long ago that, you see, it made no real impression on me, the general strike. It was something that had better been forgotten. I think it was a mistake.

END OF INTERVIEW.