

## CHAPTER II

### BOOM AND BUST

As the year 1887 began a thousand railroad construction workers shovelled snow to lay a temporary switchback over the Cascade Mountains. In the summer hundreds of railroad cars would be carrying wheat to Tacoma wharves to be exchanged for thousands of Japanese tea chests. Already carpenters were erecting new warehouses to house the wheat and tea. Boosters crowed that Tacoma had reached the edge of "incredible prosperity."<sup>1</sup> That view was shared by the town's thirty-one saloon keepers, twenty-nine real estate brokers, and 104 longshoremen.<sup>2</sup>

On the waterfront, the Stevedores, Longshoremen and Riggers' Union of Puget Sound expected John Cunningham, who served as both president of the SL&RU and general manager of the Cooperative Company, to get the bid to handle the tea and wheat. After all, Cunningham could underbid any stevedore boss on the Sound. The Cooperatives did not seek a middleman's profit as much as to provide jobs for stevedores and dockmen. Cunningham called on shipping agents and captains with a printed card listing a wage scale of 40 cents an hour between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Sixty cents overtime began at 6:00 p.m. and lasted until 7:00 a.m. One hour out of every eleven had to be set aside for meals.<sup>3</sup>

Stevedore Boss Rudolph DeLion tried to break up the longshore union by making John Cunningham his partner on January 1, 1887. SL&RU immediately expelled Cunningham from the union and fired him from his job as cooperative manager. SL&RU sent notices to other Puget Sound unions asking them to have nothing to do with the turncoat.<sup>4</sup> On his first job as a stevedore boss, Cunningham hired Chilean sailors for \$1.00 a day and board to load lumber on the *Sarah Ridgeway*. The new boss got around the Alien Contract Labor Law by housing the Chileans aboard the ship at night.<sup>5</sup>

At 7:30 a.m. on February 9, 1887, a bloody, one-sided fight took place between Cunningham and eight SL&RU men on the Tacoma Mill Company wharf in Old Town. Cunningham was "badly used up," receiving severe cuts on the top and side of his head. He swore out warrants charging his former union brothers with assault with intent to kill.<sup>6</sup> Walter Burdette, George Fitzgerald, Edward Glenfield, John McArthur, Charles Seymour, Charles Taylor, James Watson, and Peter Wessels were named in the grand jury indictment. The union men posted bail and were released.<sup>7</sup> At the trial, Judge Hoyt dismissed charges against seven union longshoremen. Taylor pled guilty

of assault and paid a \$25.00 fine and court costs of \$144.00.<sup>8</sup>



*Unloading tea from the ship Republic at the Northern Pacific wharf, 1888.  
(Washington State Historical Society)*

After the fight on the wharf, Cunningham and DeLion dissolved their partnership. DeLion transferred his operations to British Columbia where he sought to control cargo-handling on Vancouver and Victoria wharves. Cunningham formed C&M Stevedoring with John Mullen. Although they competed for stevedoring contracts, friction between the Cooperatives and Cunningham subsided as internal dissension in the union surfaced. On March 17, 1887, nonshareholders complained that they were not getting a "just share" of the work. David Crombie, William Gregan, and others who did not own shares in the cooperative forced the issue. Union historian George Noonan recalled the contentious meeting:

*On that date a bitter fight took place at the meeting of the Union, held in Old Tacoma. In the course of the debate Pete Peterson, one of the shareholders, remarked that if the members who did not hold shares were not satisfied with the way things were run, they knew what they could do. The challenge was no sooner hurled than it was at once accepted. Upon the motion of Gregan, seconded by Crombie,*

*those of the organization who did not hold shares merged into the 'Longshoremen and Riggers Union of Tacoma,' afterwards popularly known on the wharves as the Number Ones.<sup>9</sup>*

The constitution and bylaws of the Number Ones are the same as the Stevedores, Longshoremen and Riggers' Union of Puget Sound.<sup>10</sup> Both gave "protection" as the main reason for organizing the union. Office holders had the same duties, initiation requirements were identical, and the reasons for expulsion were duplicated. Both constitutions demonstrated straight trade unionism. The text of the constitution of the June 1886 Seattle Stevedores, Longshoremen and Riggers' Union resembled the governance rules of the two Tacoma bodies. Seattle added a Declaration of Principles, "An injury to one is the concern of us all," and a Working Committee charged with "the duty to see that such members get work in their regular turn."<sup>11</sup>

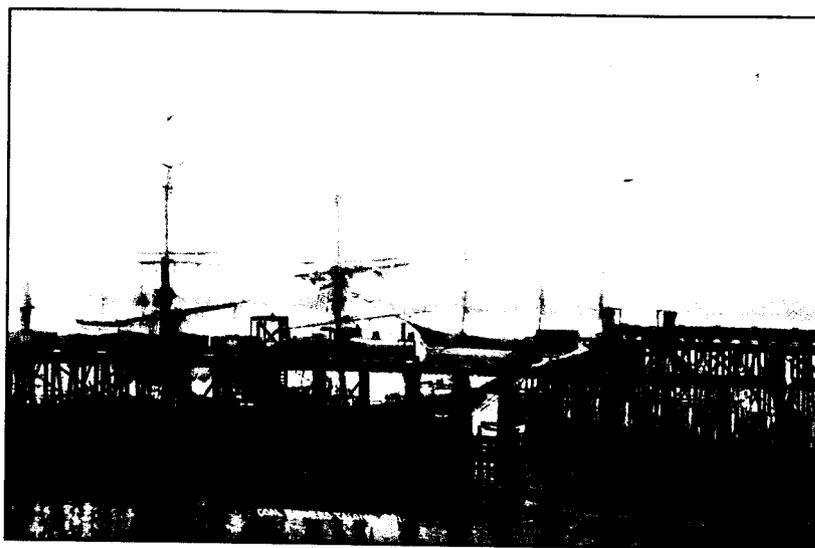
All summer, ships filled the lumber and coal wharves. Other vessels lay at anchor in Commencement Bay waiting for berths. On top of this the largest tea shipment in history was due to call at the end of August. Fifty-six days before the *A. G. Ropes* docked, the Cascade Division of the Northern Pacific became operational on the temporary track. Rail cars filled with grain had made it over the mountains and into the big warehouse at the Northern Pacific wharf. When the *Ropes* docked on August 28, longshoremen discovered Stevedore Boss James Griffiths held the contract to unload the tea. Concern turned to relief when Griffiths hired every longshoreman he could find at 50 cents an hour. Working twelve-hour shifts for six-and-a-half days, waterfront workers discharged 50,000 tea chests from the *Ropes*. Throughout the job, Cooperatives and Number Ones toiled side by side.<sup>12</sup> Ironically, Captain D. H. Rivers took out a load of 4,600 tons of coal on the *Ropes*.<sup>13</sup>

Griffiths & Sprague unloaded the second tea ship *Alexander Gibson* during the week of December 5, 1887. Cunningham & Mullen held the contract to stow grain aboard the *Gibson*. But Captain Speed refused to honor C&M's contract to supervise the loading.<sup>14</sup> Speed claimed the right to pick the stevedore contractor.<sup>15</sup> On January 5, 1888, Speed finally allowed C&M to load the *Gibson*. Cunningham offered the Number Ones wheat-packing jobs at 40 cents an hour. The union men turned the stevedore boss down until guaranteed 50 cents an hour.<sup>16</sup>

Cunningham's troubles were not over. Lumber handlers working the *Martha Fisher* and *William A. Campbell* struck C&M on May 21, 1888. The men had not been paid for over two weeks.<sup>17</sup> Three days later John Mullen paid the union longshoremen, and the ships were loaded.<sup>18</sup> C&M dissolved when the company failed to win the bid to stow grain on the 1888 tea ship flotilla. The newly incorporated Puget Sound Stevedoring Company underbid both Griffiths and C&M.<sup>19</sup> Ex-longshoreman William L. McCabe moved from Portland to Tacoma to become managing partner of the new company. John Cunningham joined Puget Sound Stevedoring as a trustee for several months

Then the erstwhile union president moved permanently to Spokane. McCabe hired Edward S. Hamilton as bookkeeper and paymaster. McCabe's stevedoring operations in Portland and Tacoma specialized in loading grain and lumber bound for South America, Asia, and Europe.<sup>20</sup> This Tacoma-based company bid from \$1.10 to \$2.00 per thousand board feet, depending upon the size of timber and the configuration of the vessel. For stowing wheat and flour, McCabe charged 35 cents a ton. The rate for discharging tea was 35 cents a ton; ballast, 40 cents; cement, 45 cents; and railroad iron, 75 cents.<sup>21</sup>

On August 23, 1888, maritime business in Tacoma reached its zenith for the year. Forty-two ships lay at the wharves or anchored in the bay waiting for coal, lumber, or wheat. The Number Ones sent a notice to all stevedoring companies that "Nine hours will hereafter constitute a day's work in discharging vessels, and that the rate of pay will be 55 cents an hour." The stevedoring firms offered, and the men accepted, 50 cents a ten-hour day while working lumber and wheat. The new rate applied to both the Number Ones and the Cooperatives.<sup>22</sup> Three weeks later the cooperative announced that the monthly payroll for its fifty members averaged \$5,400.<sup>23</sup>



Coal bunkers next to the Northern Pacific wharf, 1891.

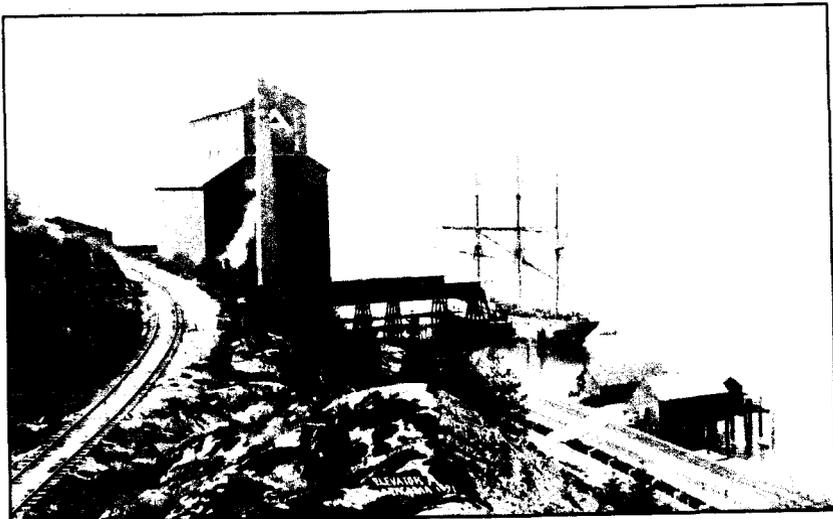
(Rutter photo, Oregon State Historical Society, neg. ORHI 48385)

The completion of the main line of the Northern Pacific Railroad increased Tacoma's maritime commerce. But the cost of longshore labor, averaging \$987 a ship, and the speed of cargo dispatch were also important.<sup>24</sup> Seattle and Port Townsend newspapers claimed their longshoremen worked faster. On August 14, 1888, Tacoma Harbormaster Robert M. Mountfort reported that the average

length of time consumed in loading lumber vessels was three weeks; wheat, one week; and coal and tea, six days. No ship loaded in Commencement Bay by union longshoremen had ever put into another port because of poor loading listing.<sup>25</sup>

### The Boom Years

Within three years after the completion of Northern Pacific's transcontinental rail line in 1887 the population of Tacoma increased from 17,000 to 36,000 people. At the same time on Pacific Avenue three- and four-story brick and stone edifices arose beside the wooden storefronts. On the waterfront large-scale construction took place from Fifteenth Street to the new smelter at the head of Commencement Bay. Companies erected warehouses, wharves, shingle mills, and brick yards. A giant steam dredge dug a channel through the tide flats. Pile-driving crews followed, and behind them carpenters who transformed mud banks into Dock Street.<sup>26</sup> When construction crews finished, three new grain elevators rose along Northern Pacific tracks. Four pairs of steam shovels moved grain from railroad cars until the elevators reached capacity, 3,450,000 bushels.<sup>27</sup>



Loading wheat at Elevator A, 1891

(Rutter photo, Washington State Historical Society)

Lumber remained the major export of Tacoma. Sawmill workers cut 480,000 board feet of lumber daily for the export trade and 150,000 for the eastern market.<sup>28</sup> Lumber showers stacked the dimension sticks in rail cars and on Old Town sawmill wharves. Members of the longshore Cooperative developed proficiency in loading beams inside the holds of deep-water ships. At the Starr Street wharf, five ships could load lumber at the same time. Coal bunker storage space at the foot of Pacific Avenue doubled during 1888, just in time to serve 111 vessels.<sup>29</sup>

Wheat and flour still had to be sacked, but two mechanical conveyor belts powered by a 140-horse engine could carry 30,000 sacks a day into a ship's hold.<sup>30</sup> A visitor asked elevator manager Charles Kershaw, if the belt would be "the great stevedore exterminator." "Not a bit of it," retorted Kershaw. "More men will be needed when it is operated than under the old style of loading. Where eight men have been required in the hold of a vessel to stow the wheat away, fourteen will be required and more men will be used in the warehouses to keep the conveyor supplied with sacks."<sup>31</sup> At the beginning of the shipping year, the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, which served China and Japan, recognized and gave job preference to the Number Ones. Five months later Pacific Coast Steamship Company replaced Seattle union longshoremen with Tacoma's Number Ones. The California shipping line was the eighth major steamship company to give preference to members of the local.<sup>32</sup> In addition, Number Ones gained job control over all trucking jobs in NP warehouses. Peace prevailed between the Cooperatives and Number Ones. They shared equally in the great event of the shipping season, the unloading of the tea ships.<sup>33</sup>

Number Ones and Cooperatives posted notices on the docks October 15, 1889, that nine hours constituted a day's work. Straight time pay would increase from 40 to 55 cents an hour and night work to \$1.00 an hour. Waterfront workers claimed their proposed scale would bring Tacoma even with the wages paid in other ports on the West Coast. Stevedoring companies offered a compromise that the men accepted. Wages increased to 50 cents an hour for daytime, and \$1.00 for night work. Ten hours remained the normal workday.<sup>34</sup>

The Number Ones participated on April 3, 1890, with seven other unions in organizing the Tacoma Trades Council. The objective of the council was to provide mutual protection for members and aid other workers to form unions. The council also supported the drive for the shorter workday in all trades and campaigned for the eight-hour day for municipal employees.<sup>35</sup> To celebrate the union cause, the trades council sponsored Labor Day observances that included parades down Pacific Avenue, picnics, sporting events, and a grand ball.<sup>36</sup> David Crombie, president of the Number Ones, summed up the attitude of the local's 200 members toward Labor Day:

#### *Ode to Labor's Holiday, September 7, 1891*

*What rapture swells the air  
On this auspicious morn.  
'Tis the honest sons of toil's refrain  
Who'd long been in scorn  
By some proud few who thought always  
Their wealth could reign supreme  
Till labor's sons rose in their might  
And woke them from their dream.  
How boldly they asserted rights  
That dormant long had lain,  
And strove by unity's great power*

*Their highest hopes to gain!  
 For who would have a craven soul  
 When manhood takes a stand  
 To be enrolled amongst the brave  
 In this our glorious land.  
 To this immortal day  
 When freemen we unite  
 To celebrate with honest pride  
 That we have gained the fight.  
 And as a proof of our success  
 With heartfelt joy we pray  
 That long we'll like to celebrate  
 Each Labor's victory day.<sup>37</sup>*

### Number Ones Versus Number Twos

Despite good economic conditions, dissension arose among Tacoma longshoremen. On August 13, 1890, gang bosses Orlando "Grizzly" Carter, Frank Clark, and Michael Shanahan asked for gun permits because of threats to their lives by fellow members of the Number Ones. The bosses charged that Thomas Bassance, "at a recent meeting (of the Number Ones) said in a speech that other secret organizations had made away with men and that it could be done again and that it must be done in the case of Hamilton, Carter, Clark, and Shanahan; that Commencement Bay had held other men and that there was room for these men in it."<sup>38</sup> The union expelled the three bosses for using "tactics not in accord with their obligation as union men."<sup>39</sup> The union issued a warning to Puget Sound Stevedoring not to dispatch Carter, Clark, or Shanahan to boss the tea ship *Francis*.<sup>40</sup> On August 15 the three gang bosses appeared on the *Francis*. A majority of the Number Ones left the ship. Several malcontents lined up with the gang bosses.<sup>41</sup> Puget Sound Stevedoring owner William L. McCabe recruited idlers loitering on the dock to fill out the gangs.<sup>42</sup> The secessionists formed the Lumber and Grain Stevedores' Union, popularly known on the waterfront as the Number Twos. Two former cooperative officials, Charles Seymour and John Northover, were elected president and secretary of the new union.<sup>43</sup> William L. McCabe of Puget Sound Stevedoring promptly recognized the Lumber and Grain Stevedores. The stevedore boss agreed to pay the current scale, 55 cents an hour for a nine-hour day.<sup>44</sup>

Four days after the split occurred on the *Francis*, William McCabe and Fred Burns, president of the Number Ones, confronted each other in Gig Harbor. The stevedore boss had obtained sailors from the Seattle union hall to help Number Twos load the lumber ship *Republic*. Burns accompanied the agent of the Coast Seamen's Union who pulled the union seamen off the lumber ship, infuriating McCabe.<sup>45</sup> When the tea ship *Snow and Burgess* docked at Tacoma on September 9, McCabe and Shanahan picked only Number Two stevedores to break out the cargo. Number Ones handled the tea chests from the wharf

to the warehouse. The situation became volatile when a sign appeared on the dock proclaiming "Boss Shanahan, the scab and stool pigeon." When a policeman took the sign down, no one made an issue of the fate of the placard.<sup>46</sup>

The struggle between the longshore factions shifted to the Tacoma Trades Council during September 1890. A council investigation found that the trouble was part of "a preconcerted attempt" by McCabe to break up the longshore union. The council resolved to have nothing to do with the Number Twos until recommended to do so by the Number Ones. In the meantime the council gave its moral support to the older stevedore union in its struggle with McCabe.<sup>47</sup>

During the evening of September 19, 1890, at the longshoremen's hangout corner, Eighth and Pacific, Mike Shanahan and his brother Ed passed Walter Burdette, Con Crowley, Patrick Harkins, John Lynch, Tom Lynch, Ed Ryan, and William Young. "They had some words and of course nothing short of divinity could testify as to which side began it." At any rate Mike Shanahan drew his gun, pulled the trigger, but the rusty pistol would not fire. "Stop or I'll shoot!" Shanahan kept yelling as Burdette jumped on him and forced him to the pavement. The excitement became intense. Hundreds of men and boys rushed to the scene. "Pacific Avenue became a surging, rushing stream of humanity that carried everything before it like an angry flood." The crowd knocked a driver off his express wagon. The horse trotted through Shanahan's assailants, scattering them. Shanahan grabbed the axle under the wagon and escaped. After a foot race with the police, Burdette and seven other Stevedores, Longshoremen and Riggers' Union men were arrested.<sup>48</sup> On September 30, a judge dismissed charges against all of the Number Ones.<sup>49</sup>

The Number Ones and Twos continued their argument in the daily papers. Number Two officers Northover and Seymour wrote the *Morning Globe* that the Stevedores, Longshoremen and Riggers' Union had been taken over by incompetent men. As a result, the more reliable men seceded and formed the Lumber and Grain Stevedores' Union.<sup>50</sup> Two days later the *Morning Globe* printed a rebuttal letter. The Number Ones claimed they had negotiated the raise before the Lumber and Grain Stevedores' Union seceded. The old longshore union men asserted employers had sunk \$10,000 into the Number Twos' effort to break up the Number Ones. As for protecting the incapable, the Number Ones defended their action in taking care of old and infirm members as a humanitarian gesture.<sup>51</sup> The day after their letter to the editor appeared, the Number Ones contracted to work for Captain W. C. Saunders's new stevedoring company. Saunders underbid McCabe on discharging the *Earl Granville*, but within a year McCabe had driven Saunders out of the stevedoring business.<sup>52</sup>

Near the end of 1890, the Number Twos asked Knights of Labor organizer W. H. Galvani for a charter. Galvani installed the Number Twos as Knights Assembly 2943. On January 22, 1891, at the weekly trades council session, the Number Ones charged that the Number Twos were working for less than union wages. The council passed a motion that organizer Galvani revoke the Number

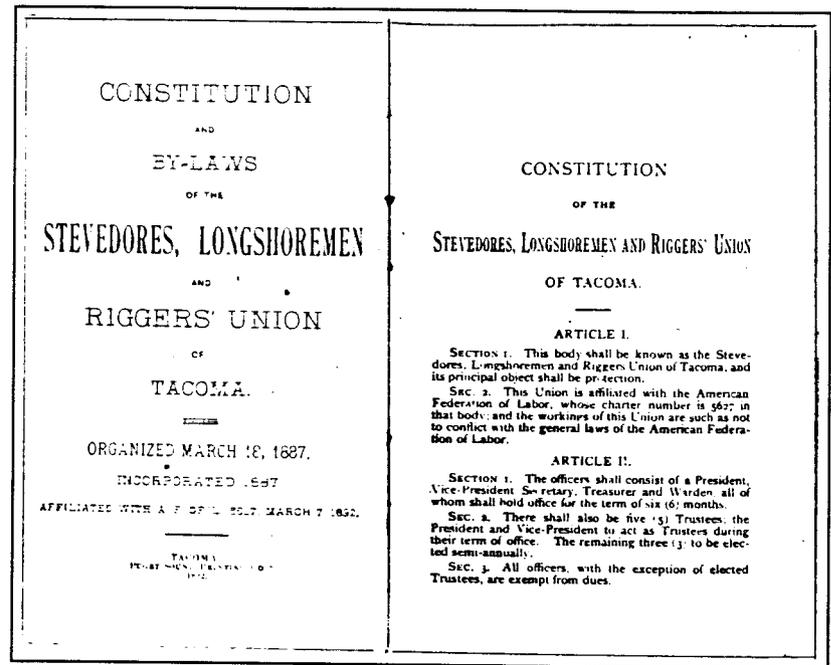
Twos charter.<sup>53</sup> One month later six members of Assembly 2943 appeared before the council to deny charges that they had withdrawn from the Number Ones at the request of William McCabe. Shanahan also denied that he was shorting the pay of longshoremen. Galvani was asked if he had received \$10.00 from McCabe for writing Assembly 2943's constitution.<sup>54</sup> During May 1891, the council sent a list of the charges to the Knights General Secretary John W. Hayes in Philadelphia, but there was no answer.<sup>55</sup>

The council established a conciliation committee on May 28 to settle the differences between the Stevedores, Longshoremen and Riggers and the Lumber and Grain Stevedores. The committee tried, but could not get the Number Twos to agree to meet.<sup>56</sup> In August, the Number Ones asked the council to invite Assembly 2943 to participate in the Labor Day parade, but the Number Twos failed to appear.<sup>57</sup> In December an application by the Number Twos to join the trades council was refused by the delegates.<sup>58</sup>

For the thirty members of the Lumber and Grain Stevedores, there was plenty of work in the early 1890s. In 1890-1891 they loaded 3,712,580 bushels of wheat compared to 2,038,000 the previous shipping year.<sup>59</sup> The Number Twos also stowed much of the 122,125,418 board feet that was shipped from Tacoma.<sup>60</sup> Longshore historian Noonan noted that as the Number Twos "began to get a little stronger, W. L. McCabe promptly informed them if they did not keep their noses clean, they would give their work back to the Number Ones. The Bosses game of playing one set of workingmen against the other seemed to have been splendidly handled upon this occasion."<sup>61</sup>

While keeping the Number Twos in check, McCabe entered a "combination" to divide up all stevedoring contracts inside the Straits of Juan de Fuca. In April 1891, five stevedore firms jointly incorporated the Puget Sound and British Columbia Stevedore Company. The "combine" carved the territory into five areas, Port Townsend, Seattle, Vancouver, Victoria, and Tacoma. A standard rate schedule was printed and sent to all shipping agents and ship captains.<sup>62</sup> Within two months the Tacoma stevedore bosses seceded from the combine and started their own company, McCabe & Hamilton. Hamilton explained, "I guess there were too many in the company. We thought we could do better alone."<sup>63</sup>

The Number Ones voted during March 1892 to become the first Washington State longshore local to affiliate with the American Federation of Labor, the largest labor organization in the United States. As AFL Federal Local 5627, the Number Ones aimed to gain greater protection.<sup>64</sup> Many union longshoremen had attended the mass meeting held for Samuel Gompers at Tacoma's Germania Hall the previous year. The AFL president stated that the membership had concentrated their efforts on securing the adoption of the eight-hour day for all working people. Gompers pointed with pride to the fact that many carpenters had achieved the great goal and coal miners would be next. The hope of working an eight-hour day must have appealed to the longshoremen. It would take a long, hard struggle to gain the prized shorter working day, but longshoremen never gave up on the idea.<sup>65</sup>



Constitution of the Number Ones (Noonan collection, Tacoma Public Library)

Along with thousands of Tacomans, longshoremen gathered on the docks to celebrate the arrival of the *Phra Nang* on June 18, 1892. When she hove into sight, steam whistles in the harbor sounded shrill welcomes. As she passed the Number Ones in front of the tea shed, the men shouted out their greetings. At the NP wharf, City Councilman H. A. Corell hailed the arrival of the steamship that he predicted would make Tacoma the eastern terminus of the Northern Pacific's Puget Sound and Orient Line.<sup>66</sup> Every month a steamer direct from China and Japan would arrive in Commencement Bay. The Number Ones obtained from Stevedore Boss A. T. Stewart the preference in discharging the incoming silks, teas, and curios, and stowing the westward-bound flour, lumber, and salmon. The China steamers would take up the slack in the coastwide general cargo business. No longer would Number Ones be so dependent on Pacific Coast Steam ships and NP warehouse jobs.<sup>67</sup>

## Bust

In 1890 thousands of banks and businesses in Europe, South America, and the eastern section of the United States declared bankruptcy and closed their doors. Worldwide overproduction of goods and excessive speculation in real estate and railroad securities brought on a seven-year economic depression. At first the Puget Sound area seemed spared from massive business failures and

high unemployment. There were signs the local economy could soon be in trouble. Cheap Australian and British coal and Canadian lumber glutted the San Francisco market during the winter of 1891-1892. As early as April 1892, the Number Ones and other unions reported to the Tacoma Trades Council that business was "dull." During autumn the economic situation eased, only to go flat again during the winter of 1892-1893.<sup>68</sup>

After a whispering campaign on a Sunday and three days of heavy withdrawals, the Tacoma Merchants' National Bank closed its doors on June 1, 1893. The bank failure set off a parade of financial disasters. On July 21 the Puyallup Bank failed, followed by the State Savings Bank and the Tacoma National Bank. Looking back after the Panic of 1893 was over, only seven out of twenty-one Pierce County banks survived. When the Northern Pacific Railroad declared bankruptcy, Tacoma's economic life practically stopped. There was no Labor Day parade on Pacific Avenue in 1893.<sup>69</sup>

The Number Ones joined with other Washington unions in organizing a Labor Congress to present to the state legislature on February 9, 1893, eighteen new bills and numerous amendments to bills already introduced. Overall, the Labor Congress sought to enlist the House and Senate in alleviating the plight of workers.<sup>70</sup> Through delegates Dave Crombie and William Howell, the Number Ones proposed that the legislature pass a bill preventing "all alien seamen from handling all cargoes of vessels in the various waters of the state of Washington."<sup>71</sup> Among labor spokesmen privileged to speak on the floor of the House of Representatives was David Crombie. The presentation was not successful. The alien seamen bill failed to come out of committee.<sup>72</sup>

A clash between the Sailors' Union and shipowners during July 1893 indicated trouble would be coming to the waterfront. The Tacoma Trades Council made another attempt to get the two longshore factions to settle their differences. A special trades council committee of three called on both longshore unions to persuade them to amalgamate, but nothing was accomplished.<sup>73</sup> That dead end came at a time when the situation of the Number Ones was precarious. The NP had decided to divert half the China boats to Portland. Pacific Coast Steam and the Northern Pacific were both in receivership. A news item in the *Tacoma Daily Ledger* reported on September 30, that an out-of-work and hungry Number One, James Flanagan, "smashed a plate glass store window in the presence of a policeman in order that he might be arrested and provided with food and shelter."<sup>74</sup>

On January 12, 1894, all Puget Sound longshore unions received notice from Goodall, Perkins and Company, agents for Pacific Coast Steamship Company, that beginning on January 13 wages would be reduced from 50 to 40 cents an hour. In addition, Pacific Coast Steam insisted that their sailing crews unload cargo onto the dock and that the company select the foremen. Finally, the company forbade men smoking on its docks. In effect, the steamship line demanded abandonment of most gains made by union longshoremen since 1886. Seattle longshoremen struck immediately and lost everything.<sup>75</sup> William L.

McCabe promptly moved to Seattle and opened a branch office that soon controlled all stevedoring work except at the Pacific Coast Steamship docks.<sup>76</sup>

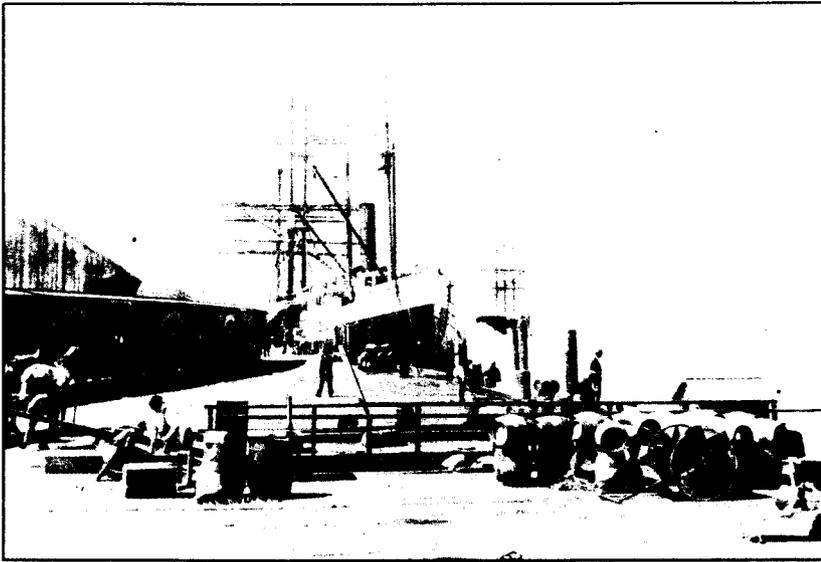
Learning from the Seattle union's experience, Tacoma, Port Townsend, Everett, Anacortes, and Vancouver, British Columbia, longshoremen acceded to Pacific Coast Steam's terms. Afraid that Puget Sound longshore unions were on the verge of disintegration, the Seattle Western Central Labor Union proposed all Washington longshore locals amalgamate into one local. Seattle and Everett replied favorably, but the central labor union took no further action.<sup>77</sup> On the day that wages were cut the Number Twos were paying off at the Oak Saloon in Old Town. Two men stepped up with handkerchiefs drawn over their faces and guns in their hands. They took the day's wages, \$280, and escaped.<sup>78</sup>

Number Ones dodged destruction by Pacific Coast Steam only to become entangled in the American Railway Union strike against the Northern Pacific. On June 30, Northern Pacific railway workers in Tacoma joined the nationwide strike. Among those walking out were the foreman, Charles Barnes, and nine warehousemen, all members of the Number Ones.<sup>79</sup> The NP wharf was completely shut down. The question was whether other Number Ones would work NP ships or trains with scab warehousemen. On July 12, the union came "perilously near" total participation in the strike.<sup>80</sup> The vote not to work the China ship *Victoria* was so close that action was deferred.<sup>81</sup> When the *Victoria* anchored two days later, Local 5627 worked the ship.<sup>82</sup>

In addition to coping with scarcity of work, the wage cut, and the railway strike, Number Ones were beset by internal problems. The president of the Number Ones, George Greetham, secured the position of Superintendent of Stevedores for Pacific Coast Steam in Tacoma on November 10, 1894. The new stevedore boss resigned from the union shortly after.<sup>83</sup> When the union received notice that Greetham would "pick the men as he pleased," a special meeting was called to discuss the matter with the new superintendent. At this meeting the following questions were put to Greetham by Recording Secretary Charles Hoyt:

- Q. *Will you in your capacity of Foreman agree to place the men as you did while President of the Union?*
- A. *No sir.*
- Q. *Will you then agree to give the members of this union the preference?*
- A. *I can't promise that.*
- Q. *Will you then agree not to discriminate against the members of this union?*
- A. *That will depend entirely upon circumstances that may arise hereafter.*<sup>84</sup>

That afternoon Greetham replaced Ed Glenfield as gang boss on the collier *Willamette*. Most of the Number Ones refused to work for the new superintendent, but about thirty union and thirty nonunion men turned to. There were hand-to-hand encounters resulting in cracked heads that day as longshoremen battled each other. When the day ended Greetham's supporters controlled the docks.<sup>85</sup>



Union longshoremen at the Northern Pacific wharf, early 1890s.  
(Rutter photo, Washington State Historical Society)

Farther down Commencement Bay in Old Town, the Number Twos fared no better than their rivals. During mid-December 1894, the Number Twos refused to pack wheat in the ship *W. F. Babcock* because sailors had usurped the longshore job of discharging ballast. Ed Hamilton quickly hired scabs to replace the thirty union longshoremen.<sup>(86)</sup> Recognizing that the strike was lost, several of the strikers shipped out on vessels the next day.<sup>(87)</sup> Soon after their defeat the Number Twos dissolved their union. Even that radical solution did not end their problems. The Number Two membership fought over the remains of the union treasury. The argument grew so serious that a lawsuit was filed by one faction against the other. By the time the lawsuit was settled, the Number Twos had formally disbanded.<sup>(88)</sup>

The Number Ones also had serious problems. Treasurer Tom Penteny ran off with the union's funds in 1895. The membership dispersed to ranches, fishing boats, and the Klondike. By the end of 1896, the union had disintegrated. The longshoremen's cooperative also failed to survive the depression. The ten-year-old company's equipment was auctioned off in 1896. The idea of a longshore union cooperative in the Puget Sound stayed alive, to be reborn during the next era of good times. There were feeble attempts to organize a waterfront union in 1898 and 1899, but the times were too hard. When the depression had run its course in 1897, job control would be firmly in the hands of the foremen at Pacific Coast Steamship and McCabe & Hamilton.

## CHAPTER II BOOM OR BUST

1. TDL, January 1, 1887.
2. Polk's *1888 Directory of Puget Sound*.
3. Sunday and holiday work was considered overtime. See Tacoma Cooperative Stevedoring and Rigging Company advertisement in unpagged front section of the Puget Sound Directory for 1888.
4. TDL, January 16, 1888.
5. *Ibid.*, January 20, 1887.
6. *Ibid.*, February 10, 1887.
7. *Pierce County District Court Case Number 1955*.
8. TDL, March 13, 1887.
9. Noonan Tacoma, p. 22.
10. *Constitution and Bylaws of the Stevedores, Longshoremen and Riggers' Union of Puget Sound 1886. Constitution of the Stevedores, Longshoremen and Riggers' Union of Tacoma 1887*
11. *Constitution By-Laws and Rules of Order of the S. L. & R. U. of Seattle, Organized June 12, 1886*, pp. 3 and 8-9.
12. TDL, August 30, 1887.
13. *Ibid.*, September 29, 1887.
14. *Ibid.*, January 6, 1888.
15. *Ibid.*, February 22, 1888.
16. *Ibid.*, February 23, 1888.
17. *Ibid.*, May 22, 1888.
18. *Ibid.*, May 23, 1888.
19. *Ibid.*, July 1, 1888. The Articles of Incorporation of Puget Sound Stevedoring Company were filed on June 30, 1888. The owners included Captain J. A. Brown and W. L. McCabe, Columbia River stevedore bosses; businessman J. P. Betts of Port Townsend; and Captain James Carroll of the ship *Ancon*.
20. *Ibid.*, July 28, 1888.
21. *Ibid.*, April 27, 1891.
22. *Ibid.*, August 23, 1888.
23. *Ibid.*, September 16, 1888.
24. *Ibid.*, January 28, 1888.
25. *Ibid.*, August 14, 1888.
26. *Ibid.*, March 6, 1889.
27. *Ibid.*, September 7, 1889.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*, March 5, 1889.
31. *Ibid.*, April 12, 1889.
32. Noonan Tacoma, p. 2.
33. TDL, March 11, 1889.

34. Ibid., October 15, 1889.
35. *Tacoma Trade Council Minutes*, April 3, 1890. Hereafter cited as TTC.
36. TDL, September 2, 1890. PI, September 8, 1891. For the history of the trades council and the campaign of Tacoma union people for the shorter working day see Otilie Markholt, *To Live in Dignity*, pp. 5-12.
37. TDL, September 4, 1891.
38. Ibid., August 15, 1890.
39. Noonan Tacoma, p. 2.
40. *Tacoma News*, August 15, 1890. Hereafter cited as TN.
41. Noonan Tacoma, p. 2.
42. TN, August 15, 1890.
43. Noonan Tacoma, p. 2.
44. *Morning Globe*, September 22, 1890. Hereafter cited as MG.
45. TDL, August 21, 1890.
46. MG, September 9, 1890.
47. TTC, September 4 and 11, 1890.
48. MG, September 20, 1890.
49. TDL, September 30, 1890.
50. MG, September 22, 1890.
51. Ibid., September 24, 1890.
52. TN, September 25, 1890.
53. TTC, January 22, 1891.
54. Ibid., February 26, 1891.
55. Ibid., May 21, 1891.
56. Ibid., June 11, 1891.
57. Ibid., August 27, 1891.
58. Ibid., December 10, 1891.
59. *The New West*, December 3, 1892. Annual wheat shipping statistics were reckoned from September 1 to August 31.
60. WCT, 1893, p. 36.
61. Noonan Tacoma, p. 2.
62. TDL, April 27, 1891. Stevedore companies incorporating the Puget Sound and British Columbia Stevedoring included: Barneson & Chilcott, Port Blakely, Port Townsend and Seattle; Puget Sound Stevedoring of Tacoma; and John Betts & Company of Vancouver and Victoria. The published rates for loading cargos of lumber bound to South America, Australia, China, or Europe, \$1.10 to \$2.00 per 1,000 feet. On the basis of a ton, the cost of loading wheat and flour, 35 cents; salmon, 55 cents; for discharging tea, 35 cents; ballast, 40 cents; cement, 45 cents; coal, pig iron, and glass, 50 cents; shale, bricks, and tiling, 65 cents; coke and railroad iron, 75 cents.
63. Ibid., July 24, 1891.
64. *Constitution and By-Laws of the Stevedores, Longshoremen and Riggers' Union of Tacoma. Affiliated with A. F. of L., 5627, March 7, 1892*. Local 5627 elected Charles Barlow and William Craigen delegates to the 1892 AFL convention in Philadelphia. See TTC, November 24, 1892.

65. TDL, March 22, 1891. Number Ones Fred Burns and Michael Flynn served on the reception committee for Samuel Gompers.
66. Ibid., June 18, 1892.
67. TTC, April 21 and May 5, 1892.
68. Ibid., April 21, 1892.
69. Hans Bergman, *History of Scandinavians in Tacoma and the Pacific Coast*, pp. 34-35.
70. TDL, February 7, 1893. The Labor Congress was the official forerunner of the Washington State Federation of Labor.
71. Ibid., February 9, 1893.
72. Ibid., February 10, 1893.
73. TTC, July 6 and 20, 1893.
74. PI, September 30, 1893.
75. Ibid., January 13 and 14, 1894.
76. Joseph Gaston, *Portland Oregon Its History and Builders*, p. 361.
77. WCLU, March 6, April 3 and 17, 1895.
78. PI, January 15, 1894.
79. TDL, July 2, 1894.
80. Noonan Tacoma, p. 3.
81. TDL, July 14, 1894.
82. Ibid., July 15, 1894.
83. PI, November 10, 1894.
84. Noonan Tacoma, p. 3.
85. PI, November 10, 1894. TDL, November 11, 1894.
86. TDL, December 15 and 16, 1894.
87. Ibid., December 19, 1894.
88. Noonan Tacoma, p. 3.