

64. Ibid., December 29, 1916.
65. Ibid., October 2, 1916.
66. PI, December 18, 1916.
67. Ibid., October 3, 1916.
68. SUR, October 6, 1916.
69. BI. 1916-1917, p. 250.
70. TDL, October 15, 1916.
71. Letter to the Officers and Members of the Sailors' Union of the Pacific from the Pacific Coast District ILA, October 30, 1916, in TLA, November 24, 1916.
72. Ames File, Box 57, January 11 and 16, 1917. Danaher, Dempsey, the Defiance, and St. Paul and Tacoma lumber companies were members of the Puget Stevedoring Company.
73. TLA, November 24, 1916.
74. PI, November 23, 1916.
75. TLA, December 15, 1916.
76. Ames File, Box 57, Letter from J. S. Gibson to E. A. Ames, January 11, 1917., 1916.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SCAB HALL

Harvey Wells lived a very circumscribed life in Tacoma during 1917 and 1918. He roomed at the Lawrence Hotel at 1011½ A Street. Every day at 6:30 a.m. he walked to the Waterfront Employers' Labor Dispatch Office at 1014 A Street to select men to work the ships. Guided by the Tacoma Waterfront Employers' Union general policy established in September 1916, Manager Wells dispatched two nonunion gangs for every ILA gang. General cargo and lumber handler gangs who joked with Wells went out often. Longshoremen who complained received fewer jobs. A majority of the workers kept their mouths' shut when they lined up. Down in the holds of ships everyone called Wells "Mr. Nice and Nasty."<sup>1</sup>

After Wells dispatched gangs, he walked two blocks to Harvey's Restaurant where he ate his meals and, if he had spare time, played billiards. No one knew for certain where Wells came from. Associates believed that he had attended medical school because of his ability to treat injuries. Before becoming a longshore dispatcher, he had developed another talent, success at breaking strikes. He had crushed two loggers' walkouts near Port Townsend before herding scabs who smashed the 1916 longshoremen's strike in Tacoma.<sup>2</sup>

A handsome, barrel-chested bachelor, Wells wore gray suits, smoked cigars, and invariably carried a 32 Colt in his belt. In addition to managing the waterfront employment bureau, which union longshoremen called the scab hall, Wells served as paymaster for International Stevedoring.<sup>3</sup> Every weekday Wells drove his Oakland touring car to the auto stage stop. Here, he picked up payroll sheets, change slips, and a check sent by the Seattle Waterfront Employers' Union. Wells always cashed the check at the Washington National Bank.<sup>4</sup> With payroll sheets, bills, and small change stuffed in a sack marked CASH, the employment hall manager headed for the docks.<sup>5</sup> As Wells paid the workers, each man signed the payroll sheet. State law required that the men receive their wages within twenty-four hours after the ship departed, or every forty-eight hours if the vessel was not finished.<sup>6</sup>

As secretary of the Tacoma branch of the Waterfront Employers' Union, Wells transcribed very few minutes of meetings. President Edwin Orrett of Terminal Stevedoring called the five members together once or twice a year.<sup>7</sup> Since all Tacoma employers attended the weekly Seattle WEU meetings, most south Sound business was attended to during the Butler Hotel sessions. Orrett transmitted to Wells the decisions affecting Tacoma. Bulletins posted in the dispatch office on A Street for longshoremen to read in 1917 were copies of

notices already tacked up in the Seattle hall. Only the letterhead had been changed.<sup>8</sup>

Employer dispatch hall managers in Seattle, Tacoma, Everett, and Olympia implemented a standard wage scale and working rules on November 1, 1916.<sup>9</sup> Harvey Wells interviewed every longshoreman dispatched to jobs on ships worked by the Tacoma Waterfront Employers' Union. When Paddy Morris applied at the scab hall, he signed his name to a card and gave it to Manager Wells. Every time Morris answered a question, Wells punched a hole in the card. "He asked me a number of questions; for instance, if I belonged to a union, and I said yes, and he asked me if I was a sailor, and I said yes . . . Then I went out in front of the hall and I waited for a job. I was there several days and was not picked." Finally, a stevedore boss who knew Morris to be a good lumber handler came over and picked him.<sup>10</sup>



Harvey Wells in front of the Waterfront Employers' pay office in the Perkins Building, 1924.

(Courtesy Elsie Burns)

## Tacoma Longshoremen and World War I

On April 6, 1917, at the request of President Woodrow Wilson Congress declared war on the Central Powers. A wave of patriotism swept the nation.<sup>11</sup> In Tacoma the next day, hundreds of men enlisted in the armed forces. Nine were union longshoremen.<sup>12</sup> During the course of the war seventy-eight members of locals 38-3 and 38-30 served in the army, navy, and marines. On August 23 union longshoremen and the families of the men in the service dedicated a service flag with a star for each man.<sup>13</sup> Two weeks later the men carried the

flag and a huge street-wide banner in the annual Labor Day parade: "Our boys are over there, and we're backing them over here."<sup>14</sup> The waterfront was considered a sensitive area. At first Local 38-3 Secretary A. C. Hill and Harvey Wells issued official passes to men working on the waterfront.<sup>15</sup> During November 1918, President Wilson placed all waterfronts under military protection. Wilson's proclamation also banned all aliens from the docks.<sup>16</sup>

The needs of the armed forces and war industries caused a labor shortage in the Pacific Northwest. The new shipyards in Tacoma hired thousands of men at higher pay than businesses downtown or on the waterfront. On May 2, 1917, Puget Sound longshore unions sent a circular letter to employers "suggesting" an increase in wages to offset the accelerating cost of living.<sup>17</sup> The next day, WEU announced in an "Open Letter" posted on all docks a 10 percent raise for Puget Sound longshoremen who worked foreign ships.<sup>18</sup> "We wish to recognize the loyalty of the men who have worked faithfully since the strike last summer," declared WEU Secretary William C. Dawson.<sup>19</sup> Longshoremen and truckers working coastwise ships were not included in the raises. Such a step, employers stated, would upset the water freight business' narrow competitive edge over coastal rail carriers.<sup>20</sup>

Praise and a wage increase were not enough. On May 8 locals 38-3 and 38-30 delegates to the Tenth Annual Pacific Coast District ILA Convention vented frustration at employer actions. Speaking for Tacoma's general cargo men, Lawrence Davis declared promises made by bosses were not carried out.<sup>21</sup> E. F. McMahon backed up Davis, declaring that "The union men are given the worst of it at every turn of the road."<sup>22</sup> Delegate Jack Bjorklund pointed out that Seattle fared better than Tacoma because the public Port of Seattle had remained a union shop.<sup>23</sup> Local 38-30 delegate Arne Jones reported that conditions were still not as good as before the strike, but lately the situation was improving.<sup>24</sup> To remedy their "rotten" situation, Local 38-3 introduced a resolution calling on the ILA to hire an organizer for Tacoma. Highest priority in the membership drive would be men delinquent in their dues and longshoremen working out of the scab hall. Delegates turned down Tacoma's bid for an organizer.<sup>25</sup>

Local 38-3 went ahead with its organizing drive. During the spring of 1917, ninety-two men joined the union, making a total of 624 members.<sup>26</sup> In August, the union took in fifty grain handlers Harvey Wells had dispatched to work the Grace steamer *Santa Rita*. The scab hall men had suddenly stopped working when they found themselves handling 300-pound coffee sacks. They demanded \$1.00 an hour before they would move another sack. Wells wired Grace headquarters for advice. By the time the shipping line agreed to pay the rate asked by the men, strikers had joined Local 38-3.<sup>27</sup>

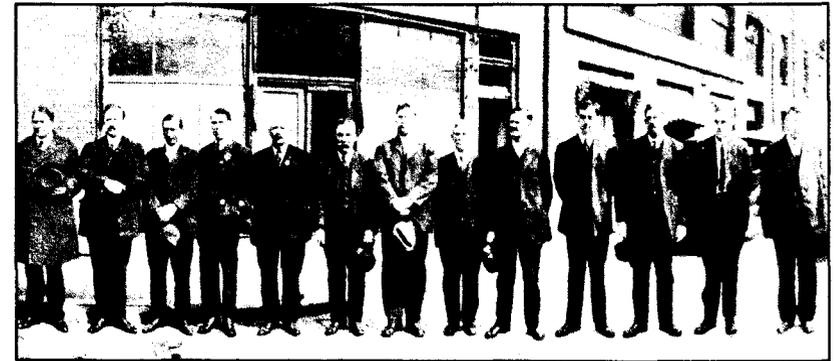
On October 16, nonunion black longshoremen at the Milwaukee docks struck for pay parity with private piers. Black members of Local 38-3 asked the demonstrators to join the union.<sup>28</sup> During the following year eighty-one African Americans became members of the general cargo local.<sup>29</sup> At the 1918

convention of the Pacific Coast District ILA. Tacoma delegates proposed a resolution calling on locals "to inaugurate a campaign of organization among the colored workers with the object in view of having them become members of the various Locals now in existence and that we go on record as opposing any move to create new Locals to take care of said workers." The convention passed the resolution with one dissenting vote.<sup>30</sup>

In the midst of Local 38-3's organizing campaign, WEU posted a second round of wage increases to demonstrate "high regard for the quality of work" of deep-water longshoremen. Employers advanced stevedore straight time to 65 cents an hour and overtime to \$1.00 an hour. Truckers received 45 cents straight time and 65 cents overtime.<sup>31</sup> When nonunion coastwise longshoremen in Seattle learned that they had been passed over a second time, they struck. Nine hours later strikers returned to work with promises that wages would be raised to 55 cents straight time and 82½ cents overtime.<sup>32</sup> That evening 1,000 union and nonunion dock men from Tacoma, Everett, and Seattle gathered at Pier D in the Queen City. The men demanded parity with San Francisco's scale of 75 cents an hour for straight time and \$1.25 for overtime.<sup>33</sup>

The struggle of the ILA locals to regain control of the Tacoma waterfront was complicated by the actions of IWW Marine Transport Workers' Local 380. As 1917 began, MTW Local 380 sponsored a debate between Local 38-3 officers and Wobbly organizer J. T. Doran. The subject was the causes of the failure of the 1916 strike. According to the *Industrial Worker*, ILA representative Joseph Cross stated the strike would have been won if members had stayed on the picket line instead of running away. "Red" Doran defended the men who had left. "Had they remained it would but mean more hungry families, more broken heads, more graves on the hillside and more tin-starred murderers walking the streets unhung." The cause of the defeat, said Doran, was the antiquated organization of the craft trades. The AFL permitted union sailors, railroaders, and teamsters to assist the employers in breaking the strike of longshoremen. One Big Union (OBU) based on modern industrial lines would have won that strike.<sup>34</sup>

Debate was not the only method used by Wobblies to attract attention. On the Tacoma waterfront, the letters "OBU" adorned walls, fences, pilings, dock equipment, and even the sides of vessels. Interspersed with the initials were colored chalk slogans "Slow down, don't scab on yourself," "Get \$20 for a \$10 job," and "Put the cat to work." For members of the ILA, a Wobbly wag had sketched "I L(ose) A(gain)" on sides of buildings.<sup>35</sup> The *Industrial Worker* claimed in April 1917 that the Tacoma MTW local had "steady growth."<sup>36</sup> Among new IWW members were men working out of the employers' and the ILA halls.<sup>37</sup> A week after Local 38-3 member Henry J. Gehrig joined MTW 380, the federal government deported him to Salt Lake City. The German-born Gehrig was accused of being an undesirable alien.<sup>38</sup> Considered by the federal government "absolutely fearless and dangerous to a high degree," New England native J.T. Doran was arrested in Tacoma on October 6, 1917. Doran was charged with subverting the war effort.<sup>39</sup> The jailing of Doran slowed the Wobbly drive among waterfront workers.



Defeated longshoremen met at Tacoma for the Pacific Coast District ILA Convention May 7-12, 1917. Top photo: left to right, Charles Houla, Honolulu; C.O. Brown, Everett; H.W. Weber, Seattle; Les Gholson, Seattle; J. Watt, Seattle; M. Johnson, Portland; F. Johnson, Seattle; B.F. Smith, Seattle Steamboatmen; Pete Anderson, Seattle; C. Eliason, Ballard; L. Larson, Port Ludlow; Sydney R. Lines, Bellingham; C.S. Martin, Seattle; P.S. Anderson, Port Blakely.

Bottom, left to right, T.V. O'Connor, international president of the ILA; Gordon J. Kelly, Vancouver, B.C., Pacific Coast District president; Arne Jones, Tacoma Lumber Handlers; H. Dugan, Seattle; T. Stenson, Seattle; D. Connell, Seattle; John C. Bjorklund, Tacoma; E. McMahon, Tacoma; Lawrence H. Davis, Tacoma; Marshall E. Wright, Tacoma, Pacific Coast District secretary; H.F. Johnson, Tacoma; V.H. Jordon, Tacoma; August F. Seitz, Tacoma.

(ILWU Local 23 archives)

## The National Adjustment Commission

Long before American entrance into World War I, the federal government demonstrated concern about conditions in the American maritime industry. On September 7, 1916, Congress had created the United States Shipping Board. This government agency aimed to establish the largest fighting fleet and merchant marine in the world. The construction of warships and freighters accelerated when America entered the war. In June 1917, the United States Shipping Board, American Steamship Association, and Atlantic

District of the International Seamen's Union signed an agreement that governed wages and working conditions. The settlement provided for the resolution of disputes without resorting to lockouts or strikes. Two months later, the Shipping Board tried to replicate the offshore agreement with the ILA and waterfront employers. By creating the National Adjustment Commission NAC sought to regulate longshore wages, hours, and working conditions on the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific coasts. Atlantic and Gulf employers accepted the agreement, but many West Coast employers "objected strenuously to recognition of the ILA." NAC was never able to get San Francisco employers or the Riggers and Stevedores' Union to accept government jurisdiction over wages. In the north, Grays Harbor and Puget Sound stevedoring companies refused at first. After a conference on October 3, most West Coast employers signed an agreement with NAC containing the following proviso:<sup>40</sup> "Any disputes between the employers and employees not settled locally between themselves shall be referred to the National Adjustment Commission, whose decision shall be final . . . and during the Commission's deliberations work shall continue uninterruptedly."<sup>41</sup>

On October 23, a mass meeting of Tacoma and Seattle ILA longshoremen compiled and sent a list of demands to waterfront employers. The men insisted WEU dispatch halls be closed, the workday be eight hours, and wages increased. If WEU failed to reply by October 25, the union men planned an appeal to NAC in Washington, D. C.<sup>42</sup> WEU responded that since they did not have an agreement with the ILA, they were not going to discuss any issue with the union.<sup>43</sup> On November 7, NAC Chairman Raymond B. Stevens telegraphed all Puget Sound waterfront unions that a specialist on casual labor, Dr. Carlton Parker of the University of Washington, would survey longshore wages and working conditions. Stevens invited employers and ILA locals to send representatives to a December hearing on Parker's report. Tacoma ILA locals sent Jack Bjorklund and Paddy Morris to Washington, D. C.<sup>44</sup>

To the consternation of Bjorklund and Morris, Parker recommended, and NAC approved, the continuation of rustling cards and scab hiring halls. The two Tacomans asked Washington State central labor councils to send telegrams to Samuel Gompers asking for his intercession.<sup>45</sup> The AFL president succeeded in getting NAC to reconvene. Gompers told NAC that fink halls were an un-American system breeding rebellion among workers. Furthermore, if rustling cards were not eliminated immediately, Gompers vowed to take the matter up directly with President Wilson.<sup>46</sup> On December 18, NAC issued a new Award based on the work practices code of the New York City Port Authority. The commission recommended all longshoremen be hired at dock gates. The employer hiring halls must be closed by July 1, 1918, and the use of rustling cards stopped.<sup>47</sup>

When Puget Sound waterfront employers protested the order to close their hiring halls, NAC told employers to come to Washington, D.C. on June 25, 1918, for a hearing. Tacoma's largest longshore employer, the Milwaukee dock, did more than remonstrate with words. In clear violation of the Award, the Milwaukee manager posted on docks and in Harvey Wells's hiring hall on January 13, 1918:

**Notice!**  
**To gain admittance to the Milwaukee dock,**  
**cards issued by this hall must be**  
**presented at the gates.<sup>48</sup>**

The Tacoma labor movement reacted to the Milwaukee dock manager's obduracy by sending resolutions of protest to the Shipping Board, NAC, and Samuel Gompers.<sup>49</sup> The ILA district office cautioned the men not to strike. Walking out would break their promise not to strike during wartime. Such an action would also complicate Dr. Parker's wage study. A month passed with nothing done about the rustling card or the scab hall. Local 38-3 men decided to take action. A mass meeting was held on Washington's birthday to devise means of doing away with the hall and card.<sup>50</sup> Four days later a motion passed at Local 38-3's regular meeting to no longer work out of the scab hall. The membership unanimously adopted a companion motion to levy a fine of \$10.00 on any union longshoreman caught carrying the hated rustling card.<sup>51</sup> The boycott of the employers' hall lasted several days. Then ILA men drifted back looking for work. Unsuccessful at individual action, Local 38-3 joined with the membership of twelve other Puget Sound ILA locals in a mass vote to "hang the hook" on April 11, 1918. At the last moment, federal conciliators Henry M. White and Edgar C. Snyder succeeded in getting the walkout postponed.<sup>52</sup>

Both WEU and ILA sought to influence Dr. Parker's longshore wage study. The employers wanted the cost of living measured retroactive to August 1, 1917, while longshore locals urged Parker to use August 1, 1916. Adoption of the latter date meant a substantial pay raise because prices had skyrocketed since American entry into the war. Using University of Washington cost-of-living index figures based on August 1, 1917, WEU posted a new wage scale on dock bulletin boards April 18, 1918. WEU offered longshoremen 65 cents an hour straight time and \$1.00 an hour overtime. Dock truckers received 60 cents an hour for the first nine hours and 90 cents an hour thereafter. At the bottom of the notification appeared the sentence, "The present open shop conditions to continue."<sup>53</sup>

Four days later all Puget Sound locals assembled in Seattle to review the employers' proposal. The group passed a resolution protesting "the untenable attitude" of the Waterfront Employers' Union. The ILA men refused to accept as final the bosses' latest wage scale.<sup>54</sup> NAC Special Agent Henry White told the ILA and WEU to each send one representative to his office to sit with him for the purpose of determining wages and working conditions. The ILA named a newly appointed ILA vice president, Jack Bjorklund. WEU selected its president, Keith Middleton.<sup>55</sup>

After conferring with Bjorklund and Middleton, NAC agent Henry White issued on May 10, 1918, an Award of Wages and Working Conditions for Longshoremen, Truckers, and Checkers. White granted longshoremen the eight-hour day, wages of 70 cents an hour straight time and \$1.05 overtime for

coastal vessels. For deep-water ships the pay rate was 80 cents and \$1.15. Dock truckers received 65 cents an hour straight time and \$1.00 overtime. White's Award did not provide for ILA recognition, nor preference in hiring. White reiterated NAC's decision that the employer hiring halls must shut down on July 1. The ILA Pacific Coast District Convention of May 6-11, approved White's Award pending an appeal to Washington, D.C. for equal pay for truckers. WEU agreed to White's wage scale on May 14. Employers continued to appeal the closure of their dispatch halls.<sup>56</sup>

While employers and Puget Sound ILA unions were appealing sections of the White Award, the United States Employment Service created in June 1918 a Marine Branch to furnish labor for loading munitions. ILA President T. V. O'Connor was appointed director of the new government agency. O'Connor came to the Pacific Coast to assist local employment conciliator Edgar C. Snyder in persuading WEU to negotiate with the ILA. After numerous sessions with Keith Middleton and Jack Bjorklund, White announced an agreement. The rustling card would be abolished immediately. On July 1, White added, WEU would turn over its labor dispatch halls to the United States Employment Service. The government would appoint hiring hall staff acceptable to employers and union longshore locals.<sup>57</sup> In Tacoma, WEU recommended Harvey Wells be retained as dispatcher. Locals 38-3 and 38-30 refused to accept Wells. On September 28, T. V. O'Connor appointed Jack Bjorklund manager and E. L. "Big Ed" Harris dispatcher. That afternoon Bjorklund and Harris sent the first gangs out of the ILA hall at 1353 Commerce Street. The name U. S. Hall now adorned the plate glass window in the main door. Within three months, this hall dispatched 800 men a day, all members of Local 38-3.<sup>58</sup>

After the federal takeover of the employer hiring hall, Harvey Wells became manager of the Employers Association of Washington, Tacoma Branch. This agency provided workers to open-shop businesses, including nonunion shipping lines, stevedore bosses, and lumber companies. Despite requests by Local 38-3 business agents Ed Kloss and August Seitz, men from other unions continued to "leach" at Wells' new office.<sup>59</sup> Then the influenza epidemic struck the Tacoma waterfront. Six members of Local 38-3 died before the contagious infection abated.<sup>60</sup> The men were unable to get the ships loaded on schedule. Two non-union shipping lines, Grace and Alaska Steamship, tried to supplement their steady company gangs with ILA men. Locals 38-3 and 38-30 did not want to break their no-strike pledge to NAC, but they disliked working with scabs. The union men walked off the job "as individuals" whenever they saw a scab on the ship.<sup>61</sup>

On October 15, Wells set in motion a plan to maintain the "semblance of an organization" on the Tacoma waterfront. He asked all major steamship companies, dock operators, warehouse managers, and stevedoring companies to meet on October 31.<sup>62</sup> Nine representatives attended the meeting at the Tacoma Hotel. The group voted unanimously to form the Waterfront Employers' Union of Tacoma. Harvey Wells was named manager. The group approved of the idea of forming a Federation of Waterfront Employers' Unions for the entire Pacific Coast. A. F. Haines of Pacific Steamship Company was requested to discuss the

possibilities of a coastwide federation with employers and associations in Portland and San Francisco.<sup>63</sup>

### The Birth of the Port of Tacoma

World War I proved an economic bonanza for Tacoma. Never in the previous history of the City of Destiny had foreign and domestic cargo trade reached the volume of 1917. During the year 1918 Tacoma's maritime business dropped precipitously while Seattle's made a giant leap:

Year	Tonnage	
	Tacoma	Seattle
1917	2,909,530	3,850,627
1918	2,054,111	5,235,596 <sup>64</sup>

The six-year-old public Port of Seattle's new facilities at Harbor Island, Bell Street, and Smith Cove accounted for most of the increase. The Gantry cranes at Smith Cove moved tons of cargo from railroad cars onto vessels at a fraction of the old cost. Much of the West Coast's outbound steel and railroad construction cargo was rerouted through Seattle.<sup>65</sup> When the Port of Seattle contracted to outfit the United States Army's expedition to Siberia in early August 1918, Tacoma waterfront businessmen were galvanized into action. Pressure was applied to the City Council to find ways to update Tacoma's harbor facilities.<sup>66</sup> On August 20, 1918, Mayor C. M. Riddell asked Commissioner of Finance Fred Shoemaker and Commissioner of Public Safety F. H. Pettit to review with him the waterfront situation. Commissioner Shoemaker preferred that private enterprise solve the problem. Commissioner Pettit took the opposite position. "As things now stand Seattle is getting all the plums in the shipping line," declared Pettit. "Something needs to be done quickly. If the City cannot meet the situation then I think a port commission should be established." Mayor Riddell favored city development of the waterfront by issuing utility bonds. The mayor opposed the formation of a port district. That would mean an increase in taxes.<sup>67</sup>

Lively discussions about the future of the waterfront took place on street corners, and in club rooms, restaurants, saloons, ladies' societies, and union meetings.<sup>68</sup> Opponents to public improvement of the waterfront pointed out that the Port of Seattle had lost money in 1914 and 1915. Proponents responded that Seattle's public port had earned a profit of \$292,652 during 1916. ILA longshoremen were well aware that the Port of Seattle operated a closed shop. The Port hired 400 longshoremen every day.<sup>69</sup> The Tacoma City Council established a committee of thirty-three business and labor men to study whether private enterprise, a port commission, or city government would do the best job of developing the waterfront. Local 38-3 Business Agent August Seitz served as one of the labor representatives.<sup>70</sup> In a rare moment of unity, both Fred Tuttle of Washington Stevedoring Company and Seitz supported the creation of a port

commission.<sup>71</sup> On August 30, 1918, the Central Labor Council approved 88 to 0 a resolution proposed by Local 38-3 calling for the establishment of a Pierce County Port Commission.<sup>72</sup> A week later the City Council's waterfront improvement committee announced it would sponsor the port district proposition on the November 5 ballot.<sup>73</sup>

The campaign to bring about county residents' acceptance of a port district was initiated by the longshore unions and backed by labor. Speaking for organized labor, August Seitz told the *Ledger*, "We know that commerce is being driven away from Tacoma every day because we have not the wharves and facilities for handling cargoes. It is a port commission or quit, in a nut-shell."<sup>74</sup> Longshoremen William Eagen and C. J. McIntyre did the daily work of distributing printed matter and "boosting" the public port in rural areas that had voted against the proposition in 1912.<sup>75</sup> When Local 38-3 Business Agent Ed Kloss announced his candidacy for the port commission, he quickly received organized labor's endorsement.<sup>76</sup>

The day before the election, Charles Richardson, president of Pacific Cold Storage, wrote the *Ledger* that public ports in Seattle, Portland, and Astoria were financial failures. Tacoma ought to learn from their poor example. Richardson also appealed to Pierce County farmers not to support a port district that would benefit only the City of Tacoma. State Senator W. H. Paulhamus, president of the Puyallup and Sumner Fruit Growers' Canning Company, countered Richardson's arguments the same day in a full-page newspaper statement. Senator Paulhamus wrote, "The Port of Seattle is the one industry that is the most responsible for that city's present prosperity." Paulhamus added, "A publicly-owned warehouse means more to the farmers of Pierce County than to any citizen of the City of Tacoma, provided there is constructive generalship in the building of these facilities."<sup>77</sup>

Despite the presence of the deadly influenza epidemic, Tacoma and Pierce County voters turned out in large numbers to cast ballots on the port proposition. By a vote of 15,054 to 3,429 the people created the Port of Tacoma. Farmer Charles Orton, longshoreman Edward Kloss, and banker Chester Thorne were elected commissioners. The new port commission assembled on November 19, 1918, to begin the process of preparing a master plan for the development of Commencement Bay.<sup>78</sup>

As the year 1918 ended, the future looked bright for 1,100 Tacoma union longshoremen. The Port of Tacoma had been created with one of their members sitting on the commission. And the men had successfully blunted the employers' attempt to control all longshore work through their hiring hall. Still, events in 1917 and 1918 clearly demonstrated that Tacoma longshoremen were not masters of their fate. Neither the general cargo workers nor the lumber handlers had achieved the closed shop. The employers were too well financed and too well organized to be totally beaten. Moreover, the leverage of waterfront workers occurred only during good economic times. Puget Sound longshoremen also found themselves too dependent upon federal intervention as events in 1918



*Drawing on the cover of the pamphlet urging passing of legislation to create the Port of Tacoma in 1918. (Tacoma News Tribune, November 1, 1918, Tacoma Public Library)*

proved. Union longshoremen knew what they wanted, but the means of achieving an enduring closed shop, adequate wage scale, and safe working conditions had not been discovered.

## CHAPTER VI THE SCAB HALL

1. Files of Harvey Wells, 1918-1933. Hereafter cited as Wells. Lee Barker Interview. Mr. Barker worked out of the employers' dispatch hall from November 1916 until September 1918. Tacoma city directories list the first employers' organization in 1917 as the Tacoma Waterfront Department. In 1918 the name changed to the Waterfront Employers' Union of Tacoma, and in 1919 the title was shortened to Waterfront Employers. In 1923 they adopted the name Waterfront Employers' Association and the following year, the Waterfront Employers of Tacoma.
2. Agnes Lindskog Lewis Interview. Ms. Lewis was a Tacoma waterfront employers' paymaster from 1921 until 1938. Interview with Elsie S. L. Burns, a paymaster for the waterfront employers of Tacoma and Seattle from 1925 until 1948.
3. Until August 29, 1917. Seattle longshoremen called the employers' dispatch office the scab hiring hall. On that date, a Local 38-12 delegate reported to the Seattle Central Labor Council that "On the job and intend to stay in spite of the fink hall." The term fink hall gradually replaced scab hall in waterfront jargon. See Archie Green's *Fink, The Labor Connection*, in *Comments on Etymology*, Volume XVII, May 1, 1988, pp. 1-28. Green credits Otilie Markholt for discovering the earliest recorded use of the term "fink hall."
4. Elsie S. L. Burns Interview.
5. Lee Barker Interview.
6. Elsie S. L. Burns Interview.
7. *Minutes of a Special Meeting of Tacoma Waterfront Employers, October 31, 1918. Minutes of a Meeting of the Waterfront Employers Union of Tacoma, January 7, 1919.* Members of the Tacoma Waterfront Employers' Union in 1919 were Pacific Steamship Company, W. R. Grace, International Stevedoring, Griffiths & Sprague, and Terminal Stevedoring. Borderline Transportation and the Charles Nelson Company signed letters of intent to become members, but failed to pay dues or appear at meetings.
8. Compare Minutes of *Meeting of the Tacoma Waterfront Employers' Union*, May 4, 1917, with Cantelow 1, p. 22.
9. Cantelow 1, p. 22.
10. NLB, W. T. Morris Testimony, p. 1732.
11. TDL, April 7, 1917.
12. TLA, April 19, 1918. The volunteers were Arnold Adams, Earl Berglund, Frank Ghilarducci, Walter Johnson, George McGowan, Sam Miller, James Pirie, C. W. Wright, and Ernest Wright.
13. Ibid., April 19, 1918.
14. TLA, September 6, 1918.
15. Ibid., August 23, 1918. Letter from Employers Association of Washington, Tacoma Branch to Pacific Steamship Company, October 15, 1918.
16. TDL, November 28, December 6, and December 23, 1918.
17. ST, May 4, 1917.
18. Cantelow 1, *Open Letter* facing p. 22. Longshoremen received 55 cents an hour straight time and 75 cents for overtime. Truckers working with foreign vessels received 44 cents straight time and 60 cents overtime. Lumber handlers advanced to 60 cents straight time and 90 cents overtime.
19. ST, May 3, 1917.
20. Cantelow 1, *Open Letter* facing p. 22.
21. PCDILA 1917, p. 19.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., p. 23.
24. Ibid., pp. 22-23.
25. Ibid., pp. 70-71.
26. Reichl Files. TCLC, June 27, 1917.
27. TDL, August 5, 1917.
28. *Daily Call*, October 16, 1917. TDL, October 17, 1917. TLA, January 17, 1919.
29. Reichl Files. Jack Tanner Interview. T. H. Ambler, R. G. Gray, Earl Greenway, and Ernest Tanner were initiated on December 26, 1918. All worked the rest of their lives on the Tacoma waterfront.
30. PCDILA 1918, p. 64.
31. Cantelow, *Wages - Longshoremen and Truckers 1908-1944*, p. 1. Hereafter cited as Cantelow 2.
32. ST, June 10, 1917.
33. PI, June 13, 1917. SUR, June 16, 1917.
34. *Industrial Worker*, January 27, 1917. Hereafter cited as IW.
35. TDL, July 15, 1917.
36. IW, April 21, 1917.
37. TLA, July 13, 1917.
38. War Department, Intelligence Office, U. S. Army, Seattle, Washington, File 10110-362. September 29, 1917, p. 75. Hereafter cited as File 10110-362. The number of Tacoma longshoremen who were members of the IWW is unknown. John Now refused to discuss the IWW influence within Local 38-3. If the reports of the Tacoma labor spy "Mc" are to be believed, there were very few. See Governor Ernest Lister's Papers. Secret Service Reports and Correspondence 1917-1919.
39. Ibid., undated and unpagged.
40. Markholt, *Unionism*, pp. 806 and 847-848.
41. *Chairman's Report of the National Adjustment Commission for the Period Ending December 31, 1918*, in ILA 1919, p. 91-92 and 107. Hereafter cited as NAC. One shipowner, a member of the ILA, a representative of the Secretary of War, and a government official from the Shipping Board directed the Washington, D. C. office.
42. SUR, October 27, 1917.
43. PI, October 25, 1917.
44. SUR, November 10, 1917.
45. Ibid., December 22, 1917. TLA, January 18, 1918.
46. Ibid., January 19, 1918.
47. NAC, p. 228.
48. Mary Deaton, *The Hungry Port*, p. 101. Hereafter cited as Deaton.
49. TLA, February 1, 1918. Resolutions were signed by the Tacoma Building Trades Council, Central Labor Council, Metal Trades Council, and the Board of Business Representatives.